

# PC-GZSL: Prior Correction for Generalized Zero Shot Learning

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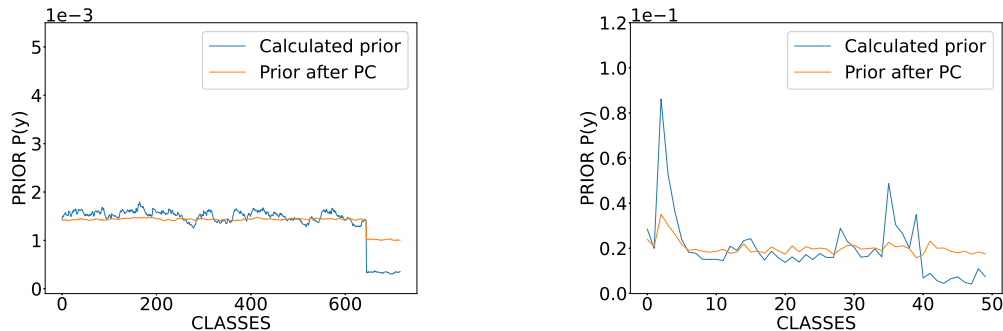


Figure 1. The bias in the trained model [33] for seen and unseen classes is calculated using proposed approach for SUN [39] and AWA2 [51] datasets. We can notice higher average probability score for seen classes. The proposed approach, Prior Correction, not only removes the model bias for seen classes, it does so between individual seen classes and unseen classes as well, evident by the smoothness of the curve.

## Abstract

*Generalized Zero Shot Learning (GZSL) aims at achieving a good accuracy on both seen and unseen classes by relying on the information acquired from auxiliary attributes. Existing approaches have devised many frameworks to make this knowledge transfer more efficient and informative. Despite their effectiveness on boosting the overall performance, there has always been a strong bias in the model towards the seen classes which makes GZSL problem more challenging. The effect of this bias on the model performance has never been properly explored. We observe that GZSL algorithms in literature have an evident bias towards the seen classes. Further we also show that techniques like calibrated stacking [7] fall short of resolving this conflict between the seen and unseen classes effectively. In this work we analyze and develop a logit-adjustment approach in GZSL setting and propose a simple, yet effective method to remove the bias from trained models in a post-hoc manner. Moreover, as a consequence of the post-hoc nature of the proposed approach, there is no additional training cost. We exhaustively compare the proposed method on both embedding-based and generative-based GZSL frameworks surpassing the SOTA results by 3.1%, 4.6% and 3.1% on CUB, SUN and Awa2 datasets. We also present theoretical*

*analysis showing effectiveness of proposed approach.*

## 1. Introduction

In real world datasets, some classes maybe very rare to encounter and some other categories may just emerge in everyday life with no labelled samples available. Developing DNN models which can extend the knowledge gained during training to a completely novel set of classes while testing has been one of the most challenging direction of research. Zero-shot learning, as it has come to be known in recent years, primarily aims to perform well on a test set which exclusively consists of novel unseen classes. Whereas in Generalized Zero Shot Learning (GZSL) [38] performance on both seen and unseen classes are evaluated.

GZSL primarily have two broad approaches, first is the embedding-based method [1, 2, 50, 57] which rely on the semantic attributes and image data to learn a global alignment between the visual representation and the corresponding semantic embedding. Second is the generative approach [43, 52] where the insufficiency in the feature expression of unseen classes is compensated via a two stage approach consisting of the generator learning and classifier learning. For any GZSL framework, the training data consist only of seen classes while the test data is made up of both seen and unseen classes. Auxiliary attributes are used

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Data	AWA2				CUB			
Method	$\mathcal{A}_{U \rightarrow U}$	$\mathcal{A}_{S \rightarrow S}$	$\mathcal{A}_{U \rightarrow T}$	$\mathcal{A}_{S \rightarrow T}$	$\mathcal{A}_{U \rightarrow U}$	$\mathcal{A}_{S \rightarrow S}$	$\mathcal{A}_{U \rightarrow T}$	$\mathcal{A}_{S \rightarrow T}$
PSVMA [33]	77.57	95.55	34.90 (-42.8)	95.28 (-0.3)	77.65	88.60	36.05 (-41.6)	87.46 (-1.1)
f-CLSWGAN [52]	68.20	78.63	52.78 (-15.4)	68.98 (-9.7)	75.72	68.36	61.09 (-14.6)	59.3 (-9.1)

Table 1. Accuracy in % when the seen and unseen prior is relaxed during evaluation.  $\mathcal{A}_{U \rightarrow U}$  is the unseen to unseen (ZSL) evaluation and  $\mathcal{A}_{S \rightarrow S}$  indicates seen to seen evaluation.  $\mathcal{A}_{U \rightarrow T}$  and  $\mathcal{A}_{S \rightarrow T}$  denotes the unseen and seen class accuracy in the GZSL setting.  $T$  denotes  $\{U \cup S\}$ . One may notice a drop in accuracy, especially for unseen classes, indicating a bias toward the seen classes.

during training along with the seen class data to help reduce the information gap between the seen classes and the novel unseen classes encountered at testing. Although the attributes serve as a good means for knowledge transfer between the seen and unseen classes, they cannot compensate for the skewed model prior, a result of over representation of seen classes.

The poor accuracy on the unseen classes in any GZSL framework can be attributed to the inherent imbalance in the distribution of training data where only seen class samples are available for training. Further, the over-fitting nature of DNNs also has a strong influence in creating the bias towards the seen classes where the classifier tends to classify unseen classes into seen categories. To mitigate the effect of this bias on model performance, the generative methods use a large sample size while sampling from the generated unseen distribution to enhance the influence of synthetic unseen samples on the trained model. However, these synthetic samples have been found to have significant deviation from the distribution of the real unseen samples [8]. Even though many of these methods have contributed significantly in improving the performance of GZSL algorithms, some residual bias still remains. In the present work we focus on addressing this issue and propose to remove the seen-unseen class bias from a trained model.

One of the early works which explored the seen-unseen class bias in GZSL proposed a very simple method called calibrated stacking [7]. It is a heuristic approach which suppresses the scores of all the seen classes in comparison to the unseen classes. However, it completely ignores the varying degree of biases within the individual seen classes while making this correction. Further [8] proposed a logit adjustment based approach for generative GZSL frameworks. Inspired from the logit-adjustment approaches [32, 35] in long tailed learning, they modify their loss function by using a prior computed from class frequencies. Prior computation using class frequencies inherently comes with a strong assumption that the model accurately learns the posterior distribution. However, this depends on a lot of factors like network complexity, amount of training data, etc [28, 42].

In this work we make two observations. First, the learned prior (also referred to as bias) on class labels would differ

significantly from a fixed priors used in literature such as calibrated stacking [7] or sample frequencies for different classes [8] and hence creates a strong bias toward the seen classes. Second, the DNN algorithms implicitly assume that the test set and train set have similar distributions for class labels. Outside this assumption, performance of DNN models starts to deteriorate, long tailed learning [18, 21, 26] is a good example for this phenomenon. The GZSL problem can be viewed as an extreme case of class imbalance with zero samples from test classes. And thus the generalized zero-shot learning scenario also suffers from the issue of distribution mismatch.

In Figure 1 we show the effective prior of a trained model, computed as an average model response over test dataset. The figure evidently implies a strong bias towards the seen classes. We also show the corrected prior using our prior correction (PC) method clearly indicating the reduction in this bias between the seen and unseen classes. Note that the corrected prior is smoother in nature indicating a reduced inter class bias. Further, in Table 1 we report the results on embedding based and generative GZSL framework by restricting the target class set. We can clearly observe that for the unseen classes the performance of ZSL ( $\mathcal{A}_{U \rightarrow U}$ ) task degrades significantly in GZSL ( $\mathcal{A}_{U \rightarrow T}$ ) setting, while the degradation for seen classes is relatively lower. This dip in the performance on unseen classes is due to the bias towards the seen classes where unseen class samples are incorrectly classified into seen class categories.

These observations demands the need of a more statistically grounded non-heuristic mechanism for bias removal. We propose a simple but effective prior correction method to remove the bias in GZSL algorithms. First, we present an approach to calculate the bias, effective prior, of a trained model from the data. We then show how to adjust the predictions by the model to remove bias and show theoretical optimality of proposed approach. We also present analysis from the perspective of improving the harmonic mean between seen and unseen class accuracies and provide further modifications to model predictions leading to improved performance. A summary of our contributions is as follows:

- We show that existing GZSL approaches have strong bias for seen classes and present an approach to capture

this bias in the trained model.

- We present theoretically motivated method for adjusting model predictions to remove the model bias for seen classes.
- Proposed approach is exhaustively validated on three benchmark datasets and outperforms the SOTA for both embedding and generative based approaches.
- We show that proposed method can be used as a plugin approach with existing frameworks and can improve the performance further without any training.

## 2. Related Work

### 2.1. Generalized Zero Shot Learning

Existing algorithms in the literature can be broadly classified into embedding-based and generation-based methods. Embedding based methods [1,2,50,57] is a family of GZSL methods which focus on projecting the semantic and visual domain features into a common space and align the information. These early works faced difficulties in capturing a sufficiently discriminative global visual information. More recent methods started to employ part based learning strategies to leverage the distinct information from the local visual regions. [31,62] obtain coordinate positions using attention mechanisms to zoom-in and crop on distinctive local regions. Graph networks [24,55] or attention guidance [34,36,54] are also employed for highlighting the significant visual features. Semantic guided methods [10,11,23,25,47] introduced the sharing attribute prototypes for localizing the attribute-related regions.

Generative methods rely on the synthesis of unseen samples using either generative adversarial networks [19,20,29,52] or variational auto-encoders [27,53]. Therefore the quality of visual semantic alignment of the synthesized unseen domain features play a crucial role in determining the model performance. [37] designed a recurrent structure and enforced semantic alignment in every stage while [12] relied on fine-tuning the visual features. Further [20] proposed to classify using projected visual features in the latent space. Although generative methods handled data imbalance using synthetic samples and showed improved performance, some residual bias still remains.

In [8] authors presented logit-adjustment approach for GZSL problem similar to us. They derived a lower bound on the harmonic mean and proposed a class frequency based logit-adjustment loss and showed improvements. Different from [8] our framework is motivated from a probabilistic perspective where we adjust the logits in a post-hoc manner using learned bias of the model. Further we also use the harmonic mean bound and propose additional correction factor. Our approach is orthogonal to [8] and many other methods

in the literature in a sense that due to its post-hoc nature, it can be combined with other methods as a plug in, and further improve the overall performance.

### 2.2. Data-Imbalanced Learning

As GZSL is a special case of a data imbalanced learning, we review the relevant literature here. Supervised contrastive learning has been proposed to tackle class imbalance [17,30,61] where data scarcity is mitigated by data augmentation where additional contrastive loss is applied on augmented samples. Other frameworks, such as ensemble of multiple experts and gradient manipulation [3,44,48], have been shown to be effective to improve model performance.

Related to our work, logit-adjustment is a popular technique used for mitigating effects of data imbalance. In [4] authors posed the class-imbalance problem as a distribution misalignment problem and proposed to adjust the decision boundaries using class dependent margin by logit-adjustment. Further work in bridging the gap between the learned posterior and the target distribution was carried out by [22,35,41] where data imbalance is modelled using class frequencies and the bias is corrected during training or post training. [49,58] proposed to learn a logit calibration layer to reduce the effect of bias by rescaling the output logits.

In principle, the logit-adjustment framework can be combined with generative approach for solving GZSL problem as already shown in [8], however their extension to embedding based approaches is non-trivial. In contrast, present approach is flexible and can be combined with both embedding based and generative methods as we have shown.

### 2.3. Vision Language Models

Recently multi-modal vision-language models (VLM) trained with internet scale data, such as CLIP [40], have shown impressive performance on many datasets in zero-shot setting. Prompt learning has been proposed to improve few-shot accuracies of such VLMs in [59,60] however it has resulted in decrease in zero-shot performance of the model. In [45,45] authors proposed to augment class descriptor prompts with visual descriptors using Large Language Models showing improved zero-shot performance.

## 3. Problem Formulation

Consider a classification problem where data samples are taken from distribution  $P(x)$  and belong to different unique classes from distribution  $P(y)$ , where  $x$  and  $y$  represent the input data and ground truth class, respectively. Let  $P_s(y)$  represent the distribution over a set  $\mathcal{Y}_s$  of seen classes whose samples are available during training. Further, let  $P_u(y)$  represent the distribution over the set of unseen classes  $\mathcal{Y}_u$ . In general, input data  $x$  is represented by features of a trained DNN model and the goal is to train

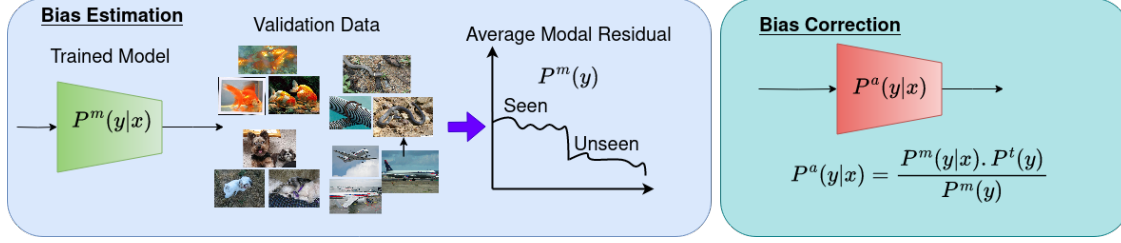


Figure 2. We summarize proposed approach in the figure. Effective prior, model bias, of a trained model is computed first using validation data. The adjusted, debiased, model is then estimated as shown.

a classification model to map these samples to the target classes. In GZSL problem, samples from  $\mathcal{Y}_s$  are available during training and the goal is to model *a posteriori* distribution  $P(y|x)$  using available trained data in such a way that it can be extended to the unseen classes  $\mathcal{Y}_u$  as well.

Let us denote the posterior distribution on the test data by  $P^t(y|x)$ . It is evident that the trained model can only approximate the target test distribution as no samples from the unseen classes are available during training. If we denote the distribution over samples from the test set classes  $\mathcal{Y}_t = \{\mathcal{Y}_s \cup \mathcal{Y}_u\}$  as  $P^t(y)$  then we have  $P^t(y) \neq P(y)$ . In particular, these distributions differ for both seen and unseen class. For seen classes, the distribution  $P_s(y)$  is only approximated by given models such as DNN [42]. For the unseen classes, the distribution  $P_u(y)$  is not available during training and it is learned by using auxiliary information and hence may deviate from the actual distribution.

### 3.1. Logit Adjustment for bias removal

Using Baye's theorem we can write the relation between different distributions for test dataset as below,

$$P^t(y|x) = \frac{P^t(x|y)P^t(y)}{P^t(x)} \quad (1)$$

If we denote by  $P^m(y|x)$  the posterior distribution of a trained model, then we can write,

$$P^m(y|x)P^t(x) = P^m(x|y)P^m(y) \quad (2)$$

We note that,  $P^t(x)$  is the target test distribution on both seen and unseen classes. The right hand side of the equation shows the class priors  $P^m(y)$  and the class conditional data distribution  $P^m(x|y)$  of a learned model on the test dataset. Thus we may write,

$$P^m(y|x) = \frac{P^m(x|y)P^m(y)}{P^t(x)} \quad (3)$$

We assume that the class conditional data distributions  $P^t(x|y)$  and  $P^m(x|y)$  are the same. Thus taking the ratio of above equations we have

$$P^t(y|x) = P^m(y|x) \frac{P^t(y)}{P^m(y)} \quad (4)$$

The above equation defines the relationship between posterior distributions  $P^t(y|x)$  and  $P^m(y|x)$  over the test set  $\mathcal{Y}_t$ . The Eq. 4 represents classical logit-adjustment framework popular in long-tailed literature where model output is adjusted by the ratios of class priors for train and test datasets. In case of GZSL problem, modelling  $P^m(y)$  by training data distribution  $P(y)$  is challenging as no samples from  $\mathcal{Y}_u$  are available. Thus we propose to estimate it from the validation samples assuming validation data and test data both follow the same distribution.

In general, the ideal posterior distribution and the prior on the test data satisfy following property,

$$\int P^t(y|x)P^t(x)dx = P^t(y) \quad (5)$$

Thus we propose to estimate the prior  $P^m(y)$  such that the adjusted distribution satisfies Eq. 5.

#### Theorem 1.

Let  $P^a(y|x)$  represent the adjusted probabilities  $P^m(y|x)$  of the trained model as below

$$P^a(y|x) = P^m(y|x) \frac{P^t(y)}{P^m(y)} \quad (6)$$

then the marginal distribution  $P^a(y)$  will satisfy Eq. 5 if

$$P^m(y) = \int P^m(y|x)P^t(x)dx \quad (7)$$

**Proof.** It is easy to see that,

$$P^a(y) = \int P^a(y|x)P^t(x)dx \quad (8)$$

$$= \int P^m(y|x) \frac{P^t(y)}{P^m(y)} P^t(x)dx \quad (9)$$

$$= \frac{P^t(y)}{P^m(y)} \int P^m(y|x)P^t(x)dx \quad (10)$$

$$= \frac{P^t(y)}{P^m(y)} P^m(y) \quad (11)$$

$$= P^t(y) \quad (12)$$

The above theorem show that the prior of a trained model can be estimated using test data as shown in Eq. 7. The resultant adjusted model has the same prior as the test dataset and removes the bias between seen and unseen classes.

### 3.2. Optimizing harmonic mean

The GZSL problem is focused on improving accuracy on novel unseen classes while maintaining a good accuracy on the seen classes. The harmonic mean between seen and unseen class accuracies represents such a criteria. It is maximum only when both seen and unseen class accuracies are high and well balanced. However, typical training framework focuses on improving the arithmetic mean of the accuracy over training samples. This does not necessarily result in optimal performance in terms of harmonic mean accuracy. In this section we analyse the relation between model performance and the harmonic mean. We use the lower bound on harmonic mean shown in [8] and derive additional posterior adjustment required. Following [8, 16] the model accuracy for class  $y$  can be written in terms of posterior probabilities as

$$A(y) = E_x [P^t(y|x)P^m(y|x)] \quad (13)$$

where,  $E_x[\cdot]$  represents the expectation over  $P^t(x)$ . Typically, individual classes may have different number of samples, thus class balanced accuracy is used to avoid most frequent classes from dominating the evaluation metric. Thus class balanced accuracies are used as shown below

$$A(y) = E_x \left[ \frac{P^t(y|x)P^m(y|x)}{P^t(y)} \right] \quad (14)$$

The average accuracy on seen classes is then given by,

$$A_s = \frac{1}{|\mathcal{Y}_s|} \sum_{y \in \mathcal{Y}_s} E_x \left[ \frac{P^t(y|x)P^m(y|x)}{P^t(y)} \right] \quad (15)$$

Using Jensen-Shannon inequality we have,

$$\frac{1}{A_s} \leq \frac{1}{|\mathcal{Y}_s|} \sum_{y \in \mathcal{Y}_s} E_x \left[ \frac{P^t(y)}{P^t(y|x)P^m(y|x)} \right] \quad (16)$$

The accuracy  $A_u$  on the unseen classes can also be written in a similar way. The harmonic mean is defined as

$$\frac{2}{A_h} = \frac{1}{A_s} + \frac{1}{A_u} \quad (17)$$

Thus we can define an upper bound on the harmonic mean using the bounds on seen and unseen class accuracies.

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{2}{A_h} &\leq \frac{1}{|\mathcal{Y}_s|} \sum_{y \in \mathcal{Y}_s} E_x \left[ \frac{P^t(y)}{P^t(y|x)P^m(y|x)} \right] \\ &+ \frac{1}{|\mathcal{Y}_u|} \sum_{y \in \mathcal{Y}_u} E_x \left[ \frac{P^t(y)}{P^t(y|x)P^m(y|x)} \right] \end{aligned} \quad (18)$$

$$\begin{aligned} &= \frac{1}{|\mathcal{Y}_t|} \sum_{y \in \mathcal{Y}_t} \frac{|\mathcal{Y}_t|}{\mathbb{1}_{\mathcal{Y}_s}(y)|\mathcal{Y}_s| + \mathbb{1}_{\mathcal{Y}_u}(y)|\mathcal{Y}_u|} \\ &E_x \left[ \frac{P^t(y)}{P^t(y|x)P^m(y|x)} \right] \end{aligned} \quad (19)$$

where  $\mathcal{Y}_t = \mathcal{Y}_s \cup \mathcal{Y}_u$  as defined before and we have,

$$\mathbb{1}_{\mathcal{Y}_s}(y) = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } y \in \mathcal{Y}_s \\ 0 & \text{otherwise} \end{cases} \quad (20)$$

and  $\mathbb{1}_{\mathcal{Y}_u}(y)$  is defined accordingly. Thus we may write,

$$\frac{2}{A_h} \leq \frac{1}{|\mathcal{Y}_t|} \sum_{y \in \mathcal{Y}_t} E_x \left[ \frac{P^t(y)}{P(\mathcal{Y})P^t(y|x)P^m(y|x)} \right] \quad (21)$$

where,  $P(\mathcal{Y})$  is defined as  $\frac{|\mathcal{Y}_s|}{|\mathcal{Y}_t|}$  for seen classes and  $\frac{|\mathcal{Y}_u|}{|\mathcal{Y}_t|}$  for unseen classes representing the empirical seen and unseen class probabilities,  $P_s(y)$  and  $P_u(y)$ , when  $y$  is a member of the respective set. Thus harmonic mean can be optimized by maximizing the product  $P(\mathcal{Y})P^t(y|x)P^m(y|x)$  in Eq. 21. One may note that the term  $P(\mathcal{Y})P^t(y|x)$  in the denominator represents the adjusted ground truth required to maximize the harmonic mean. Thus the optimal adjustment to the predicted probabilities to maximize the denominator term and hence maximize the harmonic mean, can be given by the adjusted model posterior as  $P(\mathcal{Y})P^m(y|x)$ .

One may interpret these findings in terms of cost-sensitive learning where seen vs unseen class prior is taken into account during evaluation. Nonetheless, we validate our findings with extensive experiments and show that post-hoc adjustment using empirical seen vs unseen class priors indeed boosts model performance.

It should be noted here that our interpretation of the bound on the harmonic mean in Eq. 21 is different from [8]. We only consider  $P(\mathcal{Y})$  for the adjustment as it is enough to lower the bound. However, in [8] authors use the term  $P(\mathcal{Y})/P^t(y)$  using class frequencies along with other hyper-parameters for the adjustment. Nonetheless, our experiments show that our formulation is effective and leads to better results.

### 3.3. Overall Prior Correction (PC) Adjustment

In this section we combine both proposed logit-adjustments, one for bias removal and other for improv-



Method	Arch.	CUB			SUN			AwA2		
		$\mathcal{U}$	$\mathcal{S}$	$\mathcal{H}$	$\mathcal{U}$	$\mathcal{S}$	$\mathcal{H}$	$\mathcal{U}$	$\mathcal{S}$	$\mathcal{H}$
TF-VAEGAN* [37] ECCV'20	R101	54.75	62.68	58.45	39.72	35.70	37.60	58.97	74.73	65.92
GCM-CF [56] CVPR'21	R101	61.00	59.70	60.30	47.90	37.80	42.20	60.40	75.10	67.00
HSVA [13] NeurIPS'21	R101	52.70	58.30	55.30	48.60	<u>39.00</u>	<u>43.30</u>	56.70	<b>79.80</b>	66.30
SDGZSL [15] ICCV'21	R101	59.90	66.40	63.00	-	-	-	<u>64.60</u>	73.60	68.80
FREE+ESZSL [6] ICLR22	R101	51.60	60.40	55.70	48.20	36.50	41.50	51.30	<u>78.00</u>	61.80
CDL+OSCO [5] TPAMI23	R101	29.00	<b>69.00</b>	40.60	32.00	<b>65.00</b>	42.90	48.00	71.00	57.10
CE-GZSL* [20] CVPR'21	R101	<u>67.36</u>	67.51	<u>67.43</u>	<b>51.53</b>	35.04	41.71	63.99	75.11	<u>69.11</u>
<b>CE-GZSL + PC (Our)</b>	R101	<b><u>67.73</u></b>	<u>67.91</u>	<b><u>67.82</u></b>	<u>50.14</u>	38.14	<b>43.32</b>	<b><u>67.32</u></b>	72.53	<b>69.83</b>
Transzero* [9] AAAI'22	R101	69.18	68.31	68.74	52.29	33.35	40.66	61.13	82.23	70.13
MSDN* [10] CVPR'22	R101	68.58	67.34	67.95	51.87	33.95	41.04	61.94	74.37	67.59
DUET [14] AAAI'23	ViT-Base	62.9	72.8	67.5	45.7	45.8	45.8	63.7	84.7	72.7
VADS [23] CVPR'24	ViT-Base	<u>74.1</u>	74.6	<u>74.3</u>	64.6	49.0	<u>55.7</u>	<b>75.4</b>	83.6	<u>79.3</u>
ZSLViT [11] CVPR'24	ViT-Base	69.4	<u>78.2</u>	73.6	45.9	48.4	47.3	66.1	84.6	74.2
PSVMA [33] CVPR'23	ViT-Base	70.1	77.8	73.8	61.7	45.3	52.3	<u>73.6</u>	77.3	75.4
PSVMA*	ViT-Base	73.1	74.9	74.0	<u>62.4</u>	44.9	52.2	69.9	84.3	76.4
<b>PSVMA + PC (Our)</b>	ViT-Base	<b>75.68</b>	<b>78.63</b>	<b>77.13</b>	<b>65.9</b>	49.96	<b>56.83</b>	72.69	87.61	<b>79.46</b>

Table 2. Evaluation on other GZSL frameworks. We highlight the **best results** in bolt and underline the second best results. One may note that proposed logit-adjustment achieves best harmonic mean accuracy amongst all methods for both generative and embedding based methods. (\* indicates reproduced results)

ZSLA	PC	AwA2			CUB		
		$\mathcal{U}$	$\mathcal{S}$	$\mathcal{H}$	$\mathcal{U}$	$\mathcal{S}$	$\mathcal{H}$
X	X	57.3	71.9	63.8	63.1	60.9	62.0
X	✓	60.4	70.3	65.0	64.7	60.4	<u>62.5</u>
✓	X	59.9	73.1	<u>65.8</u>	64.6	60.4	62.4
✓	✓	60.1	74.3	<b>66.5</b>	66.3	59.7	<b>62.9</b>

Table 3. We compare proposed approach with ZSLA [8]. The table show our reproduced results using vanilla softmax classifier with ZSLA framework. Baseline results are obtained by removing logit adjustment during training from ZSLA framework.

ing the harmonic mean. If we represent with  $Z_y$  the unnormalized probability scores for class  $y$ , then the overall adjustment is written as

$$Z_y^a = Z_y + \alpha \log \frac{P^t(y)}{P^m(y)} + \beta \log P(\mathcal{Y}) \quad (22)$$

where, we have included hyper-parameters  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  to control the amount of adjustment. We compute the model bias  $P^m(y)$  by empirical estimate of the Eq. 7 as

$$P^m(y) = \frac{1}{N} \sum_{\forall x} P^m(y|x) \quad (23)$$

*i.e.* the bias is computed by averaging the model response over validation dataset with  $N$  samples. The term  $P^t(y)$

represents the average number of samples for individual classes and  $P(\mathcal{Y})$  represents seen and unseen class probabilities estimated using sample numbers.

We note here that, proposed approach does not involve any model training and uses a trained model and validation data to estimate and tune the adjustment terms. We only tune two scalar hyper-parameters,  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$ . We summarize the overall approach in Figure. 2 and give algorithmic flow in Supplementary Material.

## 4. Experiments

### 4.1. Experimental setup

We use three benchmark datasets to evaluate the proposed method, Caltech-UCSD Birds-200-2011 (CUB) [46], SUN Attribute [39] and Animals with Attributes2 (AwA2) [51]. We follow the standard split proposed in [51]. We denote the average of per class top-1 accuracy of the seen and unseen splits as  $\mathcal{S}$  and  $\mathcal{U}$  respectively. Further following [51], harmonic mean denoted using  $\mathcal{H}$  and arithmetic mean  $A$ , is used to evaluate the overall performance. There have been many approaches from both the generative and embedding based GZSL in literature used to improve the performance of GZSL task. We have compared the proposed method with many recent methods from both these families. Embedding based approaches are represented by many strong baselines with high performance such as VADS [23], ZSLViT [11], PSVMA [33],

Method	CUB			SUN			AwA2		
	$\mathcal{U}$	$\mathcal{S}$	$\mathcal{H}$	$\mathcal{U}$	$\mathcal{S}$	$\mathcal{H}$	$\mathcal{U}$	$\mathcal{S}$	$\mathcal{H}$
TF-VAEGAN + CS	54.68	63.00	58.55(+0.10)	39.72	35.78	37.65(+0.05)	63.18	71.36	67.02(+1.10)
TF-VAEGAN + PC	58.30	64.30	<b>61.15(+2.70)</b>	41.74	36.74	<b>39.08(+1.48)</b>	64.03	71.34	<b>67.49(+1.57)</b>
CE-GZSL + CS	67.61	67.22	67.41(-0.02)	51.60	34.92	41.65(-0.06)	65.03	74.14	69.29(+0.18)
CE-GZSL + PC	67.73	67.91	<b>67.82(+0.39)</b>	50.14	38.14	<b>43.32(+1.61)</b>	67.32	72.53	<b>69.83(+0.72)</b>
TransZero + CS	69.51	68.03	68.77(+0.03)	52.71	33.18	40.72(+0.06)	61.30	81.96	70.14(+0.01)
TransZero + PC	70.06	71.90	<b>70.97(+2.23)</b>	52.29	35.35	<b>42.18(+1.52)</b>	63.14	81.93	<b>71.32(+1.19)</b>
PSVMA + CS	73.10	74.90	74.00(+22.94)	62.40	44.90	52.20(+16.45)	69.90	84.30	76.40(+25.31)
PSVMA + PC	75.68	78.63	<b>77.13(+26.07)</b>	65.9	49.96	<b>56.83(+21.08)</b>	72.69	87.61	<b>79.46(+28.37)</b>

Table 4. Results of our method compared with Calibrated stacking (CS) [7] approach. CS and PC indicate results obtained when using calibrated stacking and proposed prior correction. We highlight the improvement over baseline in red.

DUET [14], MSDN [10], TransZero [9], etc some of which are ViT based methods. Further, we also compare with some of the prominent generative methods like CE-GZSL [20], FREE [12] and HSVa [13]. We exclude large-scale models such as CLIP [40] and its extensions from the comparative analysis.

For both embedding-based and generation-based frameworks we employ our approach as a simple plugin method during testing. Note that given the post-hoc nature of the proposed approach, there is no additional training required. Although a simple hyper-parameter tuning of  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  is needed to obtain the best performance.

## 5. Results

### 5.1. Comparison with SOTA

We show our results on embedding-based and generation-based methods in Table 2. For embedding-based methods we apply our post-hoc prior correction on the PSVMA [33] method. We reproduce the results of the original paper, and use the improved result as the baseline. Further our method is applied on PSVMA by removing any existing calibrated stacking technique employed in the framework. As this further deteriorates the baseline, thus demanding a higher margin of improvement to surpass the state-of-the-art results. Despite this our method is able to surpass the results of all other existing works as shown in the table. Further we also employ our method over the generation-based methods taking the already strong CE-GZSL [20] as the baseline. Note that our approach boosts the accuracy of the CE-GZSL framework despite the generative methods already trying to minimize the imbalance by oversampling the synthetic unseen class samples. It improves the performance of [20] to a harmonic mean of 67.82%, 43.32% and 69.83% on CUB, SUN and AwA2 datasets respectively. Further our method becomes the new SOTA by boosting [33] to achieve a harmonic

mean of 77.13% on the CUB, 56.83% on SUN and 79.46% on AwA2 datasets improving already strong baseline by 3.1%, 4.6% and 3.1%, respectively. Note that our method demonstrates a significant boost on the fine-grained SUN dataset surpassing the SOTA by a margin of 4.6%.

### 5.2. Comparison with Zero-Shot Logit-Adjustment

ZSLA [8] presents a strong baseline with similar logit-adjustment framework as ours. In particular, authors adjust model predictions during training using empirical class frequencies. We compare proposed approach as a plugin method with ZSLA in Table 3. We note that, proposed approach (2<sup>nd</sup> row) achieves comparable accuracy to that of ZSLA (3<sup>rd</sup> row) on both datasets. Further when combined with ZSLA (4<sup>th</sup> row), proposed approach improves the performance further showing its effectiveness.

### 5.3. Results on pre-trained models

Given a trained model our proposed approach allows easy calculation of the prior and thereby remove the bias. We show the result of using our method as a plug-in over other existing GZSL frameworks in Table 4. For embedding-based methods we consider Transzero [9] and PSVMA [33] and generation-based methods are represented by TF-VAEGAN [37] and CE-GZSL [20]. From the table it can be observed that our method consistently provides a non-trivial performance boost for all the baseline frameworks. The margin of improvement can be as high as 4.63% on SUN dataset for embedding-based method PSVMA and 2.6% on CUB dataset for the generation-based approach TF-VAEGAN. The higher margin of improvement seen on embedding-based methods can be attributed to the higher imbalance between the seen and unseen classes.

### 5.4. Comparison with Calibrated Stacking

Calibrated stacking (CS) [7] presents a simple approach to remove seen class bias from the model by suppressing

$\log \frac{P^t(y)}{P^m(y)}$	$\log P(\mathcal{Y})$	$\mathcal{U}$	$\mathcal{S}$	$\mathcal{H}$	A
CUB					
X	X	36.1	87.5	51.1	55.2
✓	X	74.7	79.1	76.8	76.7
X	✓	63.3	81.3	71.2	70.0
✓	✓	75.78	78.6	<b>77.1</b>	<b>77.3</b>
SUN					
X	X	26.9	53.4	35.8	43.9
✓	X	63.6	50.2	56.1	55.0
X	✓	55.6	48.1	51.6	50.8
✓	✓	65.9	50.0	<b>56.8</b>	<b>55.7</b>

Table 5. We show contribution of individual adjustment terms in removing seen unseen class bias. Overall best improvement is observed when both components are used.

all seen class probabilities by a scale factor. We compare CS with propose method in Table 4. While the improvement provided by CS is minimal, proposed approach clearly provides a significant gain in performance across all the datasets and baselines. This validates the efficiency of proposed method in removing the seen unseen bias and show that trivially suppressing all seen class accuracies by same scale factor is not optimal.

### 5.5. Ablation Experiments:

**Effectiveness of different components:** We validate the effectiveness of different adjustment terms in Table 5. We note that each component improves model performance in terms of Harmonic mean as well as Arithmetic mean. We further validate effectiveness of Theorem 1 in Table 6. We show results when adjustment is performed using either  $\log P^t(y)$  or  $\log P^m(y)$  term only. When compared with baseline (no adjustment), adjustment due to  $\log P^t(y)$  significantly boosts the performance showing that effective prior  $P(y)$  learned by the model was quite different from the required prior  $P^t(y)$ . Further, removing incorrect prior  $P(y)$  of a trained model estimated using  $P^m(y)$  also lead to improvements.

**Validating debiasing performance** In Figure 3 we show accuracy when seen class examples are correctly classified (+ve) vs when they are mis-classified into other seen classes (seen -ve) and unseen classes (unseen -ve). Similar analysis is shown for unseen classes. We note that, for baseline model, most of the examples are misclassified into seen categories, showing a strong bias. After PC correction, the overall confusion is reduced and uniformly spread.

## 6. Limitations

We have seen that proposed PC-GZSL approach is quite robust and improves accuracy of many existing methods.

Adjustment	$\mathcal{U}$	$\mathcal{S}$	$\mathcal{H}$	A
CUB				
-	36.1	87.5	51.1	55.2
$\log P^t(y)$	72.0	74.9	73.38	73.5
$\log P^m(y)$	56.4	<b>85.2</b>	67.9	67.2
$\log \frac{P^t(y)}{P^m(y)}$	<b>74.7</b>	79.1	<b>76.8</b>	<b>76.7</b>
SUN				
-	26.9	53.4	35.8	43.9
$\log P^t(y)$	62.5	44.8	52.2	51.2
$\log P^m(y)$	29.4	<b>58.0</b>	39.0	47.7
$\log \frac{P^t(y)}{P^m(y)}$	<b>63.6</b>	50.2	<b>56.1</b>	<b>55.0</b>

Table 6. We validate the effectiveness of bias removal using  $\log P^t(y)$  and  $\log P^m(y)$  terms. We use both terms separately and notice some improvements compared to baseline.

		Baseline		PC	
+ve	Seen	0.53	0.27	0.5	0.66
	Unseen	0.43	0.7	0.27	0.17
-ve	Seen	0.035	0.036	0.23	0.17
	Unseen				
		Seen	Unseen	Seen	Unseen

Figure 3. We show the confusion between seen and unseen classes for incorrectly classified examples for the SUN dataset.

However, as it only corrects the already trained model predictions, its performance is bounded by the baseline model’s inherent accuracy. In particular, a poorly trained model will not improve much even after PC correction as original probabilities would be noisy leading to noisy bias estimation and incorrect adjustment. Further, proposed approach shares similar limitation as existing methods i.e. requirement of validation data for bias estimation, which can be challenging for ZSL settings.

## 7. Conclusions

We presented a framework to calculate the effective prior of a trained model in GZSL showing that significant bias towards the seen classes lead to sub-optimal performance. We show theoretically optimal way to remove model bias by adjusting the posterior leading to improved performance. We further use the lower bound on the harmonic mean to calculate additional correction to posterior probabilities leading to further improvement. We show the effectiveness of our approach as a simple plugin method which does not require any model training and can boost performance of many existing methods, both in embedding and generative classes.



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