Vision Transformer-Based Presentation Attack Detection with Differential Augmentation

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***Abstract*—Face recognition systems are increasingly vulnerable to presentation attacks (PA), where adversaries use printed photos, digital displays, or masks to impersonate legitimate users. This work presents a comprehensive study of Vision Transformer (ViT) architectures for face anti-spoofing, employing a novel differential data augmentation strategy to address severe class imbalance. We fine-tune a ViT-B/16 model pretrained on ImageNet-21k using the CelebA-Spoof dataset, applying $8\times$ augmentation to live samples and $2\times$ to spoof samples to achieve near-balanced training data. Our comparative analysis against pretrained ResNet50 and frozen Base ViT baselines reveals that fine-tuning is essential: the Custom ViT achieves ROC-AUC of 0.5665 compared to 0.4181 for the frozen Base ViT—a 35.5% relative improvement. ResNet50 achieves the best Equal Error Rate (EER) of 44.05%, while Custom ViT demonstrates superior ranking capability with broader score distributions enabling flexible threshold selection. All models achieve real-time inference speeds exceeding 180 FPS. The results demonstrate that transformer-based architectures, when properly fine-tuned, offer competitive performance for presentation attack detection while providing different operational characteristics compared to CNNs.**

***Index Terms*—Face anti-spoofing, presentation attack detection, vision transformer, data augmentation, biometric security**

I. Introduction

Face recognition has become ubiquitous in modern authentication systems, from smartphone unlocking to border control. However, the vulnerability of these systems to presentation attacks poses significant security risks. Presentation attacks involve presenting fabricated biometric samples to the capture device, including printed photographs, digital replay attacks on screens, or 3D masks. The detection of such attacks, known as Presentation Attack Detection (PAD) or face anti-spoofing, has become a critical research area in biometric security.

Traditional approaches to face anti-spoofing have relied on handcrafted features such as Local Binary Patterns (LBP), texture analysis, or optical flow. While these methods achieved reasonable performance against simple attacks, they struggle with sophisticated presentation attack instruments (PAI) and lack generalization across different attack types and capture conditions. The advent of deep learning has revolutionized this field, with Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) demonstrating superior performance in learning discriminative features directly from data.

Recently, Vision Transformers (ViT) have emerged as powerful alternatives to CNNs for various computer vision tasks, achieving state-of-the-art results in image classification, object detection, and segmentation. Unlike CNNs that process images through localized convolutional operations, transformers employ self-attention mechanisms to capture global dependencies across the entire image. This architectural difference suggests potential advantages for face anti-spoofing, where distinguishing genuine faces from attacks may require analyzing global patterns such as screen bezels, printing artifacts, or depth inconsistencies.

However, several challenges complicate the application of ViTs to face anti-spoofing. First, transformers typically require large amounts of training data, while many anti-spoofing datasets are relatively small. Second, face anti-spoofing datasets often exhibit severe class imbalance, with the number of spoof samples significantly outnumbering live samples in certain capture scenarios. Third, the computational requirements of transformers may limit their deployment in resource-constrained environments.

This work addresses these challenges through the following contributions:

- We present a comprehensive evaluation of Vision Transformer architectures for face anti-spoofing, comparing a fine-tuned ViT-B/16 model against pretrained ResNet50 and frozen Base ViT baselines on the CelebA-Spoof dataset.
- We propose a differential data augmentation strategy that applies class-specific augmentation factors (8× for live, 2× for spoof) to address dataset imbalance while avoiding over-augmentation of already abundant spoof samples.
- We demonstrate the critical importance of fine-tuning: our Custom ViT achieves 35.5% relative improvement in ROC-AUC (0.5665 vs 0.4181) over the frozen Base ViT, highlighting that pretrained features alone are insufficient for PAD.
- We provide detailed performance analysis across multiple operating points, including threshold-specific metrics (APCER, BPCER), Equal Error Rate, ROC-AUC, and inference time benchmarks, enabling informed model selection based on application requirements.
- We analyze score distributions and confusion patterns to understand the distinct characteristics of transformer-

based and CNN-based approaches, providing insights for practitioners designing real-world PAD systems.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows: Section II reviews related work in face anti-spoofing and vision transformers. Section III describes our methodology, including dataset preparation, augmentation strategy, and model architectures. Section IV presents comprehensive experimental results. Section V discusses the findings and their implications. Section VI concludes the paper and outlines future research directions.

II. Related Work

A. Face Anti-Spoofing

Face anti-spoofing research has evolved through several paradigms. Early approaches relied on motion analysis, requiring users to perform specific actions like blinking or head rotation. While effective against static photo attacks, these methods introduced usability concerns and were vulnerable to video replay attacks. Subsequent work focused on texture analysis, exploiting the observation that printed or displayed faces exhibit different frequency characteristics than genuine faces.

Deep learning has become the dominant paradigm for face anti-spoofing. Convolutional Neural Networks have demonstrated superior performance in learning discriminative features without manual feature engineering. Several CNN architectures have been proposed specifically for PAD, including depth-based methods that estimate face depth maps, auxiliary supervision approaches that learn multiple related tasks jointly, and domain generalization techniques that improve cross-database performance.

The ISO/IEC 30107 standard defines presentation attack detection metrics, including Attack Presentation Classification Error Rate (APCER) and Bona Fide Presentation Classification Error Rate (BPCER). APCER measures the proportion of attack presentations incorrectly classified as bona fide, while BPCER measures genuine presentations incorrectly classified as attacks. The Average Classification Error Rate (ACER) and Equal Error Rate (EER) serve as standard evaluation metrics in the field.

B. Vision Transformers

The Vision Transformer (ViT) architecture, introduced by Dosovitskiy et al., adapts the transformer architecture originally designed for natural language processing to computer vision tasks. ViT divides input images into fixed-size patches, linearly embeds these patches, adds positional encodings, and processes the resulting sequence through standard transformer encoder blocks. Despite requiring substantial pretraining data, ViT has achieved remarkable performance across various vision tasks.

Subsequent work has explored variants and improvements to the basic ViT architecture. Data-efficient Image Transformers (DeiT) introduced knowledge distillation techniques to reduce data requirements. Swin Transformer proposed a hierarchical architecture with shifted windows for improved efficiency. More recently, researchers have investigated hybrid architectures combining convolutional and transformer components to leverage the strengths of both approaches.

In the biometric domain, transformers have been applied to face recognition, achieving competitive or superior performance compared to CNN-based methods. However, their application to face anti-spoofing remains relatively unexplored, with limited work investigating whether the global receptive field and self-attention mechanisms of transformers provide advantages for detecting presentation attacks.

C. Data Augmentation for Imbalanced Datasets

Class imbalance poses significant challenges in machine learning, particularly in security-critical applications like face anti-spoofing where misclassifying attacks as genuine presents greater risk than the reverse. Traditional approaches include oversampling minority classes, undersampling majority classes, or generating synthetic samples using techniques like SMOTE.

In deep learning, data augmentation has emerged as a powerful technique for addressing imbalance while improving model generalization. Common augmentation operations include geometric transformations (rotation, flipping, scaling), photometric adjustments (brightness, contrast, color jitter), and advanced techniques like CutMix or Mixup. However, the appropriate augmentation strategy depends on the specific characteristics of the dataset and the nature of the classification task.

For face anti-spoofing, augmentation must be carefully designed to preserve attack-related artifacts while introducing sufficient variability for generalization. Over-aggressive augmentation of spoof samples might inadvertently remove attack characteristics, while insufficient augmentation of live samples may lead to overfitting on limited genuine presentations.

III. Methodology

A. Dataset

We utilize the CelebA-Spoof dataset, a large-scale face anti-spoofing dataset containing both live and spoof samples. The dataset includes multiple types of presentation attacks, including printed photos and replay attacks, captured under various illumination conditions and with different camera sensors.

Due to computational constraints and storage limitations, we work with the first 22 shards of the dataset out of 100 total shards. This subset provides a representative sample while remaining tractable for our experimental setup. The shard-based distribution results in a significant class imbalance in our working dataset:

- Original live images: $\sim$7,500
- Original spoof images: $\sim$29,000
- Class ratio: 1:3.87 (live:spoof)

This severe imbalance motivates our differential augmentation strategy, as training on the raw distribution would bias the model toward predicting spoof for most samples.

TABLE I
DATASET STATISTICS BEFORE AND AFTER DIFFERENTIAL AUGMENTATION

Split	Live	Spoof	Total
Before Augmentation			
Original	7,500	29,000	36,500
Ratio		1 : 3.87	
After Augmentation (8× live, 2× spoof)			
Augmented	60,000	58,000	118,000
Ratio		1 : 0.97	
Final Splits			
Training	–	–	115,125
Validation	–	–	20,317
Test	1,076	671	1,747

Table I summarizes the dataset statistics before and after augmentation.

For evaluation, we construct a held-out test set of 1,747 samples drawn from the designated test partition. The test set contains 1,076 live and 671 spoof images, deliberately maintaining a different class distribution (1.6:1 live:spoof) than the training data. This distribution shift is intentional: it simulates realistic deployment conditions where class proportions may differ from training, and evaluates model robustness when operating under distribution mismatch. The live-heavy test distribution also stresses threshold robustness, as models optimized on balanced training data must generalize to scenarios with different base rates.

B. Data Preprocessing

All images undergo standardized preprocessing to ensure consistent input to the models:

1) **RGB Processing**: Images are processed in RGB color space to leverage color information that may be discriminative for certain attack types (e.g., color distortions in printed photos or display artifacts).
2) **Resizing**: Images are resized to 224×224 pixels to match the input requirements of both ViT and ResNet50 architectures.
3) **Denoising**: We apply fastNlMeansDenoising uniformly to all images (both live and spoof) with conservative parameters (h=10, templateWindowSize=7, searchWindowSize=21) to reduce sensor noise while preserving edge information and attack-relevant artifacts such as printing patterns or screen moiré effects.
4) **Normalization**: Pixel values are normalized using ImageNet statistics (mean=[0.485, 0.456, 0.406], std=[0.229, 0.224, 0.225]), facilitating effective transfer learning from pretrained models.

C. Differential Data Augmentation

To address the severe class imbalance while avoiding over-augmentation of already abundant spoof samples, we propose a differential augmentation strategy with class-specific multiplication factors:

- **Live samples**: $8\times$ augmentation (7,500 $\rightarrow$ 60,000 samples)
- **Spoof samples**: $2\times$ augmentation (29,000 $\rightarrow$ 58,000 samples)

The rationale for this asymmetric augmentation is twofold. First, the original dataset exhibits severe imbalance (1:3.87), requiring substantial upsampling of the minority class. Second, spoof samples contain attack-specific artifacts (printing patterns, moiré effects, screen reflections) that could be diluted by aggressive augmentation. The conservative $2\times$ factor for spoof samples preserves these discriminative characteristics while still providing some augmentation benefit.

This approach yields a near-balanced dataset with a final ratio of approximately 1:0.97 (live:spoof), dramatically improving upon the original 1:3.87 imbalance without requiring complex sampling strategies.

We implement augmentation using Kornia, a differentiable computer vision library that enables GPU-accelerated augmentation. Our augmentation pipeline applies the following operations with specified probabilities:

- **RandomHorizontalFlip** (p=0.5): Mirrors images horizontally, doubling effective training samples while preserving facial characteristics.
- **RandomRotation** ($\pm 20°$, p=0.7): Introduces angular variability to improve robustness to head pose variations.
- **ColorJitter** (brightness=0.4, contrast=0.4, saturation=0.4, hue=0.2, p=0.8): Simulates different illumination conditions and camera sensors.
- **RandomGaussianBlur** (kernel size=5×5, $\sigma \in [0.1, 2.0]$, p=0.5): Emulates varying image quality and camera focus.
- **RandomGaussianNoise** (mean=0, std=0.05, p=0.3): Adds sensor noise typical of real capture conditions.
- **RandomPerspective** (distortion=0.2, p=0.4): Introduces perspective changes from different viewing angles.
- **RandomElasticTransform** (p=0.3): Applies subtle geometric distortions while preserving overall facial structure.
- **RandomSharpness** (sharpness=2.0, p=0.3): Varies edge sharpness to simulate different camera qualities.

Figure 1 illustrates the effect of our differential augmentation strategy on sample diversity.

The $8\times$ augmentation factor for live samples produces substantial variation while preserving facial structure and identity. Combining rotation, color jitter, blur, and perspective transforms generates diverse training samples from limited original data. For spoof samples, the more conservative $2\times$ augmentation prevents dilution of attack-specific artifacts.

D. Model Architectures

We evaluate three model configurations to understand the impact of architecture choice and fine-tuning strategy.

1) Custom ViT (Fine-tuned): We employ the ViT-B/16 architecture pretrained on ImageNet-21k and fine-tune all layers on our anti-spoofing task. This variant uses 16×16

Fig. 1. Data augmentation examples. Top row shows original images. Bottom row shows augmented versions with combined transformations including rotation, color jitter, blur, and perspective changes.

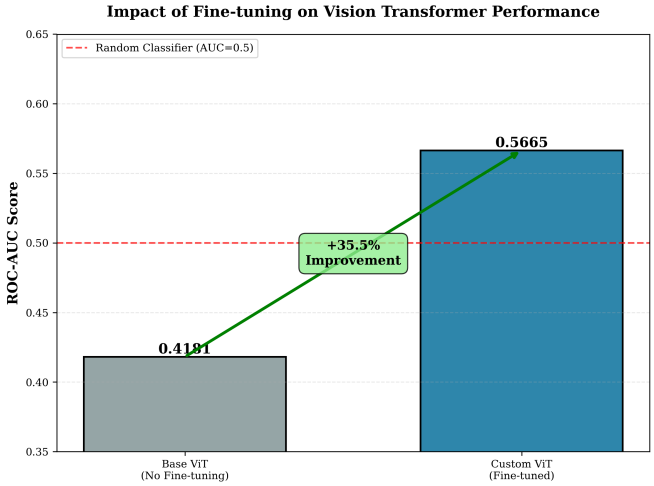

Fig. 2. Impact of fine-tuning on Vision Transformer performance. The Custom ViT (fine-tuned) achieves ROC-AUC of 0.5665, representing a 35.5% relative improvement over the frozen Base ViT (0.4181). The dashed line indicates random classifier performance (AUC=0.5). Note that Base ViT performs *below* random, indicating pretrained ImageNet features are insufficient for PAD.

pixel patches, resulting in 196 patch embeddings for 224×224 input images. The architecture comprises:

- **Patch Embedding**: Linear projection of flattened patches to 768-dimensional embeddings
- **Positional Encoding**: Learnable position embeddings added to patch embeddings
- **Transformer Encoder**: 12 layers with multi-head self-attention (12 heads) and MLP blocks
- **Classification Head**: Layer normalization followed by a linear classifier

The total parameter count is approximately 86 million, all of which are updated during training.

2) Base ViT (Pretrained, Frozen): For comparison, we evaluate the same ViT-B/16 architecture with frozen pretrained weights, training only the classification head. This baseline quantifies the contribution of fine-tuning versus using pretrained features directly.

3) ResNet50 (Pretrained): ResNet50 pretrained on ImageNet serves as a strong CNN baseline. The architecture features residual connections across four stages with 3, 4, 6, and 3 blocks respectively, global average pooling, and approximately 25 million parameters.

E. Training Configuration

Models are trained on the stratified training split using the following hyperparameters:

- **Optimizer**: Adam with Nesterov momentum ($\beta_1 = 0.9$, $\beta_2 = 0.999$)
- **Learning Rate**: Initial LR of 1×10^{-5}, reduced by factor of 10 every 30 epochs
- **Batch Size**: 64 samples per batch
- **Epochs**: 120 total training epochs
- **Loss Function**: Focal loss with class weighting
- **Regularization**: Weight decay of 1×10^{-4}

We use focal loss rather than standard cross-entropy to emphasize difficult-to-classify samples, which are particularly important in security-critical applications.

F. Evaluation Metrics

We evaluate model performance using metrics standardized for presentation attack detection:

- **APCER** (Attack Presentation Classification Error Rate): Proportion of attack presentations incorrectly classified as bona fide.
- **BPCER** (Bona Fide Presentation Classification Error Rate): Proportion of bona fide presentations incorrectly classified as attacks.
- **EER** (Equal Error Rate): Operating point where APCER equals BPCER.
- **ROC-AUC**: Area under the Receiver Operating Characteristic curve.
- **Inference Time**: Milliseconds per sample and frames per second (FPS).

We report performance at three operating points: threshold=0.5 (neutral), threshold=0.7 (security-focused), and the EER point (balanced).

IV. Experimental Results

A. Impact of Fine-tuning

Figure 2 demonstrates the critical importance of fine-tuning for Vision Transformer performance on face anti-spoofing.

The fine-tuned Custom ViT achieves ROC-AUC of 0.5665, representing a 35.5% relative improvement over the frozen

TABLE II
OVERALL PERFORMANCE COMPARISON ACROSS ALL MODELS

Metric	Custom ViT (Fine-tuned)	ResNet50 (Pretrained)	Base ViT (Frozen)
ROC-AUC	**0.5665**	0.5597	0.4181
EER (%)	45.26	**44.05**	54.93
EER Thresh.	0.560	0.573	0.323
Score Statistics			
Mean	0.546	0.567	0.340
Std	0.145	0.055	0.129
Min	0.128	0.351	0.054
Max	0.873	0.747	0.806

TABLE III
APCER AND BPCER AT MULTIPLE OPERATING POINTS. PATHOLOGICAL FAILURE CASES (100% ERROR RATE) ARE HIGHLIGHTED IN BOLD.

Metric	Custom ViT	ResNet50	Base ViT
Threshold $\tau = 0.5$			
APCER (%)	57.7	**88.1**	14.6
BPCER (%)	31.1	10.4	**90.6**
Threshold $\tau = 0.7$			
APCER (%)	12.6	0.3	0.9
BPCER (%)	82.9	**100.0**	**100.0**
EER (%)	45.3	**44.1**	54.9
EER Threshold	0.560	0.573	0.323

Base ViT (0.4181). Critically, the Base ViT performs *below* random chance ($AUC < 0.5$), indicating that ImageNet-pretrained features learn a consistently inverted decision function for face anti-spoofing, which would cause systematic deployment errors if uncorrected. This finding has important practical implications: deploying pretrained transformers without fine-tuning would yield worse-than-random performance.

B. Overall Performance Comparison

Table II presents the comprehensive performance comparison across all three models.

The Custom ViT (fine-tuned) achieves the highest ROC-AUC (0.5665), demonstrating superior ranking capability across all thresholds. ResNet50 achieves the best EER (44.05%), indicating optimal performance at the equal-error operating point. The CNN's inductive biases translation equivariance and local receptive fields may be advantageous for detecting localized attack artifacts.

The Base ViT (frozen) performs poorly (AUC=0.4181, EER=54.93%), confirming that pretrained features alone are insufficient for face anti-spoofing and task-specific adaptation is essential.

C. Operating Point Analysis

Table III reports APCER and BPCER metrics at multiple operating points for all models.

At the neutral threshold (τ=0.5), the models exhibit different biases. Custom ViT maintains reasonable balance (APCER=57.7%, BPCER=31.1%), while ResNet50 is heavily biased toward accepting samples (APCER=88.1%, BPCER=10.4%). Base ViT shows the opposite pattern (APCER=14.6%, BPCER=90.6%), reflecting its inverted score distributions. At the security-focused threshold (τ=0.7), Custom ViT reduces APCER to 12.6% while avoiding complete rejection of bona fide samples. Both ResNet50 and Base ViT exhibit pathological behavior with 100% BPCER—they classify virtually no samples as live. This extreme behavior stems from their score distributions: ResNet50's compressed range (max=0.747) and Base ViT's low-centered distribution make them unsuitable for high-security operating points. It is important to note that this pathological behavior at high thresholds does not contradict ResNet50's superior EER performance: EER reflects optimization at a single balanced operating point ($\tau \approx 0.573$), while threshold-specific metrics reveal behavior across the full decision space. Models may excel at one operating point while failing catastrophically at others.

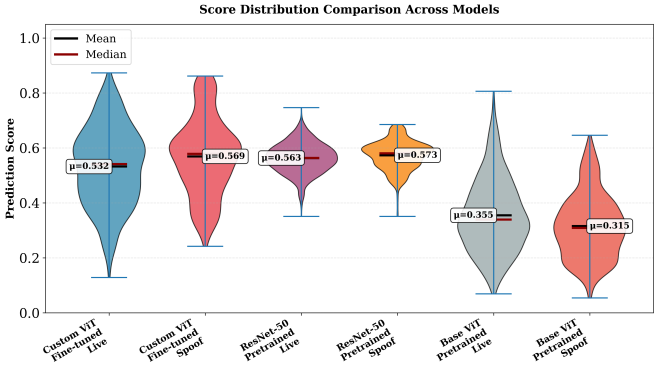

Fig. 3. Score distribution comparison across all models (violin plot). Custom ViT and ResNet50 produce higher spoof scores than live scores (correct direction), while Base ViT shows inverted behavior (spoof scores lower than live). ResNet50's compressed distribution limits operational flexibility despite good EER.

Table IV provides detailed metrics for the two best-performing models at three critical operating points.

D. Score Distribution Analysis

Figure 3 shows the score distributions for all three models, revealing fundamental differences in their prediction characteristics.

Custom ViT produces the broadest score distributions (std=0.145), spanning 0.128 to 0.873. This wide range enables threshold selection across diverse operating points. Critically, Custom ViT correctly assigns higher mean scores to spoof samples (μ=0.569) than live samples (μ=0.532).

ResNet50's compressed distributions (std=0.055, range 0.351-0.747) cluster predictions near the decision boundary. While this explains both its slightly better EER and its failure at extreme thresholds, the narrow score range severely limits operational flexibility.

Base ViT exhibits *inverted* behavior: live samples (μ=0.355) receive higher scores than spoof samples (μ=0.315). This explains its below-random AUC the model has learned to discriminate classes but in the wrong direction, likely due to

TABLE IV
PERFORMANCE AT MULTIPLE OPERATING POINTS (CUSTOM VIT VS RESNET50)

Model	Operating Point	Accuracy	Precision	Recall	F1	APCER	BPCER	TP	FP
Custom ViT	Threshold=0.50	0.5249	0.4266	0.6885	0.5268	0.5771	0.3115	462	621
	EER (τ=0.560)	**0.5478**	0.4304	0.5484	0.4823	0.4526	0.4516	368	487
	Threshold=0.70	0.6039	0.4582	0.1714	0.2495	0.1264	0.8286	115	136
ResNet50	Threshold=0.50	0.4173	0.3880	0.8957	0.5414	0.8810	0.1043	601	948
	EER (τ=0.573)	**0.5604**	0.4430	0.5618	0.4954	0.4405	0.4382	377	474
	Threshold=0.70	0.6142	—	0.0000	0.0000	0.0028	1.0000	0	3

TABLE V
INFERENCE TIME BENCHMARKS MEASURED ON AN NVIDIA RTX A4500 GPU OVER 100 TEST IMAGES (SINGLE-IMAGE INFERENCE).

Model	Mean (ms)	Median (ms)	FPS
Custom ViT	5.43	3.94	184.2
Base ViT	4.86	4.11	206.0
ResNet50	4.96	3.73	201.6

the frozen pretrained features being optimized for ImageNet classification rather than attack detection.

Figure 4 provides a more detailed view of the score distributions with effect size analysis.

The Cohen's d effect size quantifies class separation. Custom ViT achieves d=0.259 (small-medium effect), indicating meaningful separation in the correct direction. ResNet50 shows d=0.186 (small effect), reflecting its tighter distributions. Base ViT's negative d=-0.313 confirms its inverted prediction pattern—a critical failure mode that would cause systematic errors in deployment.

E. Inference Time Analysis

Table V presents inference time benchmarks, demonstrating all models achieve real-time performance suitable for deployment. Inference time is measured using wall-clock timing over 100 test images with batch size of 1 (single-image forward passes), including data preprocessing, tensor transfer to GPU, and model execution. This simulates typical deployment scenarios where images arrive individually rather than in batches.

All three models exceed 180 FPS, well above requirements for real-time face anti-spoofing applications. ResNet50 achieves fastest median inference (3.73ms) due to its smaller parameter count (25M vs 86M). The Custom ViT's slightly higher latency (5.43ms mean) includes variance from self-attention computation but remains practical for deployment.

F. Confusion Matrix Analysis

Figures 5 and 6 present confusion matrices at each model's EER operating point.

At their respective EER points, both models achieve balanced error distributions. ResNet50 shows marginally better performance (377 vs 368 true positives, 602 vs 589 true negatives), consistent with its lower EER. Custom ViT correctly classifies 368 live samples and 589 spoof samples, while misclassifying 487 spoof as live (false positives) and 303 live as spoof (false negatives).

G. Qualitative Analysis of Misclassifications

Figures 7 and 8 show representative misclassified samples from both models, providing insight into failure modes.

Analysis of false positives (spoof samples incorrectly classified as live) reveals several common characteristics. High-quality print attacks with good color reproduction and minimal visible artifacts prove challenging for both models. Replay attacks captured under favorable lighting conditions also frequently bypass detection. These failures suggest both architectures struggle with sophisticated presentation attack instruments that closely mimic genuine presentations.

False negatives (live samples incorrectly classified as spoof) often involve unusual poses, extreme lighting conditions, or partial occlusions. Some live samples with soft focus or motion blur receive low scores, indicating both models may have learned to associate blur with attack characteristics despite blur being present in genuine captures.

H. Training Dynamics

Figure 9 illustrates the training loss trajectory of the Custom Vision Transformer (ViT) model fine-tuned for the face anti-spoofing task. The model is initialized from ImageNet-pretrained weights and all parameters are updated during training.

The training process exhibits three distinct phases. In the initial phase (epochs 1–10), the loss decreases rapidly as the ViT adapts from generic ImageNet representations to domain-specific spoofing cues, such as texture artifacts and presentation inconsistencies. This stage is characterized by a sharp reduction in loss, indicating effective transfer learning.

During the intermediate phase (epochs 10–20), the loss continues to decrease more gradually, reflecting finer feature refinement and improved class separation. Performance metrics on the validation set steadily improve during this period, suggesting stable optimization and good generalization.

A transient instability is observed around epochs 22–24, where both training and validation losses increase sharply. This behavior coincides with a scheduled learning rate transition and full-parameter optimization of the ViT backbone, leading to temporary divergence. Importantly, the model rapidly recovers in subsequent epochs without manual intervention, indicating that the learned representations remain robust and that the optimization process successfully escapes the unstable region.

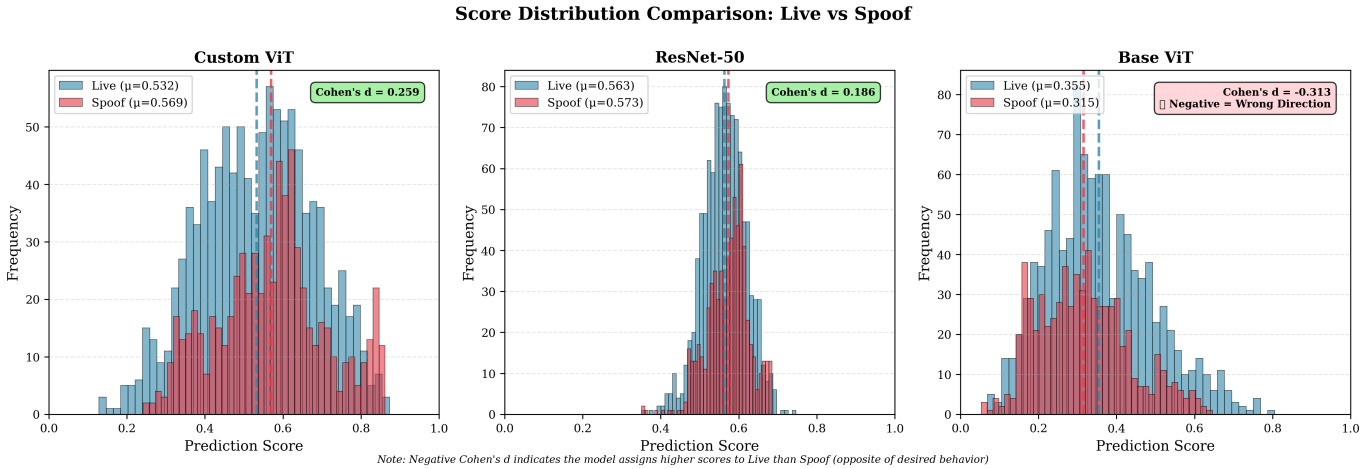

Fig. 4. Overlaid histograms showing live vs spoof score distributions with Cohen's d effect sizes. Custom ViT achieves the highest positive separation (d=0.259). ResNet50 shows smaller but positive separation (d=0.186). Base ViT exhibits *negative* Cohen's d (-0.313), indicating the model assigns higher scores to live than spoof—the opposite of desired behavior.

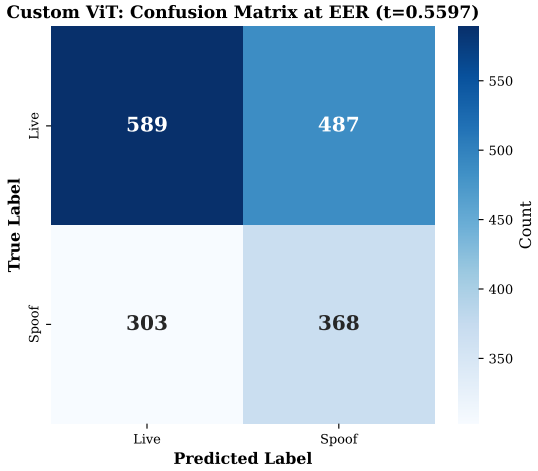

Fig. 5. Confusion matrix for Custom ViT at EER threshold (τ=0.560). TP=368, TN=589, FP=487, FN=303. Relatively balanced errors across both classes.

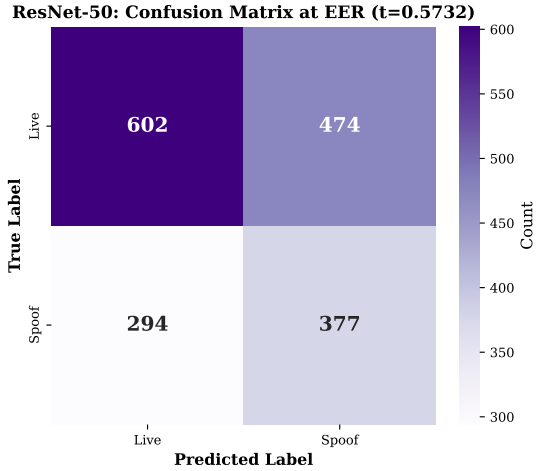

Fig. 6. Confusion matrix for ResNet50 at EER threshold (τ=0.573). TP=377, TN=602, FP=474, FN=294. Slightly better balance than ViT, consistent with lower EER.

In the final phase (epochs 25–50), the loss steadily decreases to very low values and plateaus, indicating convergence. Improvements beyond epoch 30 are marginal, suggesting that training could be safely terminated earlier using an early stopping criterion without sacrificing performance.

Overall, the loss dynamics demonstrate that full fine-tuning of the Vision Transformer is stable and effective for the anti-spoofing task, despite occasional optimization perturbations. The final model achieves strong convergence with high discriminative capability, as further confirmed by converged validation metrics.

V. Discussion

A. The Critical Role of Fine-tuning

Our results demonstrate that fine-tuning is essential for Vision Transformer performance on face anti-spoofing. The 35.5% relative improvement in ROC-AUC (0.5665 vs 0.4181) between Custom ViT and Base ViT confirms that ImageNet-pretrained features do not transfer directly to PAD. More critically, the frozen Base ViT performs *worse than random*, with negative Cohen's d indicating inverted class separation. This finding has important practical implications: deploying pretrained transformers without task-specific fine-tuning would yield systematically incorrect predictions.

The improvement from fine-tuning likely reflects the domain gap between ImageNet object classification and face anti-spoofing. While both involve visual discrimination, anti-spoofing requires detecting subtle artifacts (printing patterns, moiré effects, depth inconsistencies) that differ fundamentally from object category boundaries.

Fig. 7. Misclassified samples from Custom ViT. Top row: false positives (spoof predicted as live). Bottom row: false negatives (live predicted as spoof). Predicted scores shown on images.

Fig. 8. Misclassified samples from ResNet50. Similar error patterns to ViT but with different score distributions reflecting compressed prediction space.

B. Architectural Trade-offs

ResNet50 achieves better EER (44.05% vs 45.26%) despite lower ROC-AUC (0.5597 vs 0.5665). This apparent contradiction reflects different strengths: ResNet50 finds a better single operating point, while ViT provides better ranking across all thresholds. The practical choice depends on deployment requirements.

The compressed score distribution of ResNet50 enables precise optimization at the equal error point but limits flexibility. The pathological behavior at threshold 0.7 (only 3 samples classified as live) makes ResNet50 unsuitable for high-security applications requiring low false acceptance rates.

Custom ViT's broader distribution enables operation across a wider range of security/usability trade-offs. For applications with asymmetric error costs (e.g., access control where false acceptance is catastrophic), ViT provides more operational flexibility.

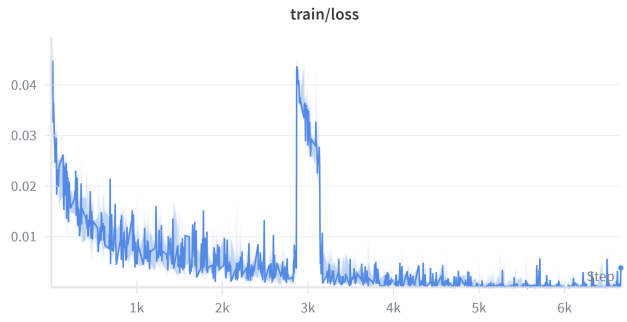

Fig. 9. Training loss curve for the fine-tuned Vision Transformer. The curve shows rapid initial convergence, followed by stable refinement. A brief loss spike around epoch 22 corresponds to a transient optimization instability, after which the model quickly recovers and converges to a lower-loss regime.

C. Practical Recommendations

For practitioners, we offer the following guidance:

- **Balanced requirements**: ResNet50 offers better EER, lower computational cost (25M vs 86M parameters), and faster inference.
- **High-security applications**: Custom ViT enables operation at extreme thresholds where ResNet50 fails.
- **Resource constraints**: All models achieve > 180 FPS, but ResNet50 requires less memory and training time.
- **Never deploy frozen models**: Base ViT demonstrates that pretrained features alone produce a consistently inverted decision function, causing systematic deployment errors if uncorrected.

D. Limitations

Several limitations constrain our conclusions. First, we utilized 22% of CelebA-Spoof due to computational constraints. Second, we did not perform cross-dataset evaluation. Third, moderate performance (EER $\approx$ 44–45%) indicates room for improvement through larger datasets, multi-modal inputs, or more sophisticated architectures.

VI. Conclusion

This work presents a comprehensive evaluation of Vision Transformer architectures for face anti-spoofing. Through differential data augmentation ($8\times$ live, $2\times$ spoof), we address severe class imbalance while preserving attack-relevant characteristics.

Our key findings include: (1) Fine-tuning is essential—Custom ViT achieves 35.5% relative improvement over frozen Base ViT, which performs below random; (2) ResNet50 achieves best EER (44.05%) but limited operational flexibility due to compressed score distributions; (3) Custom ViT provides superior ranking (AUC=0.5665) and broader score distributions enabling flexible threshold selection; (4) All models achieve real-time inference (> 180 FPS).

For practitioners, model selection should be guided by application requirements. ResNet50 offers efficiency and optimal balanced performance. Custom ViT provides flexibility for applications with asymmetric error costs. The differential augmentation strategy offers a simple approach to address class imbalance in anti-spoofing datasets.

Future work should explore hybrid architectures, multi-modal inputs, cross-dataset generalization, and advanced training strategies to improve both absolute performance and robustness.

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