

transformation-based methods adopt the same transformation when crafting adversarial examples, limiting the flexibility of transformation operations. We hypothesize that we should select the optimal transformation dynamically in each iteration to enhance the adversarial transferability.

As shown in Fig. 1, prior input transformation-based methods often revolve around designing fixed augmentation strategies like resizing inputs [57], block masking [10], or mix-up [46]. A more dynamic approach is presented by [63], advocating the precomputation of various sequences of augmentation strategies to apply to each iteration to enhance the attack performance. Complementing this, Wu et al. [53] proposes the use of generative models for image augmentation to boost the adversarial transferability. Some studies go further, combining multiple augmentation strategies to amplify input diversity to improve the performance. For example, Yuan et al. [64] introduces a neural network that generates a prediction of the optimal transformation strategy and applies the strategy to improve performance. A further improvement is hindered by the limited number of transformations.

To fully utilize the limited number of transformations, a natural idea is to use a combination of operations. However, it is not always efficient to combine different transformations together for attack, as reported in [50]. We expect to find an optimal combination of transformations to achieve a trade-off between operation diversity and adversarial transferability. Nonetheless, the enormity of the search space presents a significant challenge, impeding the identification of the most efficacious combination of transformations during an attack for optimal adversarial transferability. To surmount this hurdle, we conceptualize the search process of the optimal combination of transformations as a problem of optimal trajectory search. Each node within this trajectory represents an individual transformation, and each directed edge means a transfer of the optimal transformation from the current step to the next step. To effectively obtain the optimal trajectory in such a large search space, we design a reinforcement learning-based approach, capitalizing on its demonstrated efficacy in navigating expansive search domains.

In this paper, we introduce a novel framework called Learning to Transform (L2T) to improve the adversarial transferability of generated adversarial examples. L2T dynamically learns and applies the optimal input transformation in each iteration. Instead of exhaustively enumerating all possible input transformation methods, we employ a reinforcement learning-based approach to reduce the search space and better utilize the transformations to improve the diversity. In each iteration of the adversarial attack, we sample a subset of transformations and apply them to the adversarial examples. Subsequently, we update the sampling probabilities by conducting gradient ascent to maximize the loss. Our method effectively learns the dynamics of optimal transformations in attacks, leading to a significant enhancement in

adversarial transferability. Additionally, compared to other learn-based adversarial attack methods, our approach is more efficient for adversarial example generation, as it obviates the need for additional training modules.

We summarize our contributions as follows,

- We formulate the problem of optimal transformation in adversarial attacks, which studies finding the optimal combination of transformations to increase the input diversities, thus improving the adversarial transferability.
- We propose Learning to Transform (L2T) that exploits the optimal transformation in each iteration and dynamically adjusts transformations to boost adversarial transferability.
- Extensive experiments on the ImageNet dataset demonstrate that L2T outperforms other baselines. We also validate L2T’s superiority in real-world scenarios, such as Google Vision and GPT-4V.

2. Related Work

2.1. Adversarial Attack

Various adversarial attacks have been proposed, *e.g.*, gradient-based attack [13, 20, 32], transfer-based attack [7, 31, 51, 57], score-based attack [4, 18, 22], decision-based attack [2, 21, 49], generation-based attack [45, 54]. Among these, transfer-based attacks do not require the information of the victim models, making it popular to attack the deep models in the real world and raise more research interests. To improve adversarial transferability, various momentum-based attacks have been proposed, such as MI-FGSM [7], NI-FGSM [26], VMI-FGSM [44], EMI-FGSM [47], *etc.* Several input transformation methods are also proposed, such as DIM [57], TIM [8], SIM [26], Admix [46], SIA [50], STM [11], BSR [43], *etc.*, which augment images used for adversarial perturbation computation to boost transferability. The input transformation-based methods can be integrated into the gradient-based attacks for better performance.

Delving into the input transformation-based methods, most works are limited to designing a fixed transformation to augment the images, which limits the diversity of transformed images and the adversarial transferability. To address this issue, some researchers [53, 63, 64] propose to augment the images with a set of multiple transformations predicted by a pre-trained network. Automatic Model Augmentation (AutoMA) [63] adopts a Proximal Policy Optimization (PPO) algorithm in search of a strong augmentation policy. Adversarial Transformation-enhanced Transfer Attack (ATTA) [53] proposes to employ an adversarial transformation network in modeling the most harmful distortions. Adaptive Image Transformation Learner (AITL) [64] incorporates different image transformations into a unified framework to learn adaptive transformations for each benign sample to boost adversarial transferability. By applying optimal multiple transformations, the adversarial attack per-

formance is largely improved.

2.2. Adversarial Defense

Various defense approaches have been proposed to mitigate the threat of adversarial attacks, such as adversarial training [32, 40, 48], input preprocessing [33, 55], feature denoising [24, 56, 62], certified defense [6, 14, 34], *etc.* Liao et al. [24] train a denoising autoencoder, namely the High-level representation guided denoiser (HGD), to purify the adversarial perturbations. Xie et al. [55] propose to randomly resize the image and add padding to mitigate the adversarial effect, namely the Randomized resizing and padding (R&P). Xu et al. [61] propose the Bit depth reduction (Bit-Red) method, which reduces the number of bits for each pixel to squeeze the perturbation. Liu et al. [29] defend against adversarial attacks by applying a JPEG-based compression method to adversarial images. Cohen *et al.* [6] adopt randomized smoothing (RS) to train a certifiably robust classifier. Naseer et al. [33] propose a Neural Representation Purifier (NRP) to eliminate perturbation.

3. Learning to Transform

3.1. Task definition

The crafting of adversarial examples usually takes an iterative framework to update the adversarial perturbation. Given a benign sample x and the corresponding label y , a transferable attack takes a surrogate classifier f_θ and iteratively updates the adversarial example x^{adv} to maximize the loss of classifying $f_\theta(x^{adv})$ to y . Take I-FGSM [38] as an example. The adversarial example x_t^{adv} at the t -th iteration can be formulated as follows:

$$x_t^{adv} = x_{t-1}^{adv} + \alpha \cdot \text{sign}(\nabla_{x_{t-1}^{adv}} J(f_\theta(x_{t-1}^{adv}, y))), \quad (1)$$

where we denote α as the step size, $J(\cdot, \cdot)$ as the classification loss function. As identified by previous studies, the adversarial example exhibits a characteristic of transferability, where the adversarial examples generated by the surrogate model can fool other neural networks.

Input transformation-based methods are one of the most effective methods to boost adversarial transferability. With these methods, the adversarial samples are firstly transformed by a set of image transformations and then proceeded to gradient calculation. Let φ denote a set of image transformations operation o , where $\varphi = \{o^i | i \in \{1, 2, \dots, k\}\}$. At the t -th iteration, the adversarial example x_t^{adv} is transformed sequentially by o^i as follows,

$$\varphi(x_t^{adv}) = o^k \oplus o^{k-1} \oplus \dots \oplus o^1(x_t^{adv}), \quad (2)$$

where $o^2 \oplus o^1(x)$ denotes the operation $o^2(o^1(x))$, $o^1, o^2 \in \varphi$. We use the gradient of $\varphi(x_t^{adv})$ with respect to the loss function to update the adversarial perturbation as Eq. (1).

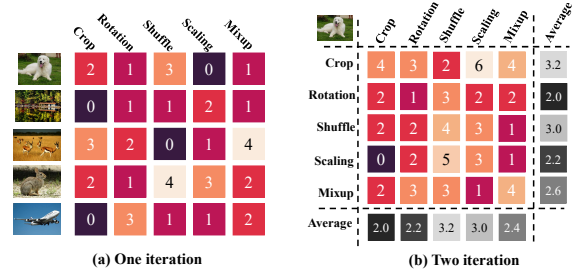


Figure 2. Comparison for different operations in boosting the adversarial transferability. The number in the box denotes the number of fooled models (Maximum: 9). In (a), the horizontal axis denotes different transformation operations and the vertical axis denotes different benign examples. In (b), the vertical axis denotes the transformation used in the first iteration and the horizontal axis denotes the transformation used in the second iteration

There are two categories for selecting the operation set φ in the previous study. One line of research focuses on designing fixed transformation-based methods, which use a pre-defined transformation φ . For example, Admix chooses mixup and scaling for transformation φ . The other line of research proposes the learning-based transformation methods, which usually use a generative model to directly generate the transformed $\varphi(x)$. Compared with the fixed transformation-based methods, learning-based methods enjoy more diversity of transformed images, leading to a better performance in adversarial transferability. In our work, we study the learning-based transformation methods.

3.2. Motivation

Previous research designs lots of transformations to improve the diversity of images, thus guiding the adversarial attacks to focus more on the invariant robust features. However, it does not always work by increasing the number of transformed images for attacks to boost the adversarial transferability. Because some combination of transformations can cause damage to original examples, losing massive amounts of information used for transferable attacks. A natural question occurs to us, *for one image, does there exist the optimal combination of transformations for the best adversarial transferability?*

To answer this question, we start by generating adversarial examples in one iteration. We take an example of crafting adversarial examples using ResNet-18 to attack other 9 models¹. We denote 5 operations for input transformation methods, namely the crop, rotation, shuffle, scaling, and mix-up. We use these operations on five images for attacks and report the number of models fooled. We report the results in Fig. 2. It can be seen that by shuffle, we can achieve the maximum

¹ResNet-101, DenseNet-121, ResNext-50, Inception-v3, Inception-v4, ViT, PiT, Visformer, Swin

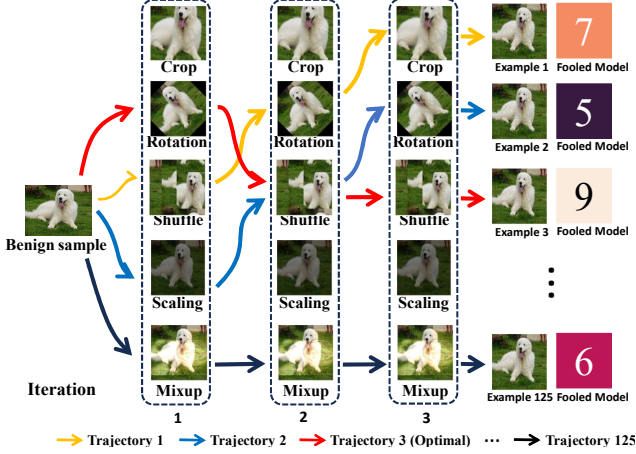


Figure 3. There exists an optimal transformation trajectory for boosting adversarial transferability. However, the search space increases exponentially with iteration number and operation number.

transferable attack success rates on a dog image, indicating the optimal transformations in all possible 5 operations.

We continue our discussion in the two-iteration scenario. Following the same setting in one iteration, we report the number of fooled models. It can be seen that by choosing crop in the first iteration and scaling for the second iteration, which successfully fooled 6 models out of 9. We also notice that shuffle, the optimal transformation in one iteration, can not maintain the optimal performance. The average fooled model for shuffle is less than crop in 0.2.

Following the aforementioned discussion, we move on to generating adversarial examples in 3 iterations, where we only take one operation as the image transformation to attack the image. As exemplified in Fig. 3, there are $5 \times 5 \times 5$ possible trajectories to transform the image for attacks. Among these trajectories, it can achieve the best performance by first shuffling, then rotating, and last shuffling the image. It should be noted it cannot consistently achieve the best performance by increasing the number of transformations for a higher diversity. As shown in Fig. 3, we respectively take the scaling, shuffle, and rotation operations at each iteration in trajectory 2. However, it has the worst attack success rate among the presented results.

Generalizing the previous problem to common cases, we are motivated to identify an optimal transformation trajectory \mathcal{T} , which is defined as the sequence of transformation used in each iteration as $(\varphi_1, \varphi_2, \dots, \varphi_T)$, for the best adversarial transferability. Each element φ_T denotes the transformation used in iteration t . It can be formulated as follows:

$$\mathcal{T}^* = \underset{\mathcal{T}}{\operatorname{argmax}} (\mathbb{E}[\mathcal{L}(f_{\theta}(\mathbf{x}_{\mathcal{T}}^{adv}), y)]), \quad (3)$$

where we denote $\mathbf{x}_{\mathcal{T}}^{adv}$ as the adversarial example generated by the surrogate model under transformation trajectory \mathcal{T} .

However, finding \mathcal{T}^* is hard. First, the search space is large. For example, supposing five candidate transformations, even if we only take one operation in one iteration to transform the image, we will still have an enormous search space for ten iterations that will be 5^{10} . The number of possible transformation trajectories grows exponentially with increasing the number of iterations and candidate transformations. Second, we can not access the black-box model f , making it hard to optimize the Eq. (3) directly. Besides, as identified in the previous work [64], each image has a different optimal transformation to boost the adversarial transferability. There is no optimal transformation trajectory shared for all images.

3.3. Methodology

The problem of Eq. (3) can be transformed into an optimal trajectory search problem, on which reinforcement learning has shown great compatibility. We are inspired to take a reinforcement learning-based approach in solving this optimization problem to enhance adversarial transferability.

Supposing we have M operations $\{o^1, o^2, \dots, o^M\}$ in total, the optimal transformation trajectory \mathcal{T} is a temporal sequence of the combination of different operations. The probability \mathbf{p} contains M possibilities $\{p_{o^1}, p_{o^2}, \dots, p_{o^M}\}$ for each iteration. Each element p_{o^m} denotes the possibility of sampling operation o^m , $m \in \{1, 2, \dots, M\}$. And p_{o^m} follows $\sum_{m=1}^M p_{o^m} = 1$. A transformation φ consists K operations o^k , $k \in \{1, 2, \dots, M\}$. We sampled K operations from \mathbf{p} . We have the possibility of a transformation φ by $P(\varphi) = \prod_{k=1}^K p_{o^k}$.

For each iteration t , we sample a combination of transformation φ_t . Each transformation in φ_t is sampled from candidates depending on \mathbf{p} . To get an optimal trajectory $\mathcal{T} = (\varphi_1, \dots, \varphi_T)$, we need to dynamically optimize the sampling distribution \mathbf{p} in each iteration t . We formulate the problem of searching optima \mathbf{p}^* in each iteration as follows,

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbf{p}^* &= \underset{\mathbf{p}}{\operatorname{argmax}} \mathbb{E}_{\varphi \sim \mathbf{p}} [\mathcal{L}(f_{\theta}(\varphi(\tilde{\mathbf{x}}^{adv})), y)] \\ \text{s.t. } \tilde{\mathbf{x}}^{adv} &= \underset{\mathbf{x}^{adv}}{\operatorname{argmax}} \mathbb{E}_{\varphi \sim \mathbf{p}} [\mathcal{L}(f_{\theta}(\varphi(\mathbf{x}^{adv})), y)], \end{aligned} \quad (4)$$

which is a bi-level optimization. The inner optimization targets to optimize the adversarial example, and the outer optimization tries to find the optimal sampling probability. Following [27], we adopt an one-step optimization strategy to derive the approximated \mathbf{p}^* :

$$\mathbf{p}^* \approx \mathbf{p} + \rho \cdot \mathbf{g}_{\mathbf{p}}, \quad (5)$$

where the ρ is the learning rate and $\mathbf{g}_{\mathbf{p}}$ is the gradient for \mathbf{p} . **Implementation details.** We present the overview of our method in Fig. 4. First, we sample L sequences of transformation $\varphi_l^t, l \in [1, 2, \dots, L]$, depending on the sampling

Algorithm 1 Gradient policy for optimal augmentation search.

Input: Classifier $f(\cdot)$; The benign sample \mathbf{x} with ground-truth label y ; Loss function $\mathcal{L}(\cdot, \cdot)$; candidate operation pool Γ , the number of iterations T , perturbation scale ϵ , policy learning rate ρ , number of operations K , number of transformations L , decay factor μ ;

$\alpha = \epsilon/T$, $\mathbf{g}_0 = 0$, $\mathbf{x}_0^{adv} = \mathbf{x}$, $\mathbf{p} \sim \mathcal{N}(0, 1)$

while $t = 1 \leftarrow T$ **do**

1. Under the distribution \mathbf{p} , sample L transformation φ_t , each consisting of K operations.

2. Transform adversarial examples:

$$\varphi_t^l(\mathbf{x}_t^{adv}) = o^K \oplus o^{K-1} \oplus \dots \oplus o^1(\mathbf{x}_t^{adv}).$$

3. Calculate the average gradient:

$$\bar{\mathbf{g}} = \frac{1}{L} \sum_{l=1}^L \nabla_{\mathbf{x}_{t-1}^{adv}} \mathcal{L}(\varphi_t^l(\mathbf{x}_{t-1}^{adv}), y).$$

4. Update the momentum:

$$\mathbf{g}_t = \mu \mathbf{g}_{t-1} + \frac{\bar{\mathbf{g}}}{\|\bar{\mathbf{g}}\|_1}.$$

5. Update the adversarial example:

$$\mathbf{x}_t^{adv} = \text{clip}(\mathbf{x}_{t-1}^{adv} + \alpha \cdot \text{sign}(\mathbf{g}_t), 0, 1).$$

6. Calculate the probability gradient:

$$\mathbf{g}_p = \frac{\partial \left(\frac{1}{L} \sum_{l=1}^L \mathbf{P}(\varphi_t^l) \mathcal{L}(f_\theta(\varphi_t^l(\mathbf{x}_t^{adv})), y) \right)}{\partial \mathbf{P}(\varphi_t^l)}.$$

7. Update the probability:

$$\mathbf{p} = \mathbf{p} + \rho \cdot \mathbf{g}_p.$$

end while

Output: \mathbf{x}_T^{adv} .

distribution \mathbf{p} . Next, we get the transformed examples denoted as $\varphi_t^l(\mathbf{x}_t^{adv})$. The probability of each sequence φ_t^l is $\mathbf{P}(\varphi_t^l)$. We use φ_t to denote all L transformation, $\varphi_t = \{\varphi_t^1, \varphi_t^2, \dots, \varphi_t^L\}$. Then, we use Eq. (1) to update the adversarial examples for each iteration. The gradient is calculated by loss between L transformed examples and their corresponding labels. Last, after updating the adversarial example, we recompute the approximate \mathbf{p} . Specifically, we compute the gradient g_{o^k} of each sampled operation o^k as:

$$\begin{aligned} g_{o^k} &= \frac{\partial \mathbb{E}_{\varphi_t \sim \mathbf{p}} [\mathcal{L}(f_\theta(\varphi_t(\mathbf{x}_t^{adv})), y)]}{\partial \mathbf{P}(\varphi_t)} \cdot \frac{\partial \mathbf{P}(\varphi_t)}{\partial p_{o^k}} \\ &= \frac{\partial \sum_{l=1}^L \mathbf{P}(\varphi_t^l) \mathcal{L}(f_\theta(\varphi_t^l(\mathbf{x}_t^{adv})), y)}{\partial \mathbf{P}(\varphi_t^l)} \cdot \frac{\partial \mathbf{P}(\varphi_t)}{\partial p_{o^k}} \quad (6) \\ &= \sum_{l=1}^L \mathcal{L}(f_\theta(\varphi_t^l(\mathbf{x}_t^{adv})), y) \cdot \frac{\partial \mathbf{P}(\varphi_t^l)}{\partial p_{o^k}}. \end{aligned}$$

We concat the gradients for each operation as $[g_{o^1}, g_{o^2}, \dots, g_{o^K}]$, which is denoted as \mathbf{g}_p . We use gradient ascent to update \mathbf{p} by \mathbf{g}_p with the learning rate ρ .

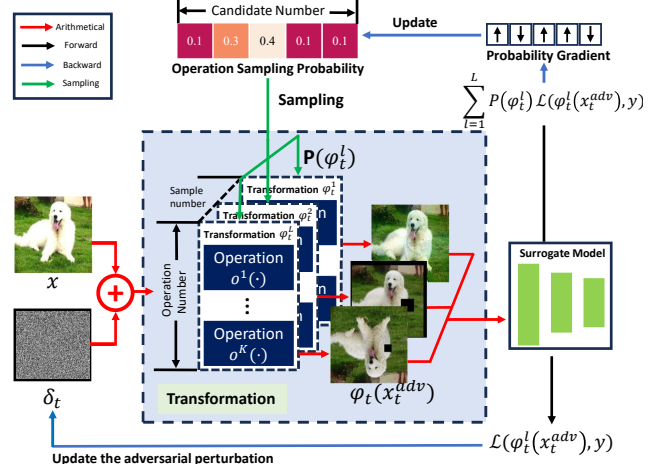


Figure 4. Overview of the pipeline in L2T. We use probability in sampling L transformations and update this probability through gradient ascent.

4. Experiments

4.1. Setup

Models. We evaluate the proposed method in three categories of target models. (1) Normally trained model: We select ten well-known models for experiments. ResNet-18 [15], ResNet-101 [15], ResNext-50 [59], DenseNet-121 [17], Inception-v3 [39], and Inception-v4 [39], ViT-B [9], PiT [16], Visformer [5], and Swin [30]. All of these models are pre-trained on the ImageNet dataset. (2) Adversarial trained models: we select four defense methods in our experiments. They are adversarial training (AT) [40], high-level representation guided denoiser (HGD) [24], neural representation purifier (NRP) [33], and randomized smoothing (RS) [6]. (3) Vision API: to imitate a practical scenario, we compare the attack performance on popular vision API. We chose Google Vision, Azure AI, GPT-4V, and Bard. For categories (2) and (3), we use ensemble-based attack. We choose two CNN-based models, ResNet18 and Inception-v4, and two transformer-based models, Visformer and Swin, to construct the ensemble surrogate model.

Dataset. Following previous works [46, 50, 57], we randomly choose 1,000 images from ILSVRC 2012 validation set [36]. All images are classified correctly by the models.

Baseline. We compare L2T with other input transformation adversarial methods. There are two categories of previous methods. The fixed transformation attack followed a fixed transformation scheme. We select TIM [8], SIM [26], Admix [46], DEM [67], IDE [58], Mask [10], S²IM [31], BSR [42], and SIA [50] for comparison. The learned transformation attack followed a set of transformations predicted by a trained network to generate adversarial examples. We also compare our method with learned transformation at-

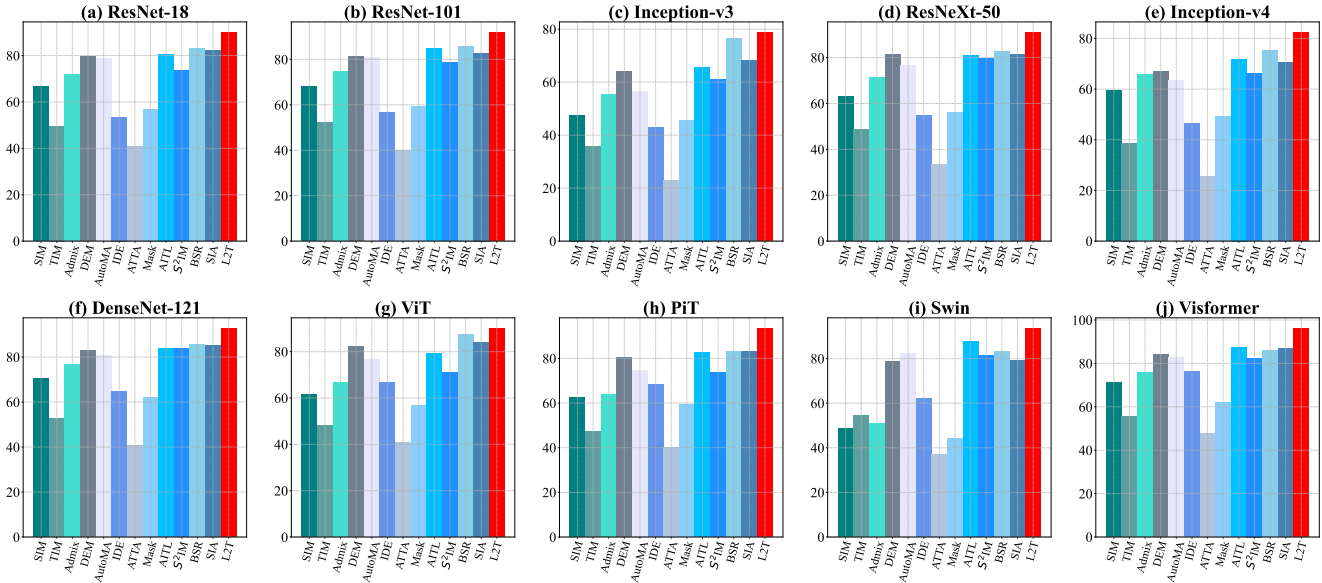


Figure 5. Average attack success rates (%) of ten models on the adversarial examples crafted on each model. The x-axis of each sub-figure denotes different attack methods. We include the detail number in our supplementary material.

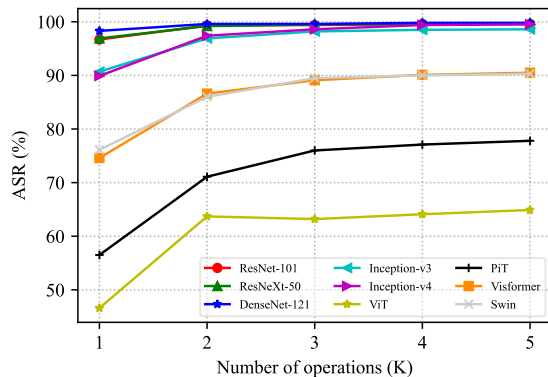


Figure 6. Attack success rates (ASR) (%) of adversarial examples generated by L2T with various number of operations K . We include the detail number in our supplementary material.

tacks, such as AutoMA [63], ATTA [53], and AITL [64]. All these methods are integrated with MI-FGSM [7] to generate adversarial examples.

Evaluation Settings. We follow the hyper-parameter setting of MI-FGSM and set the perturbation budget $\epsilon = 16$, number of iteration $T = 10$, step size $\alpha = \epsilon/T = 1.6$ and decay factor $\mu = 1$. For our method, we adopt the number of operations as 2, the number of samples as 10, and the learning rate ρ as 0.01. For the candidate operation, we chose ten categories of transformations. Each category contains ten specific operations with different parameters. We will discuss the detailed settings of our method and other baselines in the supplementary materials.

4.2. Evaluations on single models

Our proposed L2T exhibits better adversarial transferability to various input transformation based attacks. We take a single model as the surrogate model and evaluate the average attack success rate (ASR), *i.e.*, the average misclassification rates across ten models. We summarized our results in Figure 5. Each subfigure denotes the attacker generates the adversarial examples on the corresponding models and its x-axis denotes the attack algorithm used.

First, we observe that L2T consistently outperforms all other attackers, regardless of the surrogate model. Other baseline methods have various adversarial transferability according to the surrogate models. For example, the BSR performs to be the strongest baseline on ResNet-18. However, the BSR cannot remain efficient when the surrogate model is changed to Swin or PiT. In contrast, our proposed L2T is suitable for all the surrogate models being tested. These results also strengthen our argument that we should dynamically choose the transformation to fit the surrogate models. Specifically, in the worst case (subfig. c), our proposed L2T still outperforms the strongest baseline (S^2IM) by 2.1%. Overall, L2T outperforms the other baseline by 22.9% on average ASR.

4.3. Evaluations on defense methods

L2T is also capable of adversarial robust mechanisms. We test the attack performance of L2T against several defense mechanisms, including AT, HGD, NRP, and RS. We choose the ensemble setting to attack these defense approaches. We use the ensemble of four models, ResNet-18, Inception-v4,

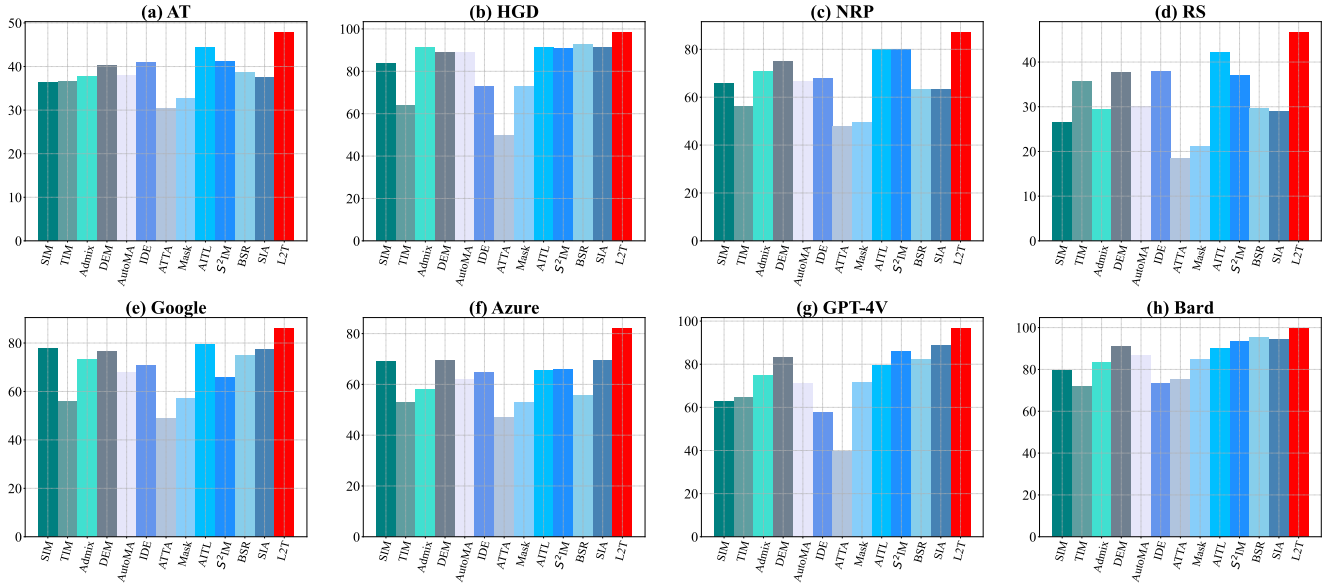


Figure 7. We integrate the ensemble-based attack with input transformation and evaluate the performance on defense methods and popular vision APIs. We include the detail number in our supplementary material.

Visformer, and Swin, as the surrogate model. We summarized our results in Figure 7 (a), (b), (c), and (d). Each subfigure denotes the model to be attacked and its x-axis denotes the attack algorithm used.

From Fig. 7, it is clear that L2T remains efficient. L2T consistently outperforms other methods against various defense methods. Notably, it achieves the attack success rate of 47.9%, 98.5%, 87.2%, and 46.7% on AT, HGD, NRP, and RS, respectively. Even on the certified defense RS, the strongest defense among the four, L2T achieves the attack success rate of 46.7%, which exceeds the best baseline (AITL) by 4.6%. This is also the biggest improvement L2T made compared to other defenses. This indicates that the dynamic of iteration also exists in the adversarial robust mechanism, which can be used to diminish its performance.

4.4. Evaluations on vision API

Our proposed L2T can also perform well in realistic scenarios. To imitate the real-world application, we test the performance of L2T on Vision API. We use the same setting in sec. 4.3 to craft adversarial examples. We choose Google Vision (Figure 7 (e)) and Azure AI (Figure 7 (f)) to evaluate attacks on vision-only API. We also choose ChatGPT-4V (Figure 7 (g)) and Gemini (Figure 7 (h)) to evaluate attacks on the foundation model API.

As shown in Fig. 7, L2T is generally the best attacker to the real-world API. All attacks perform better on foundation model API than vision-only API. For vision-only API, L2T outperforms the strongest baseline by 8.7% and 12.6%, respectively. For foundation model API, L2T achieves nearly

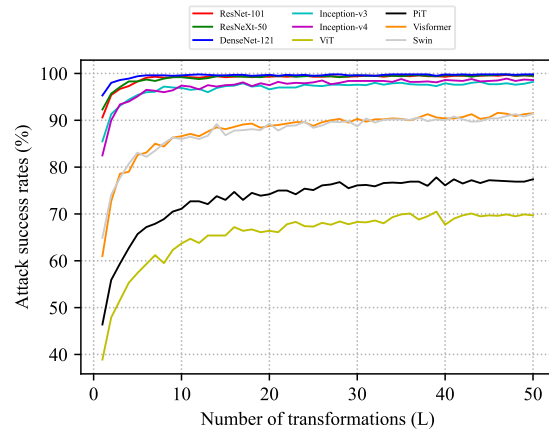


Figure 8. Attack success rates (ASR) (%) of adversarial examples generated by L2T with various number of transformations L . We include the detail number in our supplementary material.

100% attack success rate on both GPT-4V and Gemini.

4.5. Ablation study

On the numbers of operation K . As shown in Fig. 6, we study the impact of K on adversarial transferability. We craft the adversarial example on ResNet-18 and evaluate them on the other nine models. There is a clear difference between one operation and two operations. The average attack success rate increases by 8.09%, from 80.89% to 88.98%. However, when the $K \geq 3$, the improvement becomes marginal. The average attack success rate only

Table 1. Attack success rates (%) of adversarial examples by L2T and Rand (randomly choose transformation in each iteration).

ResNet-18	ResNet-101	ResNeXt-50	DenseNet-121	Inception-v3	Inception-v4	ViT	PiT	Visformer	swin
Rand	52.35	59.06	53.19	56.64	43.01	44.41	58.41	54.48	65.08
L2T (Ours)	90.00	91.90	91.00	92.80	78.80	82.40	90.10	93.50	96.20

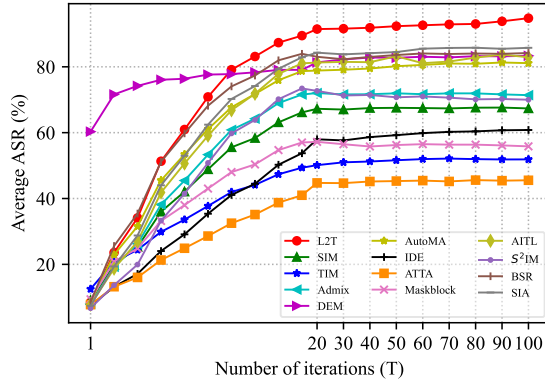


Figure 9. Average attack success rates (ASR) (%) of adversarial examples generated by L2T with various number of steps T . We include the detail number in our supplementary material.

increases by 2.29% when K is increased from 2 to 5. Thus, K should be moderately settled as 2.

On the number of transformations L . We conducted experiments on the number of transformations L . We craft the adversarial example on ResNet-18 and evaluate them on the other nine models. We choose L from 1 to 50. From Fig. 8, we observe that the adversarial transferability improves steadily with the number of transformations. The increase is significant when the number of transformations grows from 1 to 20, which improves from an average attack success rate of 75.7% to an average attack success rate of 91.1%. However, transferability does not increase significantly after the number exceeds 20, where the average attack success rate only increases 1.5%. To keep the balance between computation efficiency and adversarial transferability, we suggest the number of samples set to 20.

On the number of iterations T . We discuss the number of iterations among different attack approaches. We craft the adversarial example on ResNet-18 and compare the average attack success rate of 10 models. As shown in Fig. 9, for all the attack methods, the attack success rate increased steadily for the first 10 iterations. L2T achieves the fastest speed of increase, which reaches 89.47% at iteration 10. After 10 iterations, most of the methods struggled to make improvements. For example, the Admix goes around 71%. The performance of S²IM even decreases from 73% to 70%. Meanwhile, L2T still maintains a stable increase, from 89.47% to 94.77%.

Comparison with random sampling. We compare the learnable strategy with random sampling. As shown in

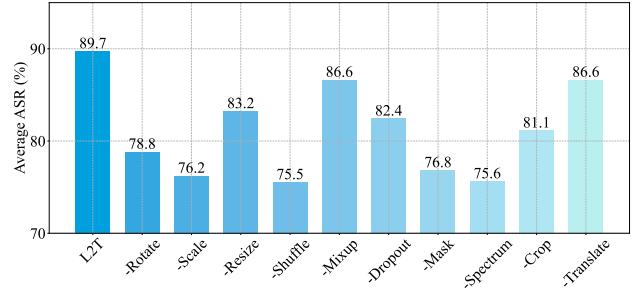


Figure 10. The average attack success rates (%) of adversarial examples crafted by L2T and L2T without a single transformation. – indicates removing such transformation.

Tab. 1, there is a clear gap of the attack success rate between random sampling and gradient-guided sampling. The minimum difference is 31.12% with setting Visformer as the surrogate model. For other surrogate models, the gap is even larger. This experiment indicates random sampling cannot effectively sample the best transformation trajectory, and the transformation in each iteration needs to be chosen carefully. **Operation candidates analysis.** We conducted an ablation study for the operation candidates. We subtract each operation in the candidates and conduct L2T on the updated operation candidates. From Fig. 10, we observe that subtracting any operations will lead to a performance decrease. For example, by subtracting the scale operation, the performance decreases for 23.5%. Meanwhile, subtracting mixup and translation only results in a 3.1% decrease.

5. Conclusion

In this paper, we study the dynamic property for input transformation. Utilizing this property, we propose L2T to optimize the input transformation in each iteration. By updating a sampling probability, our method provides an approximate solution to input transformation optimization. Our experiments further study the effectiveness of our methods. Our method performs consistently well among different targeted models. This paper provides a new perspective to understand the transferability of adversarial examples.

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