# Cross-Attribute Consistency Detection in E-commerce Catalog with Large Language Models

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#### Abstract

Comprehending the quality of data represented on an E-commerce product page is a challenge and is currently achieved with varied approaches that are dependent on large task-005 specific datasets curated with human efforts. This slows down the process of scaling to a large catalog scope. The recent advancements in Large Language Models (LLM) have revolutionized their ability to significantly enhance various downstream applications using small and carefully curated datasets. In this paper, our focus is to explore LLM capability in addressing a challenge related to the catalog quality 014 assessment. To be specific, we aim to detect the consistency of information presented between Unstructured Attributes (UA) (incl. Title, 017 Bullet Points (BP), Product Description (PD)), and Structured Attributes (SA) within a product 019 page through pairwise evaluations using predefined class labels. To achieve it, we propose a novel approach, CENSOR, that utilizes LLM 021 in two phases. In the first phase, off-the-shelf LLM is leveraged in a zero-shot manner using prompt engineering techniques. While in the second phase, open-source LLM is fine-tuned with a small human curated dataset along with the weak labeled data generated in first phase as a data augmentation technique to incorporate domain-specific knowledge. The fine-tuned LLM overcomes the deficiencies observed in the first phase and entails the model to address the consistency detection task. Evaluation conducted using the E-commerce dataset which include a comprehensive set of 186 distinct combinations of <Product Type, SA>, CENSOR finetuned model outperforms the baseline method and CENSOR zero-shot model with +34.4 and +19.4 points on F1-score respectively.

## 1 Introduction

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An E-commerce catalog contains several products which are described using a set of attributes. In general, attributes can be broadly divided into two different types mainly Unstructured Attributes (UA) and Structured Attributes (SA). UA provides information using unstructured data such as product text (Title, Bullet Points, and Description), images, and videos. While the goal of SA is to provide a summary of product information useful for other tasks such as product search, discovery, and advertising. However, due to many reasons, consistency may lack between the information mentioned in UA about the SA. Figure 1 showcases a scenario where **material** value mentioned in Textual UA (Title) providing contradicting information with SA. 044

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Such Cross-attribute consistency not observed between UA and SA can have different challenges for the end consumer such as: (1) Confusion and impact their buying decision and (2) Increases the returns of the sold products due to mismatch in expectations. Addressing the aforementioned and other similar cases will provide significant cost and time benefits.

Earlier research (More, 2016; Maadan et al., 2016; Zheng et al., 2018; Xu et al., 2019; Mehta et al., 2021) targeted comprehending SA information present in a textual UA by extracting SA information from UA. The main purpose of these works is to fill the missing information in the catalog to achieve high completeness. However, they do not focus on verifying the consistency of the SA information already provided by the seller with the rest of the product UAs. This is the major focus of our research and aim to address the issue at scale.

Although aforementioned research is proven effective for completing missing SA information. They still poses challenges in extracting accurate information from UA due to confusing attributes and diverse surface forms. Hence, extracting SA from product UAs and then comparing it with the seller provided SA might not be an effective approach for detecting inconsistency across Cross-level attributes. Therefore, in this work, we target an end-to-end solution for detecting inconsistency i.e.,



Figure 1: Example showcases the Inconsistency detected by proposed approach (CENSOR, details in Section 3) between Textual UA (Title) mentioning **material** value as *Silk* and separately mentioned in SA as *Satin*.

comparing UA usually present as a larger sequence of tokens with SA constituting a smaller sequence of tokens with a Cross-attributE CoNSistency DetectOR (henceforth, CENSOR).

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Our proposed approach is divided into two different phases. In the first phase, we build CENSOR-zero-shot with an off-the-shelf Large Language Models (LLM) (Anthropic, 2023; OpenAI, 2023) and prompting techniques to produce predefined class labels. This phase provide us with a baseline approach for the cross-attribute consistency detection task and also help to generate synthetic data for the second phase. While in the second phase, we leverage open-source LLM (Chung et al., 2022; Penedo et al., 2023; Touvron et al., 2023) as a generative formulation to produce CENSOR-fine-tuned model by finetuning on the human curated labeled dataset. To be specific, CENSOR-fine-tuned is built as a generative model which takes <UA, SA> pair and other product relevant information in a sequence as an input and returns a predefined class label. The CENSOR-fine-tuned is robust in handling diverse SA's which include different surface forms, measurement units, and varied values.

The main contributions of this paper are:

- We propose CENSOR, a two-phase approach to identify the consistency across SA and a textual UA.
- We introduce different prompting strategies for cross-attribute consistency detection task with CENSOR-zero-shot.

• We present experimental results on an Ecommerce dataset with diverse SA to showcase the efficacy of CENSOR-fine-tuned.

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To the best of our knowledge, this is a first attempt at building an approach to detect consistency between a SA and textual UA with a generative formulation for a large-scale E-commerce catalog. The rest of the paper is organized as follows. We describe related work which closely aligns with our work in Section 2. Further, in Section 3 we present our proposed method and its variants. We describe the experimental setup in Section 4 and discuss our findings in the Section 5. Finally, we conclude our observations in Section 6.

# 2 Related Work

In the related work, we mention those works which are closely related to our task.

#### 2.1 E-commerce Attribute Extraction

Several works have been proposed earlier (Kannan et al., 2011) to extract the SA information from the product title and description. Most of the works proposed the E-commerce Attribute Extraction problem as a special case of Named Entity Recognition (NER) task (More, 2016; Wang et al., 2020). Zheng et al. (2018) proposed an OpenTag architecture based on the combination of Bi-LSTM and Conditional Random Fields (CRF) for extracting a different set of attributes and not targeted specifically for numeric attributes. Similarly, Xu et al. (2019) focused on scaling up extraction and empowered attribute value extraction from

product title using an attribute-comprehension-148 based approach. Multimodal extraction is also pro-149 posed (Zhu et al., 2020) to complement different 150 modalities such as product images and descriptions 151 for extraction of attributes. Nevertheless, the ap-152 proach is not specific for numeric attributes and 153 mostly concentrated on those attributes where the 154 useful visual information from product images has 155 an impact. However, for extracting only numeric 156 attributes from the product description, Mehta et 157 al. (2021) designed a platform by leveraging distant supervision. As discussed, extracting numeric SA 159 for inconsistency detection is ineffective, we would 160 be comparing cross-level numeric SA and textual 161 UA directly and classifying them into predefined 162 classes.

### 2.2 E-commerce Text Classification

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Many works are proposed for labeling certain text with predefined labels (Sun et al., 2019). However, we want to highlight those classification works which specifically leverage the ecommerce text that spans different levels. Tan et al. (2020) utilized product title and descriptions for product categorization into leaf category using a machine translation-based approach. Other approaches (Zhao, 2020) used customer reviews present in languages other than English and performed sentiment analysis. In this paper, we portray inconsistency detection of cross-level attributes into a classification problem setup.

## 2.3 Large Language Models for E-commerce

At present, LLM are becoming common for under-180 standing and generating human language. They are built using transformer architecture (Vaswani et al., 181 2017) using different variations such as Sequence-182 to-Sequence (a.k.a Encoder-Decoder) (Chung et al., 2022) and Decoder-only (Zhang et al., 2022; 184 OpenAI, 2023; Touvron et al., 2023). Recently, focus on applying LLM for E-commerce 186 specific tasks has increased. Maragheh et 187 al. (Maragheh et al., 2023) used LLM as augmenter for recommendation-related tasks. Simi-189 larly, LLM is used for relationship identification in 190 E-commerce specific knowledge graph completion 191 models (Chen et al., 2023). There are works (Li 193 et al., 2023) which expanded LLM with instructiontuning targeted for E-commerce data for several 194 downstream tasks such as Named Entity Recog-195 nition (NER), Review Topic Classification and so on. Our work also leverages LLM for E-commerce 197

domain, however, our focus is to comprehend the quality of E-commerce data by identifying Crossattribute consistency of Cross-level information (Jurgens et al., 2014). 198

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# 3 Approach

In this section, we present CENSOR variants whose aim is to generate predefined labels by detecting consistency observed across <UA,SA> pairs.

# 3.1 CENSOR - Problem Formulation

Let S represent a set of SA, and U an UAs. Each product  $p \in \mathcal{P}$  can be thought-of as a textual representation of a product comprising relevant information about the product; e.g., Product Type it belongs to. We set forth the CENSOR as "Text-to-Text" generation inspired by previous unifying frameworks for Natural Language Processing (NLP) tasks (Raffel et al., 2020; McCann et al., 2018) and their effectiveness demonstrated for the classification task. Given any product-related representation  $p \in \mathcal{P}$ containing Structured Attribute  $s \in S$ , Unstructured Attribute  $u \in \mathcal{U}$  and a target output  $c \in C$ , learn a function:

$$f: \mathcal{P} \times \mathcal{U} \times \mathcal{S} \to \mathcal{C} \tag{1}$$

Unlike other architectures, which typically require training a task-specific layer (e.g., classification (Nogueira et al., 2020)) from scratch beyond backbone model, "Text-to-Text" formulation can leverage the pre-trained network's capacity for generating output tokens based on pretrained knowledge, saving time and resources. Therefore, utilizes LLM with two different ways. Figure 2 presents the overall framework.

## 3.2 CENSOR - Zero-shot

# 3.2.1 Methodology

CENSOR-Zero-shot utilize off-the-shelf LLM in a zero-shot manner for Cross-attribute Consistency Detection task with prompt engineering techniques. Prompt is the function (Equation 1) we design to address the task. CENSOR-Zero-shot is built on a hypothesis that off-the-shelf LLM have been pre-trained on vast amounts of textual data, and pose a rich contextual understanding. Leveraging such contextual knowledge will be advantageous in mitigating ambiguity observed for the propsed task.

CENSOR-Zero-shot is built with a two-step approach, mainly *Prompt Construction* and *Handling* 

# CENSOR-Zero-shot



CENSOR-Fine-tuned

Figure 2: CENSOR Framework.

244 *Non-Deterministic Behavior*. We discuss each of245 them in the following sections.

#### **3.2.2 Prompt Construction**

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For the prompt construction, we employed Chainof-Thought (CoT) (Wei et al., 2022) prompting technique. In our CoT driven prompt, an important intermediate reasoning step involves enabling an off-the-shelf LLM to understand the relationship between UA and SA. Hypothesis here is that if the LLM fails to identify a relationship, then its prediction is prone to be a hallucination. Additionally, this intermediate reasoning step provides an opportunity that let's LLM predict "I don't know" to prevent any hallucinations.

When the LLM identifies that UA and SA are relevant, the prompt goes on to categorize it into CONSISTENT predefined class as UA might contain SA or expresses a similar meaning as SA. This emphasis on the "containing" relationship stems from our observation that off-the-shelf LLMs excel at detecting consistency in these readily distinguishable cases, even when dealing with typically lengthy UAs (Product Description). If UA and SA are relevant but do not share similar meanings, nor does UA contain SA, the prompt would classify this pair as INCONSISTENT predefined class. For the undecided cases or not relevant cases, the prompt classifies them under the UAMS predefined class (more details about predefined classes is presented in Section 4.1).

To gain deeper insights into the reasoning behind

predefined class predictions made by the off-theshelf LLM in a zero-shot manner, we also attain prediction justification as possible reasons from the LLM. 275

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### 3.2.3 Handling Non-deterministic Behavior

Earlier research found that sometimes off-the-shelf LLM could be non-deterministic, even when the context, instructions, input data remain the same in the prompt. To address it, we set the temperature hyper-parameter as 0 and execute the prompt 3 times for deciding the predefined label using majority voting.

#### 3.3 CENSOR - Fine-tuned

We observed that the performance of CENSOR-Zero-shot is limited as it cannot effectively comprehend the domain of E-commerce catalog. Hence, there is a requirement for a solution that is adapted for E-commerce domain and also understand the Cross-attribute Consistency Detection task in an efficacious manner. Therefore, we designed CENSOR-Fine-tuned to incorporate domain-specific E-commerce knowledge and also learn about the Cross-attribute Consistency Detection task by using both human curated gold standard data along with the synthetically generated weak labeled data.

#### 3.3.1 Model Architecture

Following Equation 1, we design the CENSOR-Fine-tuned based on the Encoder-Decoder architecture (Chung et al., 2022). Recent 305studies (Fu et al., 2023) have shown that Encoder-306Decoder architecture outperforms Decoder-only307architecture (Deng et al., 2023) due to attention308degeneration issue. Also, Encoder-Decoder309architecture help us to explore the potential of310incorporating reasons generated by off-the-shelf311LLM to add more context for an <UA,SA> pair312along with the Product Type.

### **313 3.3.2** Decoder Variants

Motivated by earlier works (Puri and Catanzaro, 2019; Nogueira et al., 2020) demonstrating that the choice of Decoder tokens in an Encoder-Decoder architecture can have a significant influence on generation outcomes, especially in data scarcity setting. CENSOR-Fine-tuned explores three different Decoder options based on three different hypothesis.

321Label-onlyOur first hypothesis use the Decoder322(output as in Equation 1) tokens as predefined Class323Label. To avoid any pretrained knowledge inter-324ference with the prediction, we further modify the325Decoder tokens to make them as unique (or special326tokens).

Label+Template\_Reason To add additional context to the Decoder along with predefined Class Label, we propose second hypothesis. In this approach, context is identified using the segment in an UA that is semantically closer to the SA using Sentence Embeddings (Reimers and Gurevych, 2019). The Decoder is then formulated as a "Label+Template\_Reason", which includes both context i.e., segment in an UA and the predefined Class Label.

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The intuition here is that if relevant UA and SA are consistent (referred to ground-truth class), then based on relevant UA and product context, the generated content should be semantically close to SA.

Label+LLM\_Reason Our third hypothesis attempts to utilize the reason generated by off-theshelf LLM when predicting predefined labels. The intuition here is that the reasons provided by an offthe-shelf LLM can be seen as an additional context which can benefit the Cross-attribute Consistency Detection task.

We observed with CENSOR-Zero-shot that the reasons it generates provide information about relational knowledge between UA and SA. Hence, we aim to include those reasons for each training data point. Therefore, Decoder of CENSOR-Fine-tuned is formulated as a "Label+LLM\_Reason", which includes both LLM reason and the predefined class label.

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# 4 Experimental Setup

In the following, we present the dataset information and the evaluation metrics used for comparison.

## 4.1 Predefined Class Labels

Three different class labels are used. If the SA value is consistent with the UA, the CONSISTENT label is used. While if the SA value is inconsistent with the UA, the INCONSISTENT label is used. If the SA value is missing from the UA, the UAMS label is used, which indicates that UA doesn't have any presence of SA. For example, color SA is never mentioned in the Title of the product, it is considered the predefined label of <color, Title> pair is UAMS.

## 4.2 Dataset

We targeted 186 distinct combination of <Product Type, SA> from a English locale country that cover variety of products<sup>1</sup>. We collected the dataset by leveraging our organization's annotators by providing them with an <UA, SA> pair to annotate predefined labels. As described in Section 4.1, CONSISTENT, INCONSISTENT, and UAMS are the predefined labels used for annotating an <UA, SA> pair.

The entire dataset is split into 66% for training and 34% for the testing. Further, the training set is split into 65% for training and 35% for the validation.

We also collected synthetic data using an offthe-shelf LLM with prompt engineering techniques presented in Section 3.2.2 for expanding the training data. This is motivated by following reasons:

- Combining augmented data with the actual training data allows for training a more compact and computationally efficient model.
- Overcome the human curated data collection challenges such as scalability, bias, and cost.

Due to augmentation with the synthetic data the training data overall size has increased by 68.5%. We have kept the same size for the validation and testing set to clearly identify the benefit from the synthetic labels.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Randomly sampled according to the task requirement and do not reflect the overall quality.

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4.3 Evaluation Metrics

We evaluate the performance of the proposed approaches with the weighted averages of Precision, Recall and F-1 score. With weighted averaging, the output measurements, (i.e., Precision, Recall, or F-1 score), have accounted for the contribution of each class as weighted by the number of examples of that given class.

- Weighted Precision: Weighted mean of precision with weights equal to class probability.
- Weighted Recall: Weighted mean of recall with weights equal to class probability.
- Weighted F-1 Score: Weighted mean of F1measure with weights equal to class probability.

# 5 Experimental Results

# 5.1 Methods

We design a simple Encoder-only model baseline termed as Expandable Validation (EVA). It is built in a two-step process. In the first step, self-supervised learning (SSL) (Gui et al., 2023) is leveraged to adapt the pretrained Encoder-only ALBERT Base v2 (Lan et al., 2020) model to E-commerce domain without any manually curated labels. While in the second step, the domain adapted model is finetuned with the actual dataset.

We consider the CENSOR-Zero-shot which utilizes Claude-v1.3 (Anthropic, 2023) as the off-theshelf LLM with a given prompt (Section 5.3) as the strong baseline. While, CENSOR-Fine-tuned which leverages Flan-T5-XL (Chung et al., 2022) as its Encoder-Decoder architecture as the improvements proposed over it.

# 5.2 CENSOR-Fine-tuned Implementation

We fine-tuned CENSOR-Fine-tuned variants for 3 432 epochs with a constant learning rate of  $10^{-4}$  us-433 ing AdamW optimizer. Decoder length was varied 434 between 10 and 512 tokens based on the Decoder 435 variants. We used BLEU score to comprehend the 436 fine-tuned check-point model quality at the end 437 of each epoch during fine-tuning and selected the 438 439 best saved check-point for inference. All Experiments were executed on 8 NVIDIA A10G GPUs 440 (each 24GB). To conserve memory and accelerate 441 the fine-tuning process, all models were fine-tuned 449 using the BF16 format. 443

# 5.3 CENSOR-Zero-shot Prompt

In the following, we present the Chain-of-Thought (CoT) (Wei et al., 2022) prompt constructed for prompting Claude-v $1.3^2$ .

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- **Step-1**: Extract values in column 'UA' {UA Value} and column 'SA' {SA Value}. Do not return anything for this step.
- **Step-2**: Use your knowledge to understand the relationship between value {UA Name} and {SA Name}. Do not return anything for this step.
- Step-3: Determine whether {UA Value} includes or expresses a similar meaning as {SA Value}, relying on your knowledge and considering the relationship you identified between value {UA Value} and {SA Value}. If you cannot find a relationship between {UA Value} and {SA Value} from Step-2, your prediction answer should be 'UAMS', If (you think the meanings of {UA Value} and {SA Value} are relevant and similar) or (if value {UA Value} contains value {SA Value}), your prediction answer should be 'Consistent', If (you are very confident that the meanings of {UA Value} and {SA Value} are relevant, but (the meanings of {UA Value} and {SA Value} are not similar)) and (value {UA Value} does not contain value {SA Value}), your prediction answer should be 'Inconsistent' Otherwise, your prediction answer should be 'UAMS'. If you cannot decide, your prediction answer also should only be 'UAMS'. Do not return anything except 'Consistent', 'Inconsistent' or 'UAMS'.
- **Step-4**: Collect the reason for your prediction. Let's work this out in a step by step way to be sure we have the right prediction answer
- **Step-5**: Do not include any information generated from the above steps in the output.
- **Step-6**: After you provide the reason, provide all your response in JSON format with the following keys: 'reason', 'prediction', 'product\_id' from column 'product\_info'({product\_info}). Do not return anything except JSON.

 $<sup>^2\</sup>mathrm{At}$  the time of experimentation, Claude-v2.0 was not available.

#### 5.4 Results and Discussion

Overall results attained using different methods are presented in the Table 1 and Table  $2^3$ .

Table 1: Overall Prediction Results (Weighted Preci-<br/>sion and Weighted Recall) showing improvements over<br/>Encoder-only baseline

Model	Precision (†) (Weighted)	Recall (†) (Weighted)
CENSOR-Zero-shot (Claude-v1.3)	+21.9	+6.4
CENSOR-Fine-tuned +Label +Label+Template_Reason +Label+LLM_Reason	+ <b>46.1</b> +32.4 +41.6	+16.6 +7.8 +5.5
CENSOR-Fine-tuned +Synthetic Data+Label	+44.3	+22.4

Table 2: Overall Prediction Results (Weighted F1-score)showing improvements over Encoder-only baseline

Model	F1-score (↑) (Weighted)
CENSOR-Zero-shot (Claude-v1.3)	+15
CENSOR-Fine-tuned +Label +Label+Template_Reason +Label+LLM_Reason	+33.8 +19 +25.4
CENSOR-Fine-tuned +Synthetic Data+Label	+34.4

We found that CENSOR-Zero-shot can directly compare the relevant UA and SA values despite their length discrepancy. Furthermore, it can provide reasons for classification that are human interpretable with a few or even no post-processing. Such effective characteristics makes it a suitable stand-alone approach.

Also, we present the UA-wise results of proposed approaches in the Table 3 and per class results in the Table 4.

Effectiveness of data augmentation through the inclusion of synthetic data generated by off-the-shelf LLM has been demonstrated in the Table 1 and Table 2. CENSOR-Fine-tuned with data augmentation outperforms CENSOR-Zero-shot, and the same method without data augmentation on weighted avg. F-1 score. This can be accredited to the quality of synthetic data created by handling

non-deterministic behavior of off-the-shelf LLM (discussed in Section 3.2.3) that retained consistent responses as augmented instances.

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CENSOR's advantages shine through in its ability to substantially cut down human annotation costs and the time needed for crafting top-notch synthetic training data. Specifically, compared to the variant with no synthetic data augmentation, adding more synthetic data improves the weighted avg. Recall by a significant margin, which indicates the synthetic data generation can effectively capture more relevant instances. The high recall is especially meaningful in the E-commerce domain since the goal of identifying consistent information is crucial to reduce the customer perceived incorrectness.

#### 6 Conclusion and Future Work

In this paper, we presented CENSOR and its variants which takes <UA, SA> pair as input and generate predefined class labels targeted towards estimation of the quality of the e-commerce product data. We leveraged off-the-shelf LLM and also open-sourced pretrained LLM to showcase that fine-tuned smaller parameter model perform better in comparison. In the future, we aim to improve the performance by exploring different LLM architectures which can address the estimation of quality effectively including more modalities.

### 7 Limitations

Our work did not explore the possibility of finetuning Decoder-only architectures. Our experiments specifically focused on examining the encoder-decoder architecture such as Flan-T5-XL (Chung et al., 2022) and fine-tuning it using a product catalog dataset that combines humancurated data with weakly labeled data generated with an off-the-shelf LLM. This choice is primarily influenced by its recognized excellence in performance and our resource constraints. We note that our data augmentation approach by off-theshelf LLMs and fine-tuning strategy can be used with any other pretrained Decoder-only models such as OpenLlama (Geng and Liu, 2023) and Mistral (Jiang et al., 2023).

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Due to organization policy, we do not report the baseline numbers and only showcase overall improvements over the baseline with proposed approaches.

UA-wise Results			
Model	Precision (†) (Weighted)	Recall(†) (Weighted)	F1-score(↑) (Weighted)
Title			
CENSOR-Zero-shot	+29.3	+6.3	+11.2
CENSOR-Fine-tuned +Label +Synthetic Data+Label	+36.8 + <b>46.4</b>	+14.8 + <b>21.4</b>	+29.4 + <b>33.5</b>
Bullet Points			
CENSOR-Zero-shot	+19.3	+5.1	+14.7
CENSOR-Fine-tuned +Label +Synthetic Data+Label	+38.8 + <b>44.6</b>	+16.2 + <b>24.5</b>	+30.8 + <b>36.3</b>
Product Description			
CENSOR-Zero-shot	+23.7	+9.1	+18.7
CENSOR-Fine-tuned +Label +Synthetic Data+Label	+33.9 + <b>41.2</b>	+11.5 + <b>19.9</b>	+26.5 + <b>32.2</b>

Table 4: Class-specific Results.

	Class-wise Results		
Model	Precision (†)	Recall (†)	F1-score (†)
INCONSISTENT			
CENSOR-Zero-shot	-7.1	-1.4	-3.7
CENSOR-Fine-tuned +Label +Synthetic Data+Label	-0.2 + <b>0.9</b>	+18.7 + <b>31.4</b>	+9.7 + <b>15.1</b>
CONSISTENT			
CENSOR-Zero-shot	+9.2	-8.2	+5.3
CENSOR-Fine-tuned +Label +Synthetic Data+Label	+ <b>42.9</b> +27	-28.9 - <b>4.9</b>	+13.1 + <b>18.3</b>
UAMS			
CENSOR-Zero-shot	+6.9	-44.9	-19.5
CENSOR-Fine-tuned +Label +Synthetic Data+Label	+22.1 + <b>36.6</b>	- <b>5.3</b> -20.7	+ <b>11.6</b> +7.8

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