Is Shakespeare's language unlike that of his contemporaries?

QUOTING SHAKESPEARE

IF YOU CANNOT UNDERSTAND MY ARGUMENT, AND DECLARE: *it's Greek to me,* you are quoting Shakespeare. IF you claim to be *more sinned against than sinning,* you are quoting Shakespeare. IF you act *more in sorrow than in anger,* if your *wish is father to the thought,* if your lost property has *vanished into thin air,* you are quoting Shakespeare. IF you have ever refused *to budge an inch* or suffered from *green-eyed jealousy,* if you have *played fast and loose,* if you have been *tongue-tied – a tower of strength – hoodwinked* or *in a pickle,* if you have *knitted your brows – made a virtue of necessity,* insisted on *fair play – slept not one wink – stood on ceremony – danced attendance* on your *lord and master – laughed yourself into stitches,* had *short shrift – cold comfort,* or *too much of a good thing,* if you have *seen better days,* or lived *in a fool's paradise,* why, be that as it may, *the more fool you,* for it is a *foregone conclusion* that you are *as good luck would have it,* quoting Shakespeare. IF you think it is *early days* and clear out *bag and baggage,* if you think *it is high time,* and that *that is the long and short of it,* if you believe that *the game is up,* and that *truth will out,* even if it involves your *own flesh and blood,* if you *lie low* till *the crack of doom* because you suspect *foul play,* if you have *teeth set on edge at one fell swoop – without rhyme or reason,* then *to give the devil his due* if the *truth were known* for surely you have a *tongue in your head,* you are quoting Shakespeare. EVEN IF you bid me *good riddance* and *send me packing,* if you wish I was *dead as a doornail,* if you think I am an *eyesore – a laughing stock – the devil incarnate – a stony-hearted villain – bloody-minded,* or a *blinking idiot,* then *by Jove – O Lord – tut, tut! – For goodness' sake – what the dickens! – but me no buts – it is all one to me,* for you are quoting Shakespeare...

BERNARD LEVIN

Shakespeare's Words

William Shakespeare is credited with the invention or introduction of over 1,700 words that are still used in English today

William Shakespeare used more than 20,000 words in his plays and poems, and his works provide the first recorded use of over 1,700 words in the English language. It is believed that he may have invented or introduced many of these words himself, often by combining words, changing nouns into verbs, adding prefixes or suffixes, and so on. Some words stuck around and some didn't.

Although lexicographers are continually discovering new origins and earliest usages of words, below are listed words and definitions we still use today that are widely attributed to Shakespeare.

In this section

- William Shakespeare
- Shakespeare's Works
- Shakespeare's Family Homes
- Shakespeare's Circle
- The Shakespeare Jubilee
- Shakespeare's Globe Theatre

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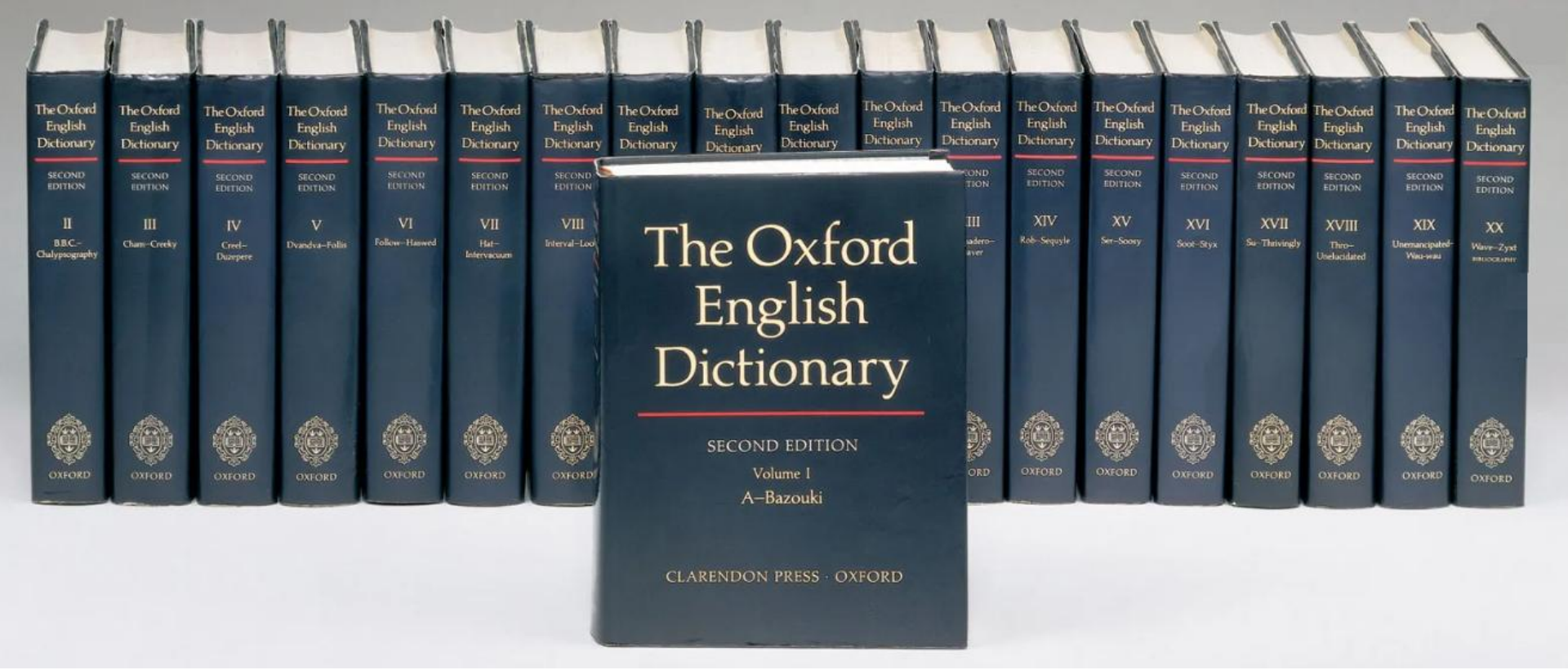
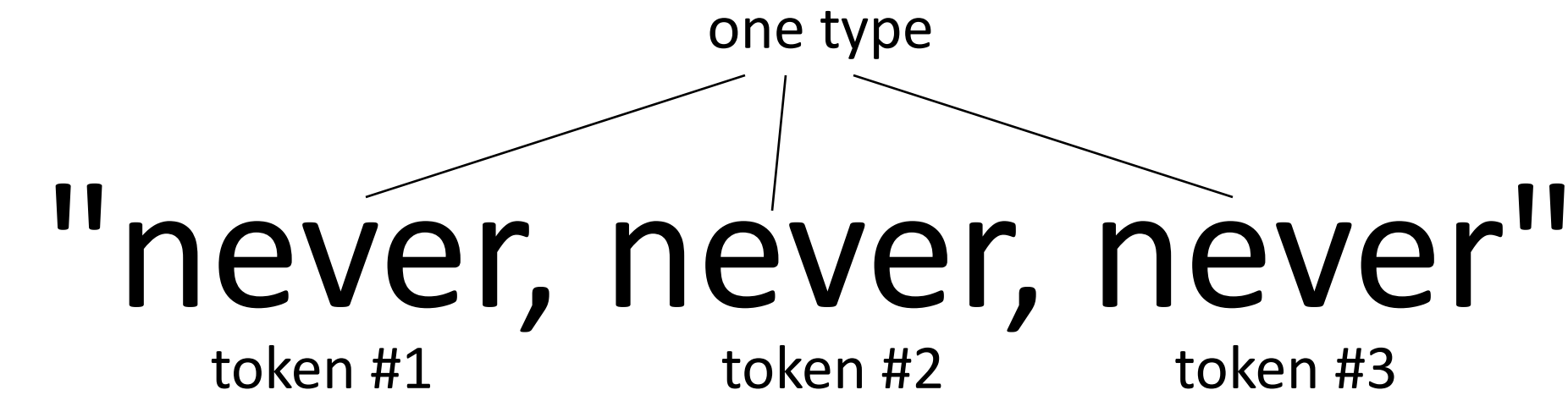

The Oxford English Dictionary
SECOND EDITION
Volume I
A–Bazouki
CLARENDON PRESS · OXFORD


one type
"never, never, never"
token #1
token #2
token #3

George Chapman 12
All Fools
The Blind Beggar of Alexandria
Bussy D'Ambois
The Tragedy of Charles Duke of Byron
Caesar and Pompey
Sir Giles Goosecap
The Gentleman Usher
A Humorous Day's Mirth
May-Day
Monsieur D'Olive
The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois
The Widow's Tears

John Fletcher 15
Bonduca
Monsieur Thomas
Rule a Wife and Have a Wife
The Chances
The Faithful Shepherdess
The Humourous Lieutenant
The Island Princess
The Loyal Subject
The Mad Lover
The Pilgrim
The Wild Goose Chase.txt
The Woman's Prize
Valentinian
Women Pleased
A Wife for a Month

Robert Greene 4
Alphonsus, King of Aragon
Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay
Orlando Furioso
James IV

Ben Jonson 16
The Alchemist
Bartholomew Fair
Catiline's Conspiracy
Cynthia's Revels
The Devil is an Ass
Every Man In his Humour
Every Man Out of his Humour
Epicoene
The Magnetic Lady
The New Inn
Poetaster
Sejanus's Fall
The Sad Shepherd
The Staple of News
The Tale of a Tub
Volpone

Christopher Marlowe 6
1 Tamburlaine
2 Tamburlaine
Edward II
Doctor Faustus
The Jew of Malta
The Massacre at Paris

Thomas Middleton 16
The Second Maiden's Tragedy
A Chaste Maid in Cheapside
A Game at Chess
Hengist King of Kent
More Dissemblers Besides Women
Michaelmas Term
A Mad World My Masters
No Wit No Help Like a Woman's
The Phoenix
The Puritan
The Revenger's Tragedy
A Trick to Catch the Old One
Women Beware Women
The Widow
The Witch
Your Five Gallants

Peele 5
The Battle of Alcazar
The Love of King David and Fair Bethsabe
Edward I
The Old Wives Tale
The Arraignment of Paris

Shakespeare 27
1 Henry IV
2 Henry IV
Much Ado About Nothing
Antony and Cleopatra
All's Well that Ends Well
As You Like It
Coriolanus
Cymbeline
The Comedy of Errors
Henry V
Hamlet
Julius Caesar
Love's Labour's Lost
King Lear
A Midsummer Night's Dream
The Merchant of Venice
Othello
Richard II
Richard III
Romeo and Juliet
The Taming of the Shrew
The Two Gentlemen of Verona
The Tempest
Twelfth Night
Troilus and Cressida
The Merry Wives of Windsor
The Winter's Tale

$$\text{variety of language} = \frac{\text{number of word types}}{\text{number of word tokens}}$$

	types	tokens	types/tokens	tokens/types
George Chapman	17722	237604	0.075	13.41
John Fletcher	16700	339744	0.049	20.34
Robert Greene	8187	66967	0.122	8.18
Ben Jonson	26680	441301	0.06	16.54
Christopher Marlowe	10663	101506	0.105	9.52
Thomas Middleton	22025	332972	0.066	15.12
George Peele	9262	70662	0.131	7.63
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Chapman 12 **Fletcher 15** Greene 4 **Jonson 16**
Marlowe 6 Middleton 16 Peele 5 **Shakespeare 27**

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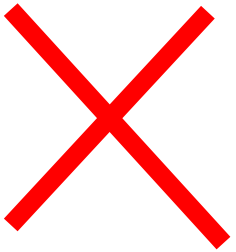

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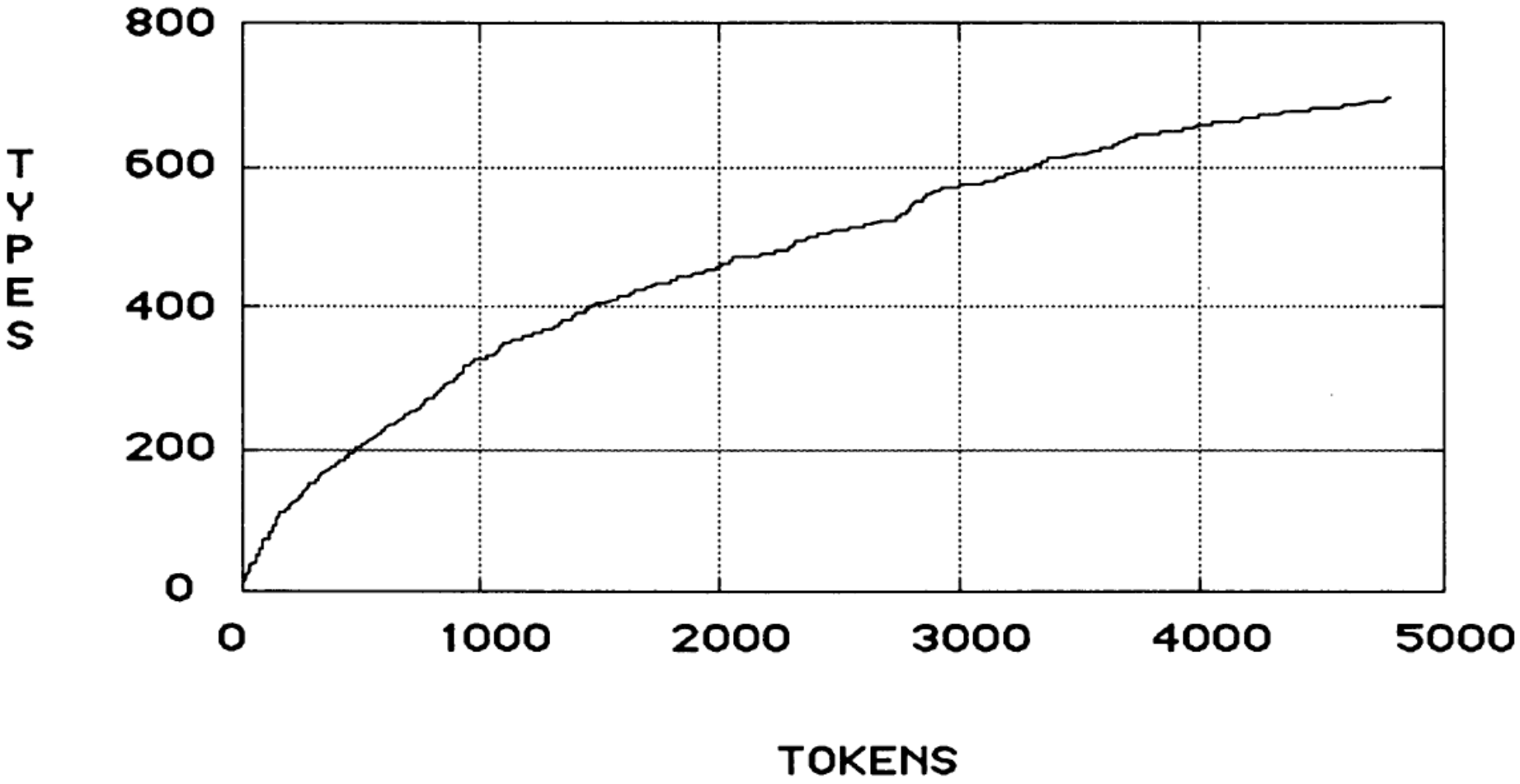
Fig. 2. Plot of Types Versus Tokens for "Macbeth" in Basic English



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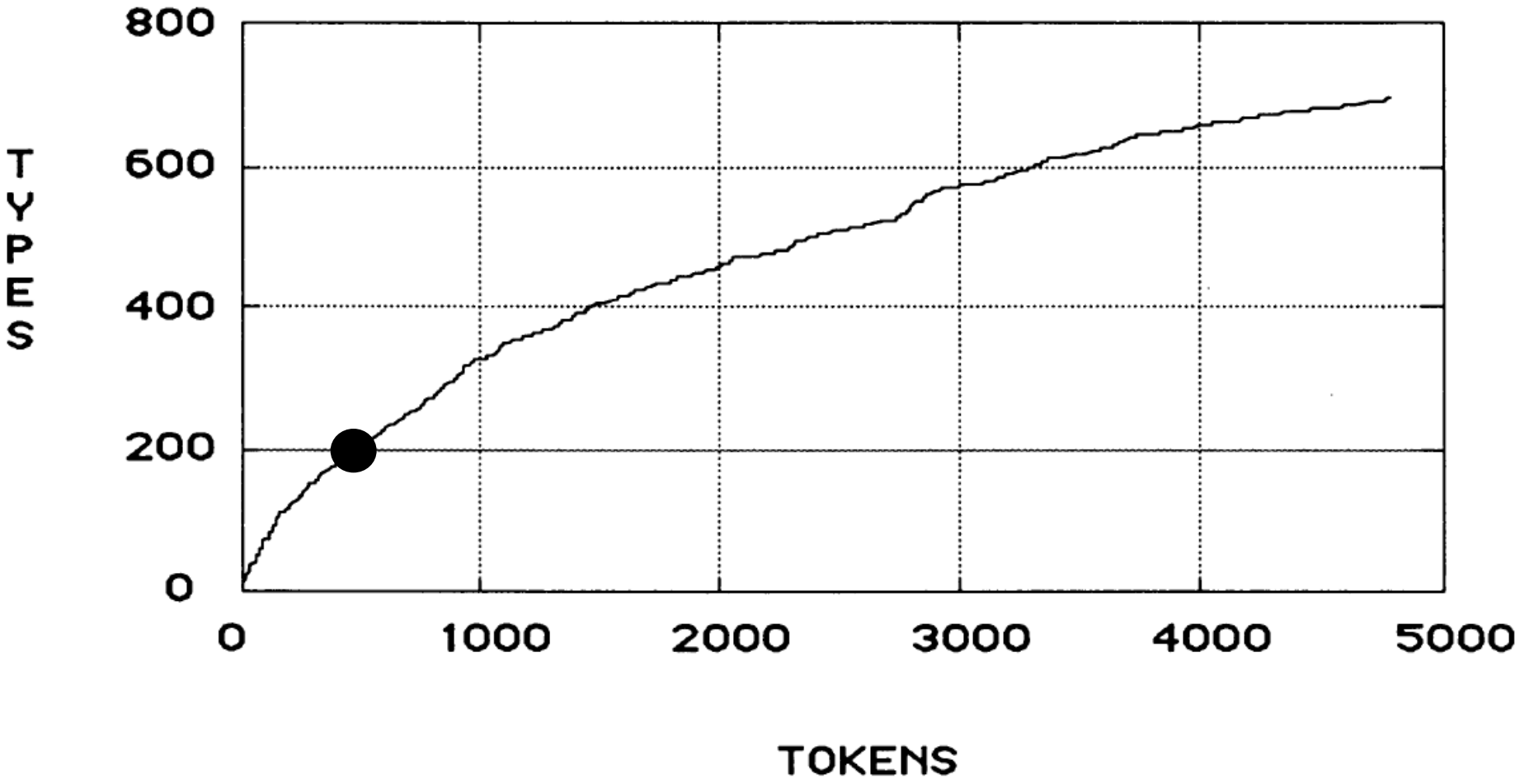

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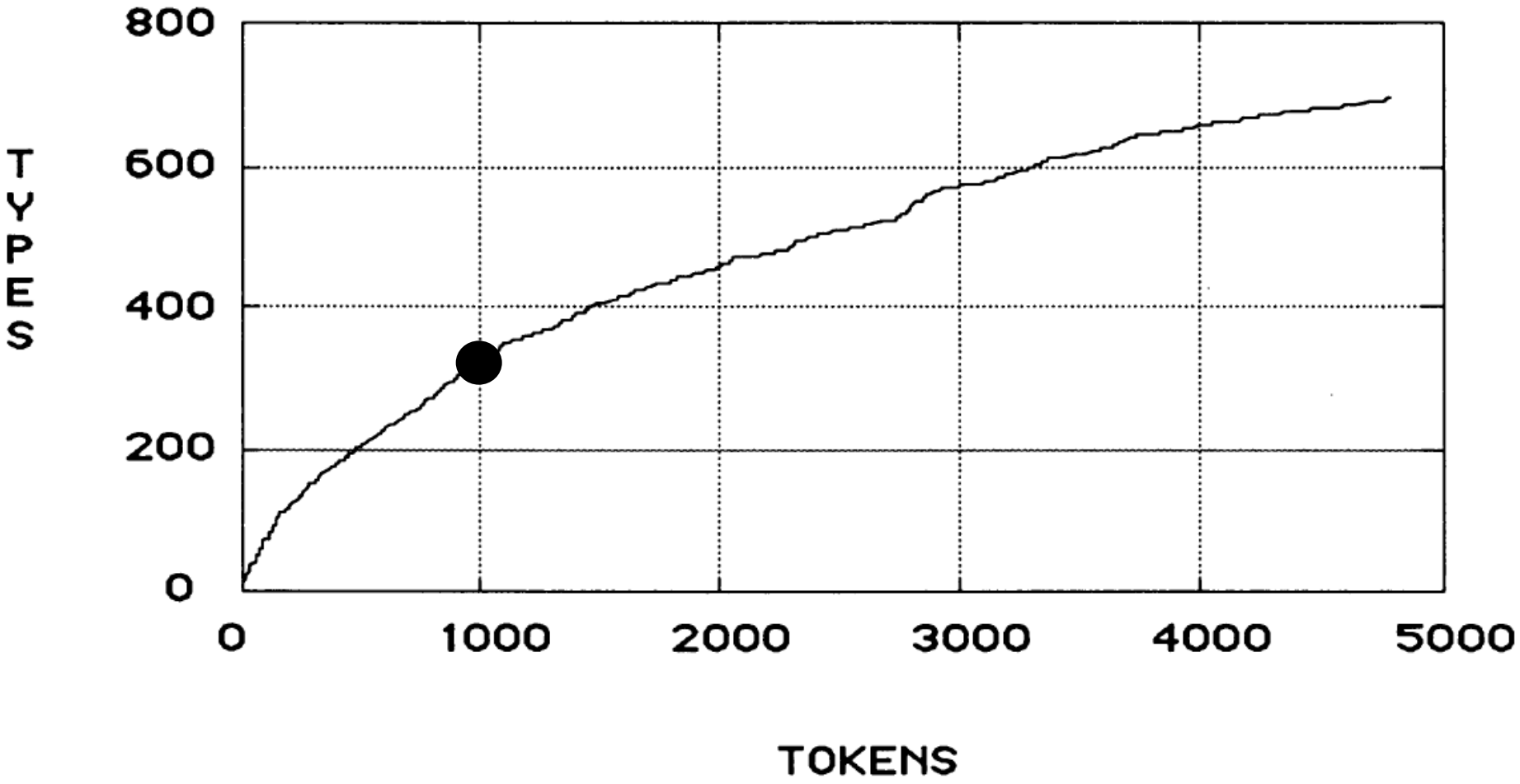

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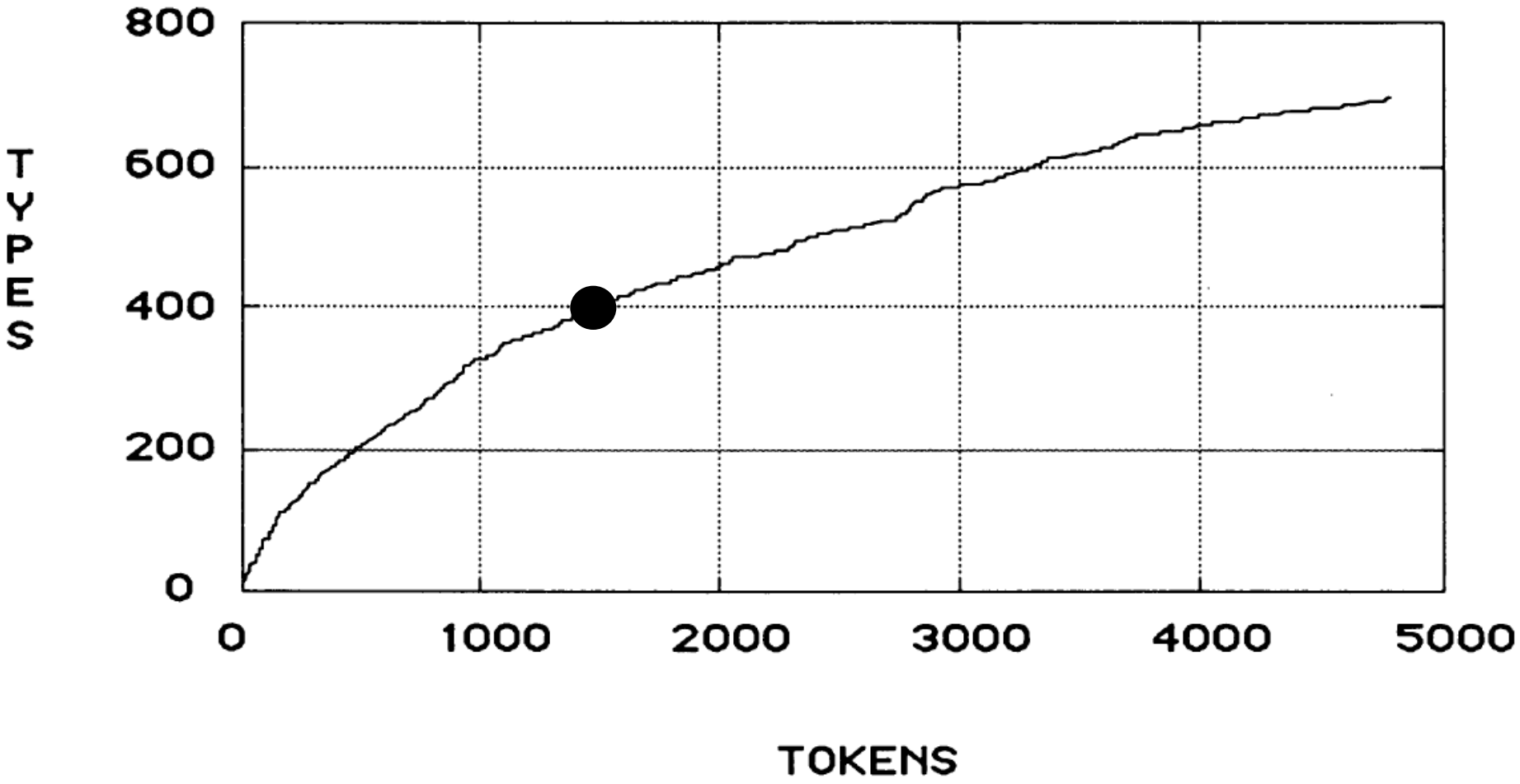

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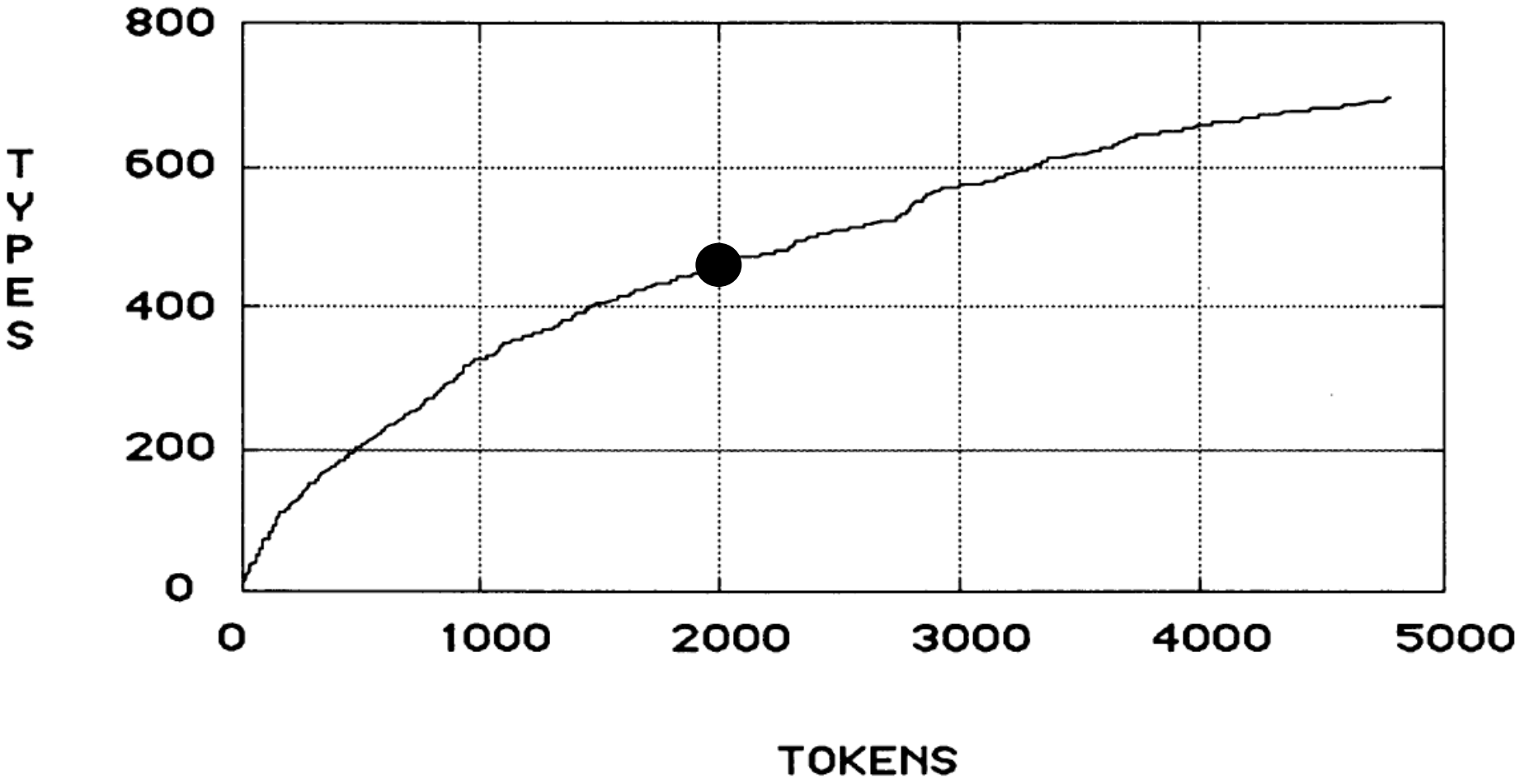

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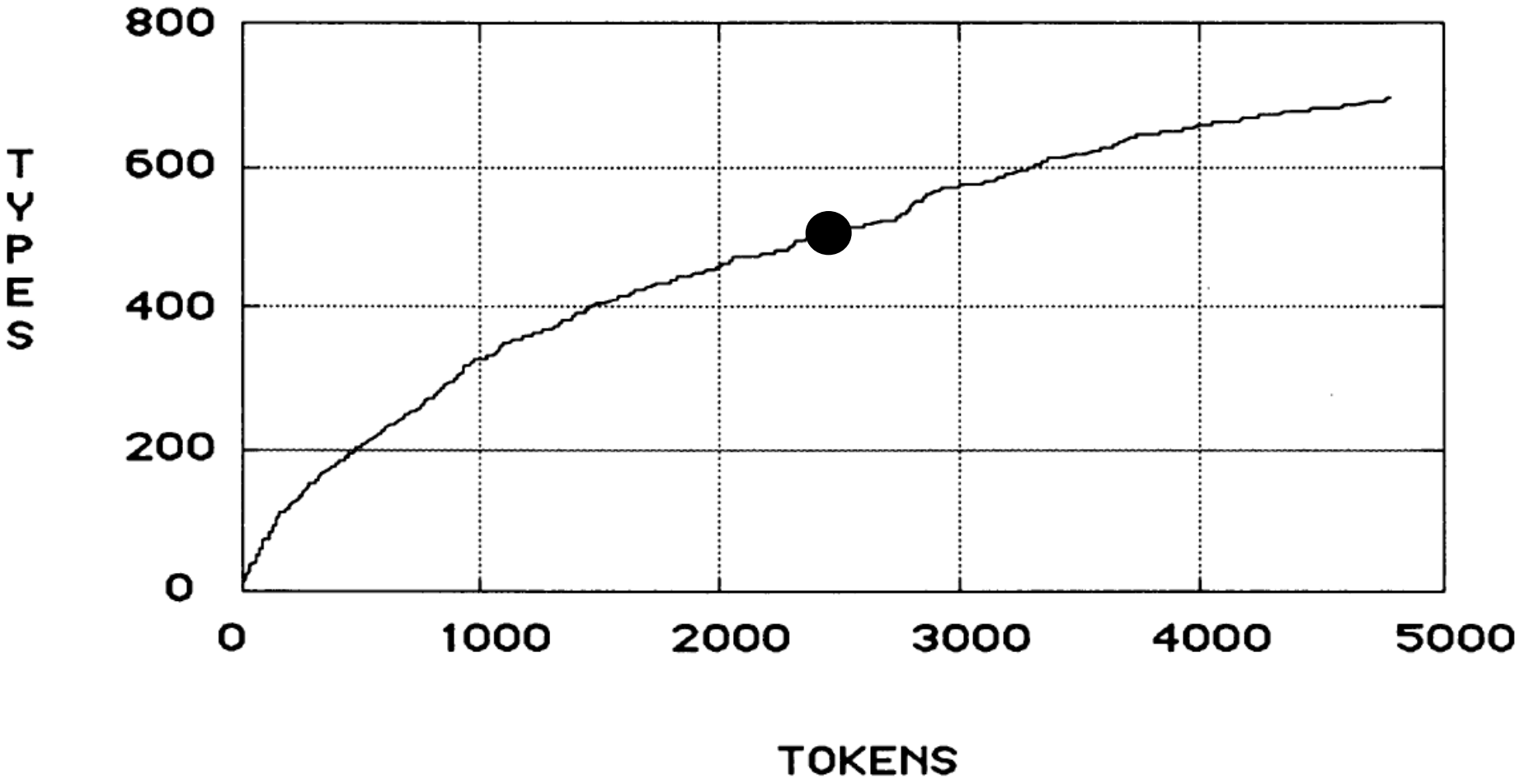

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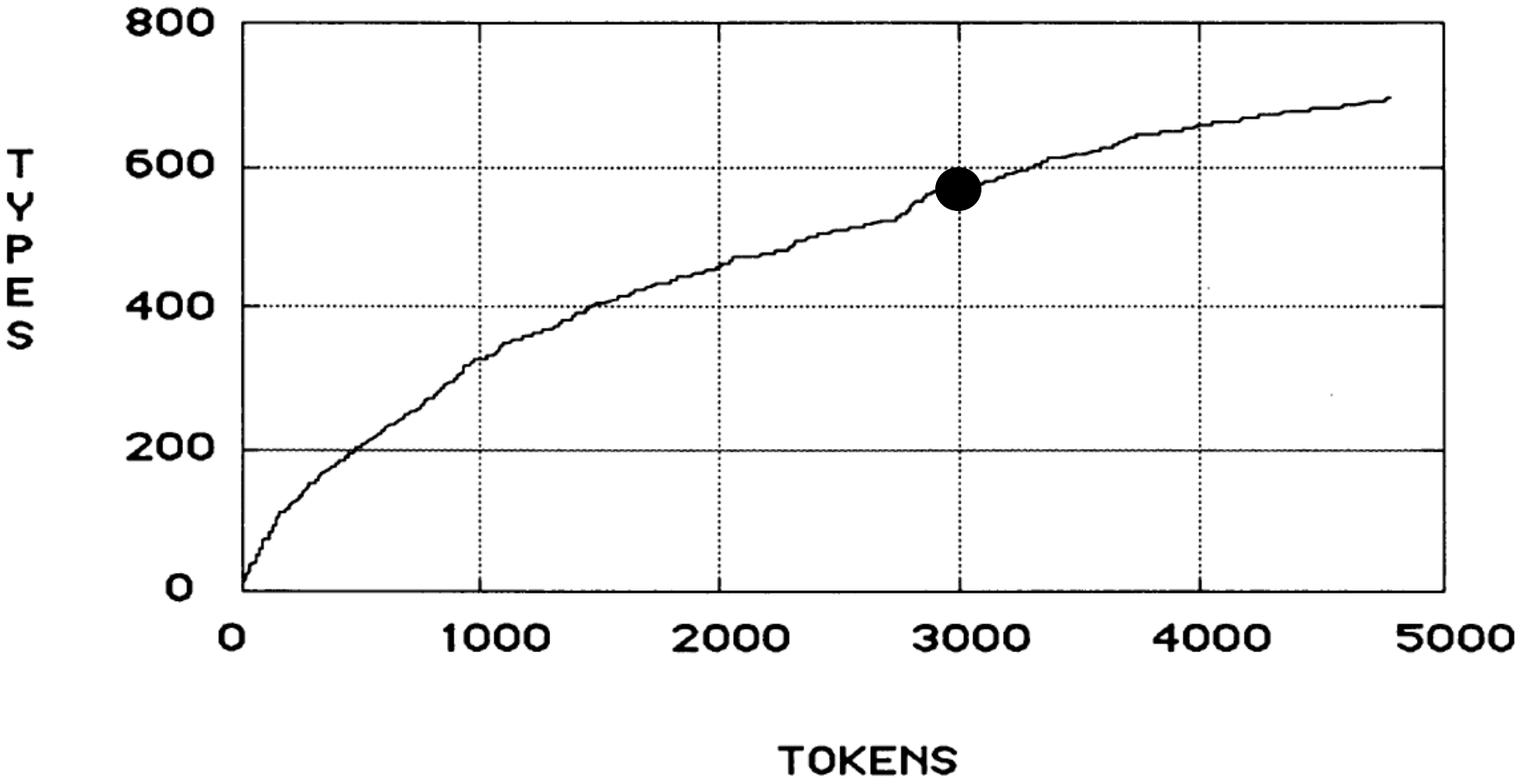

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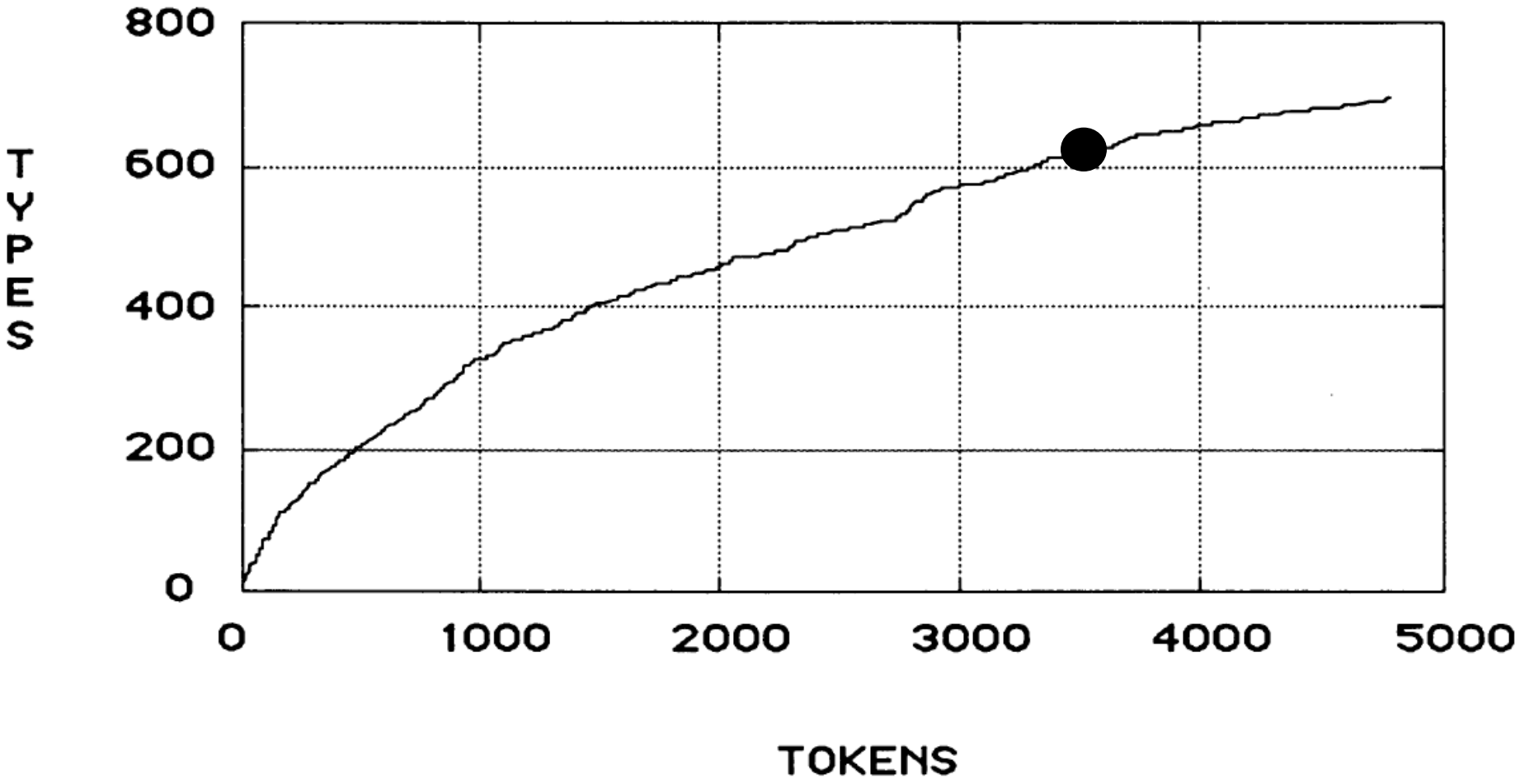

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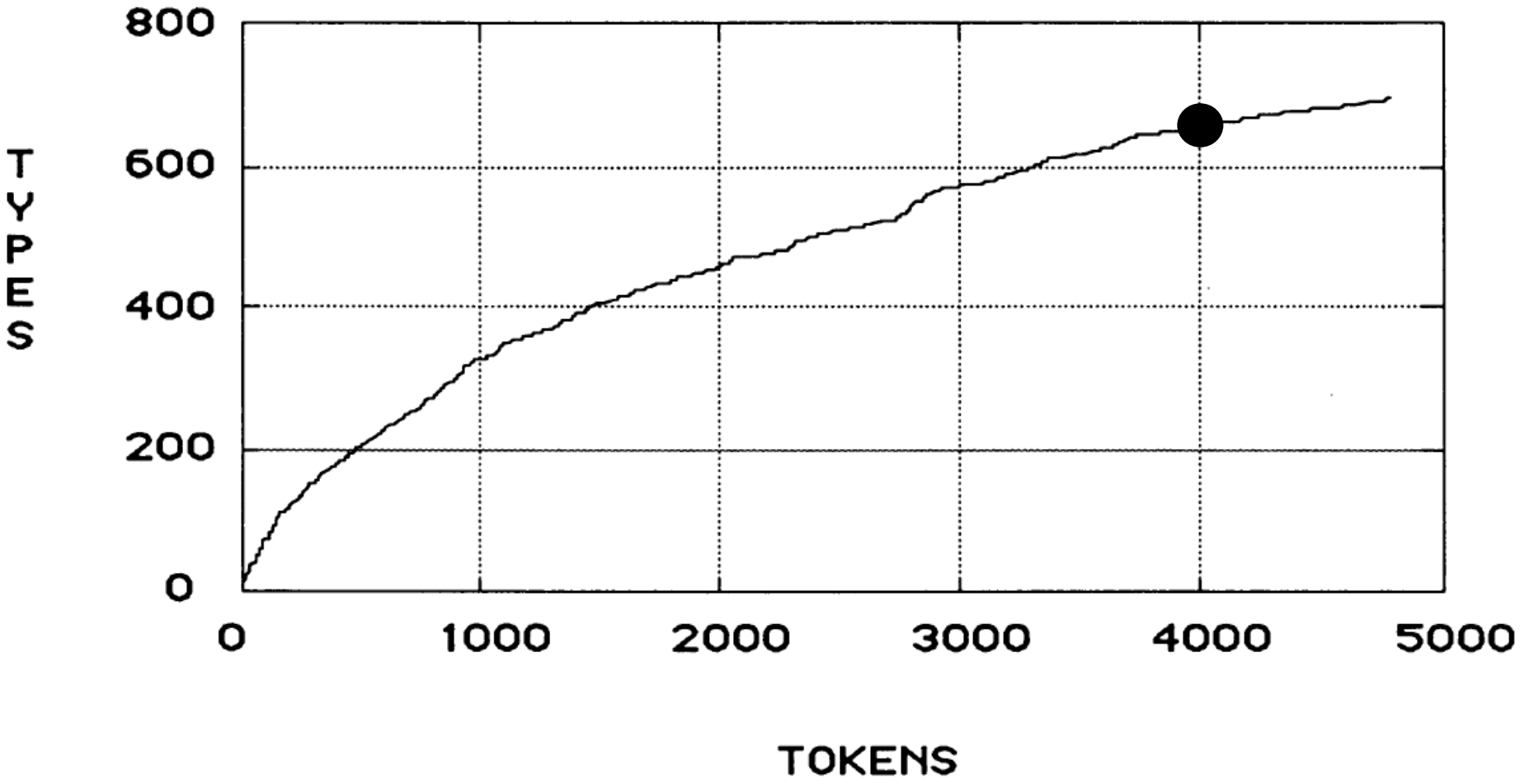

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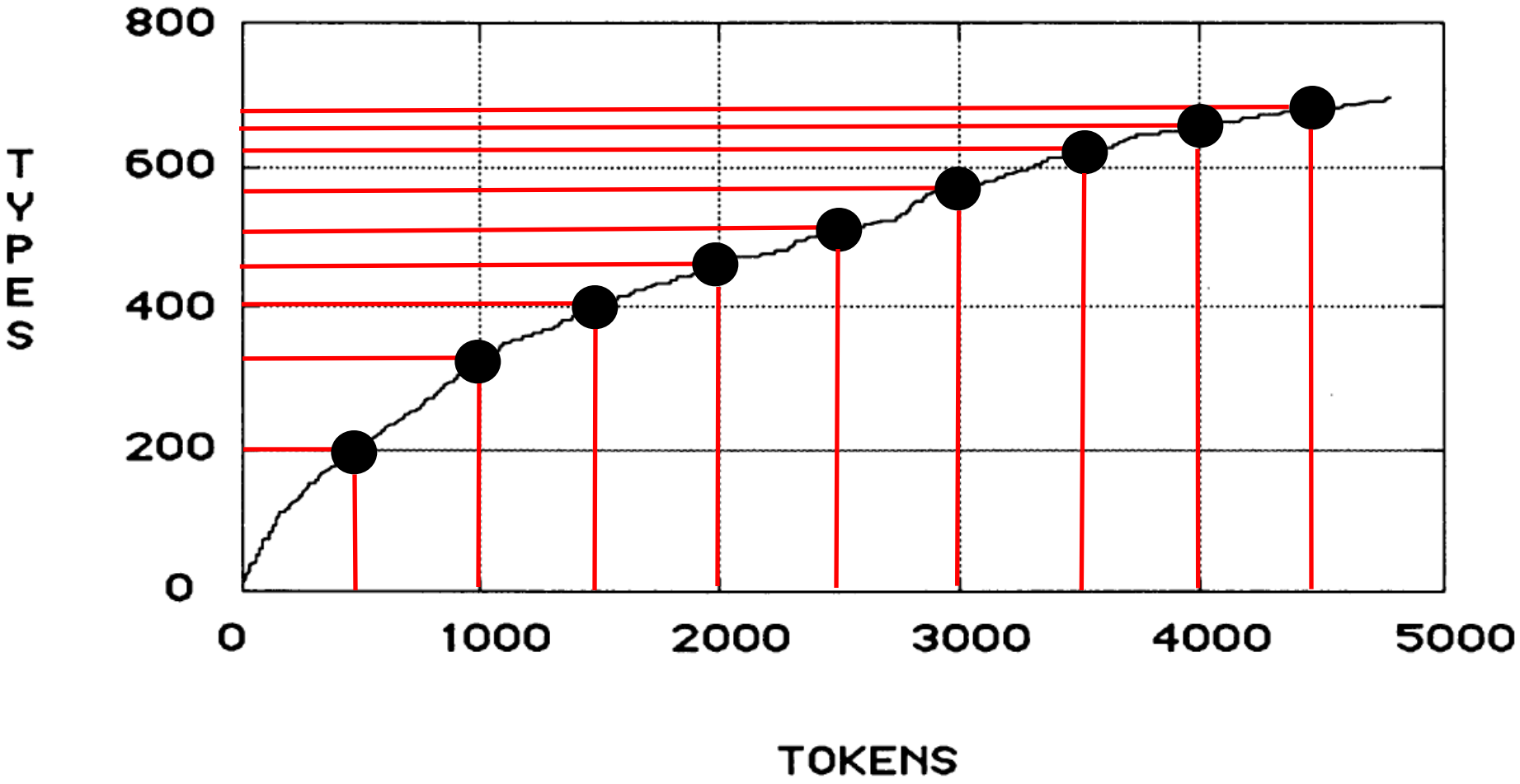

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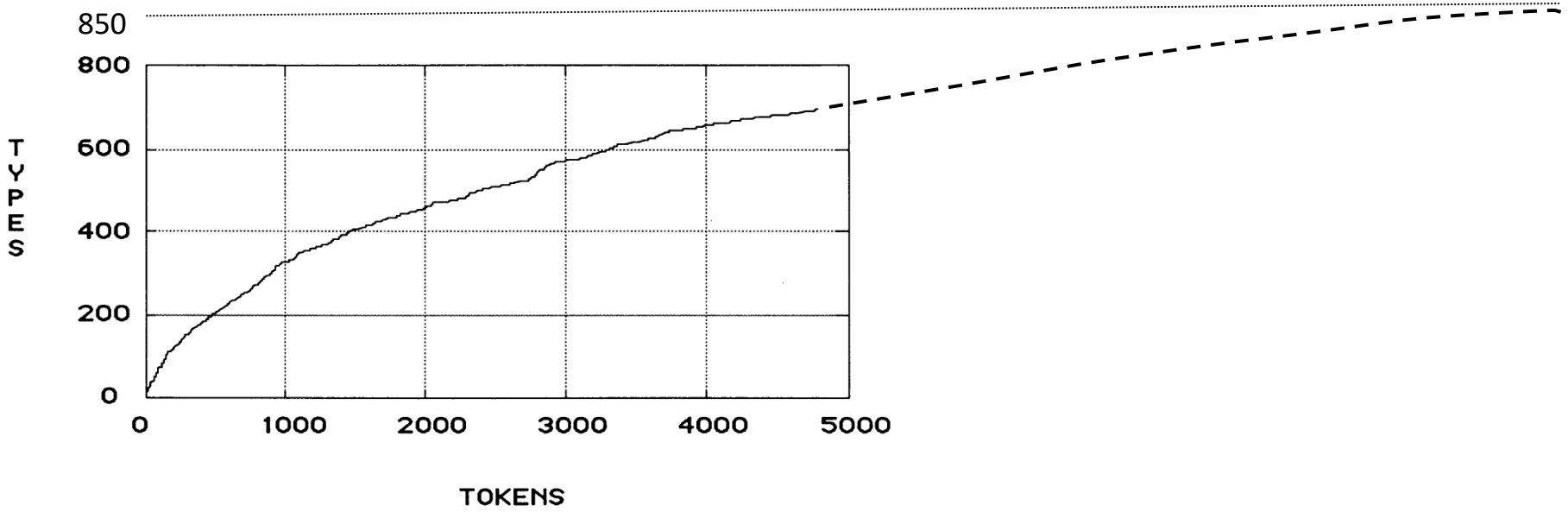

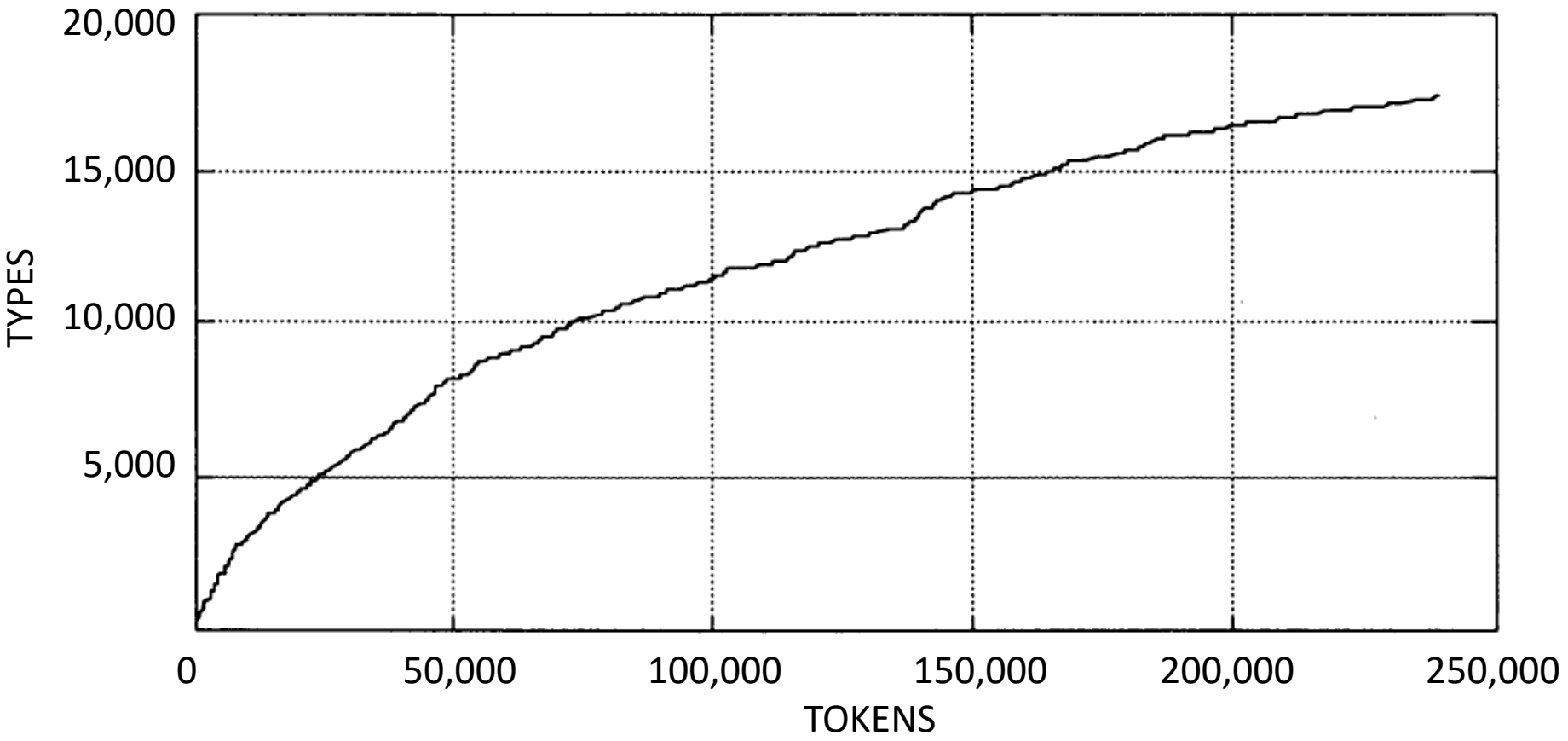
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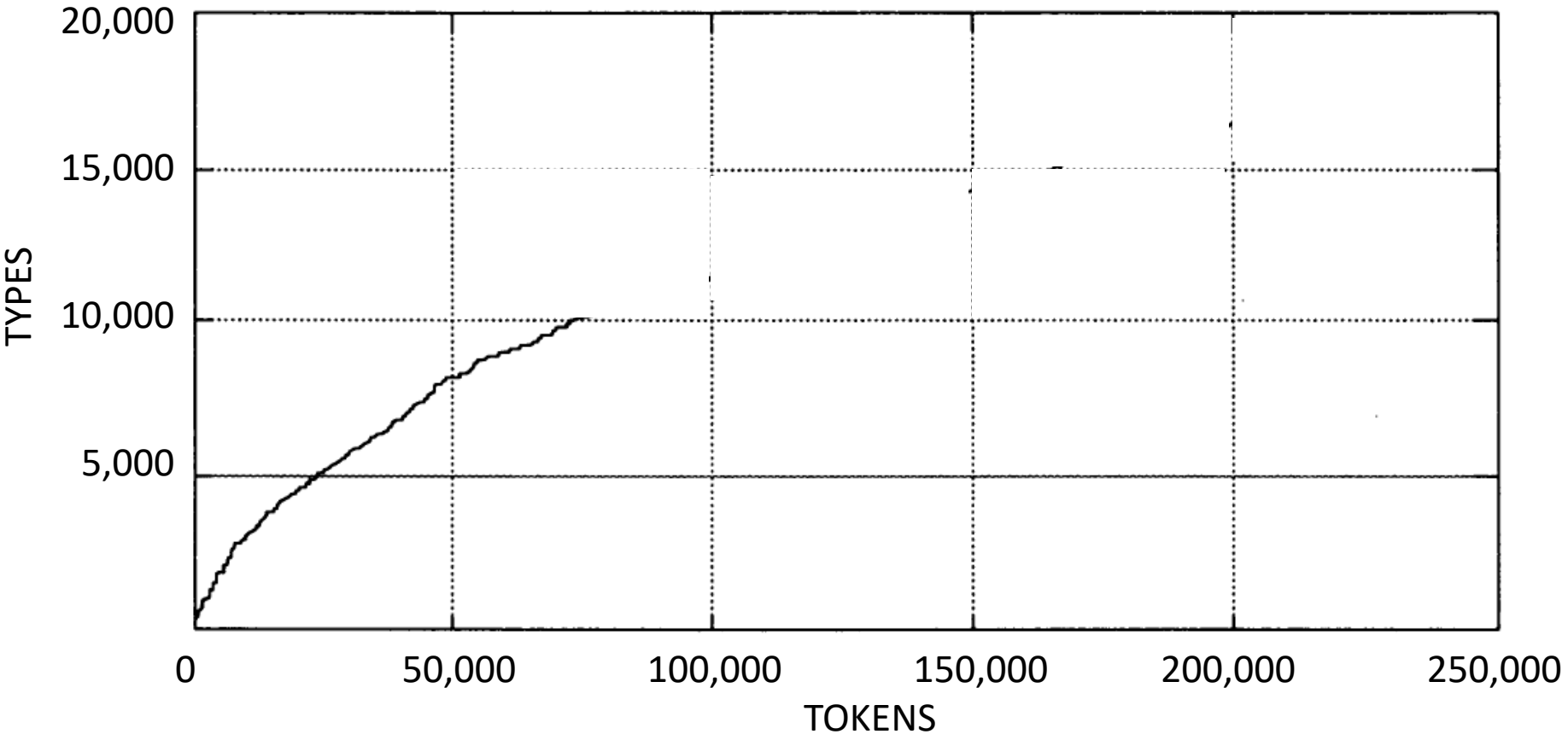
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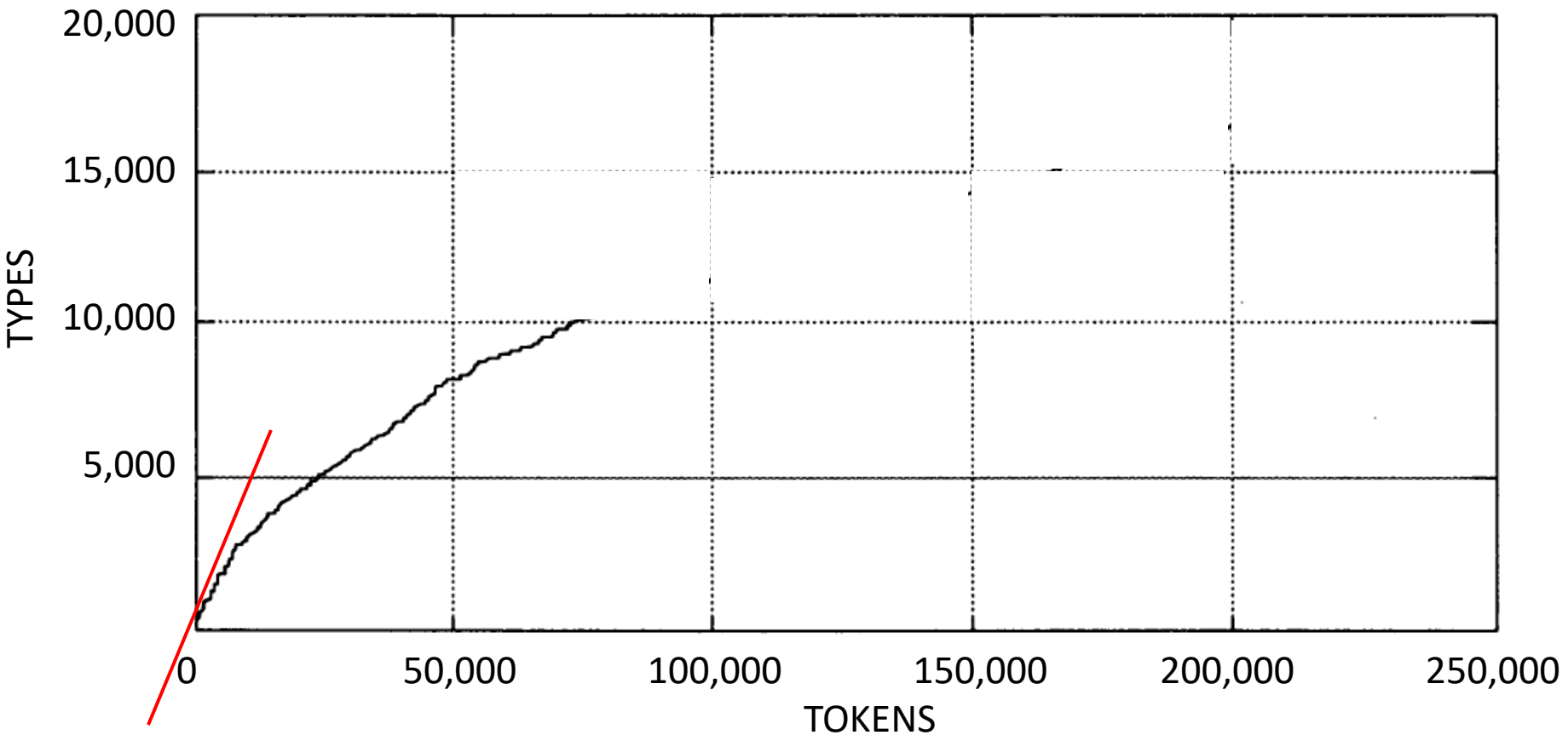
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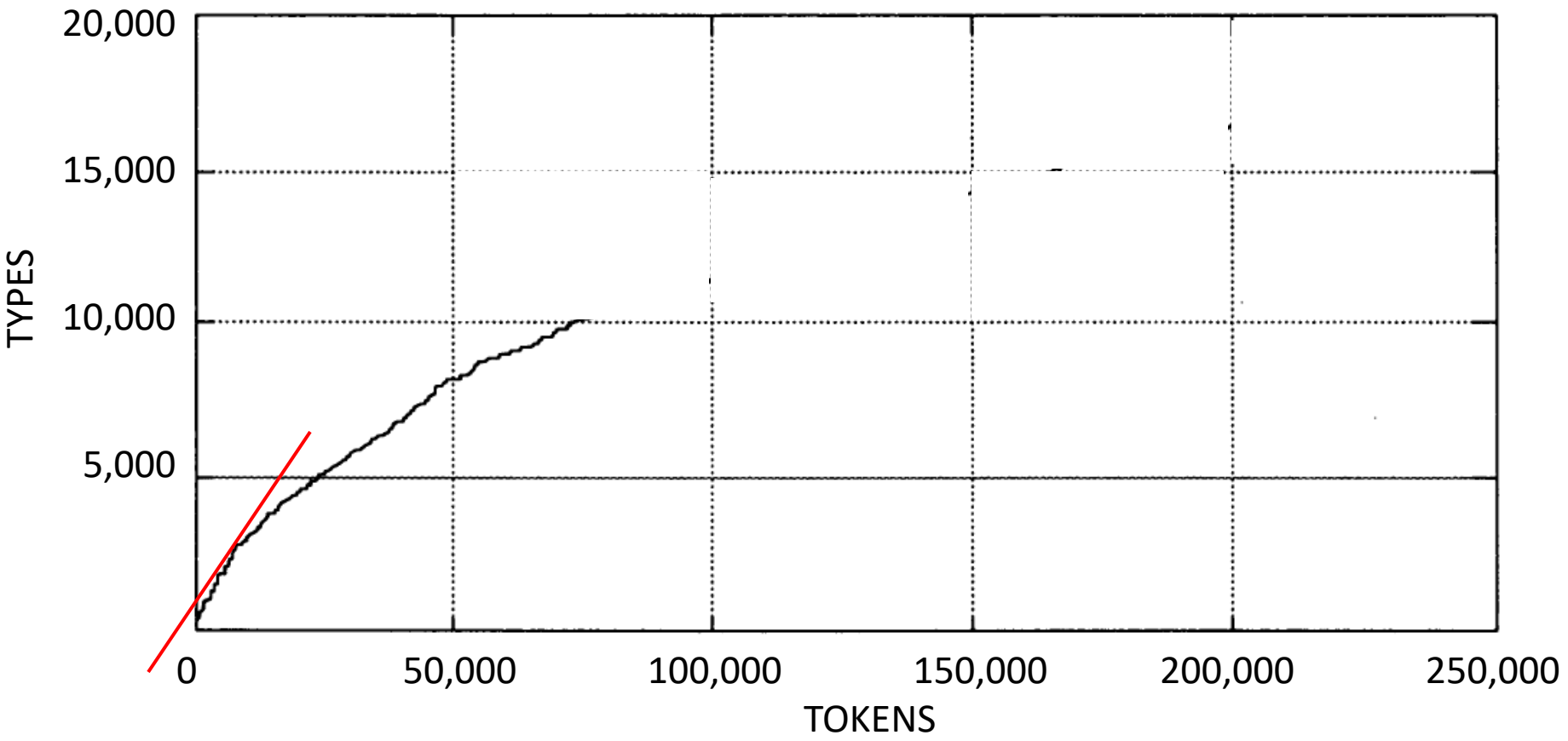
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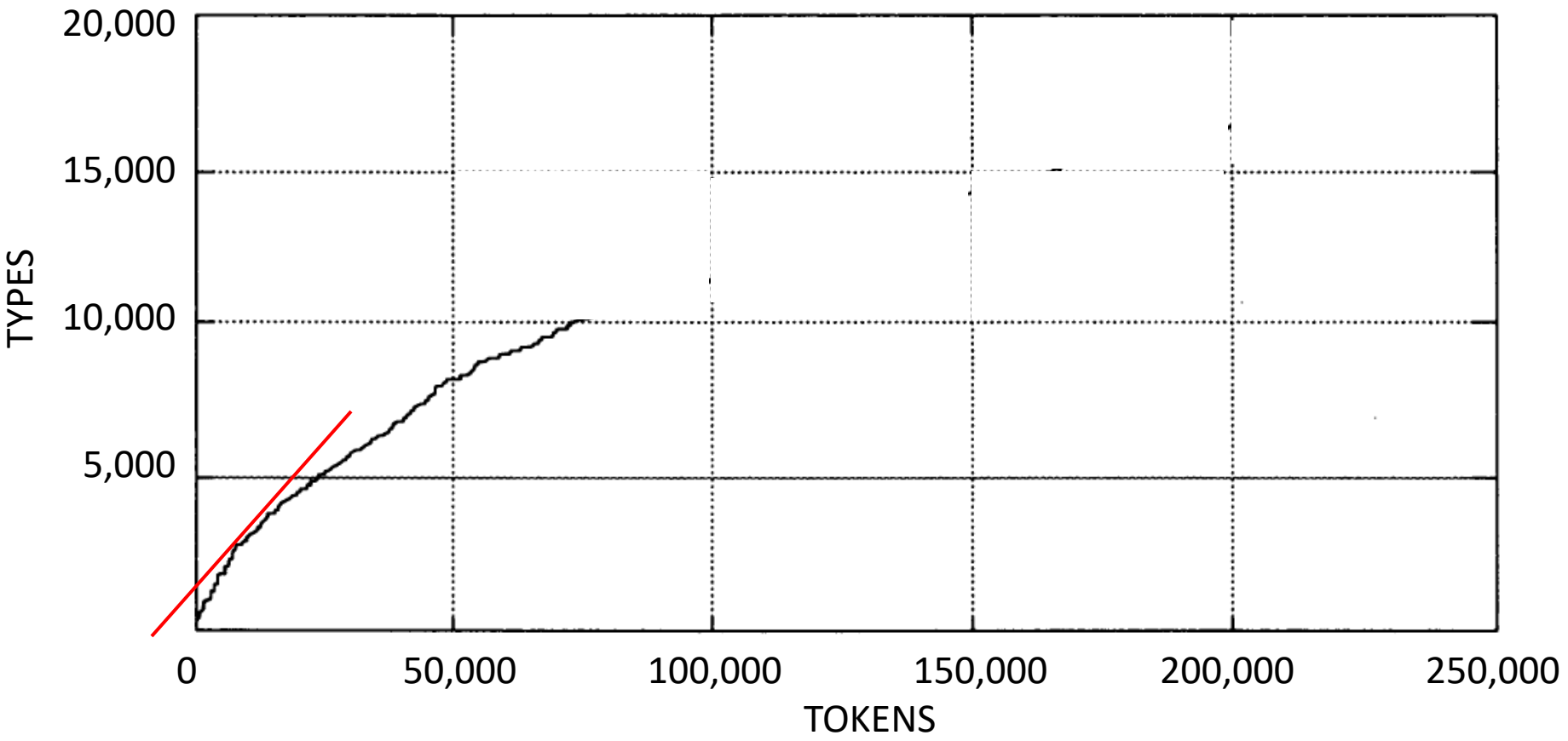
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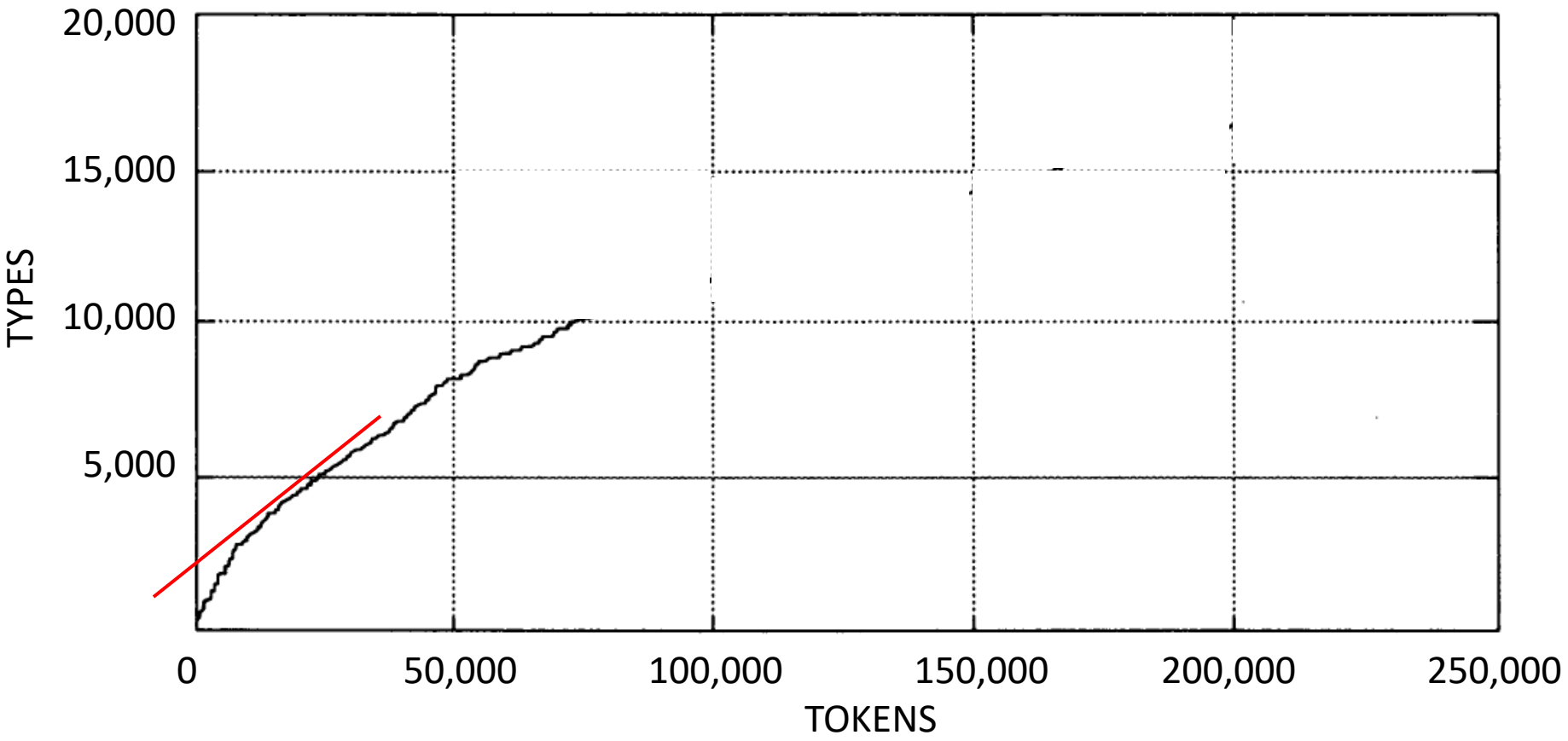
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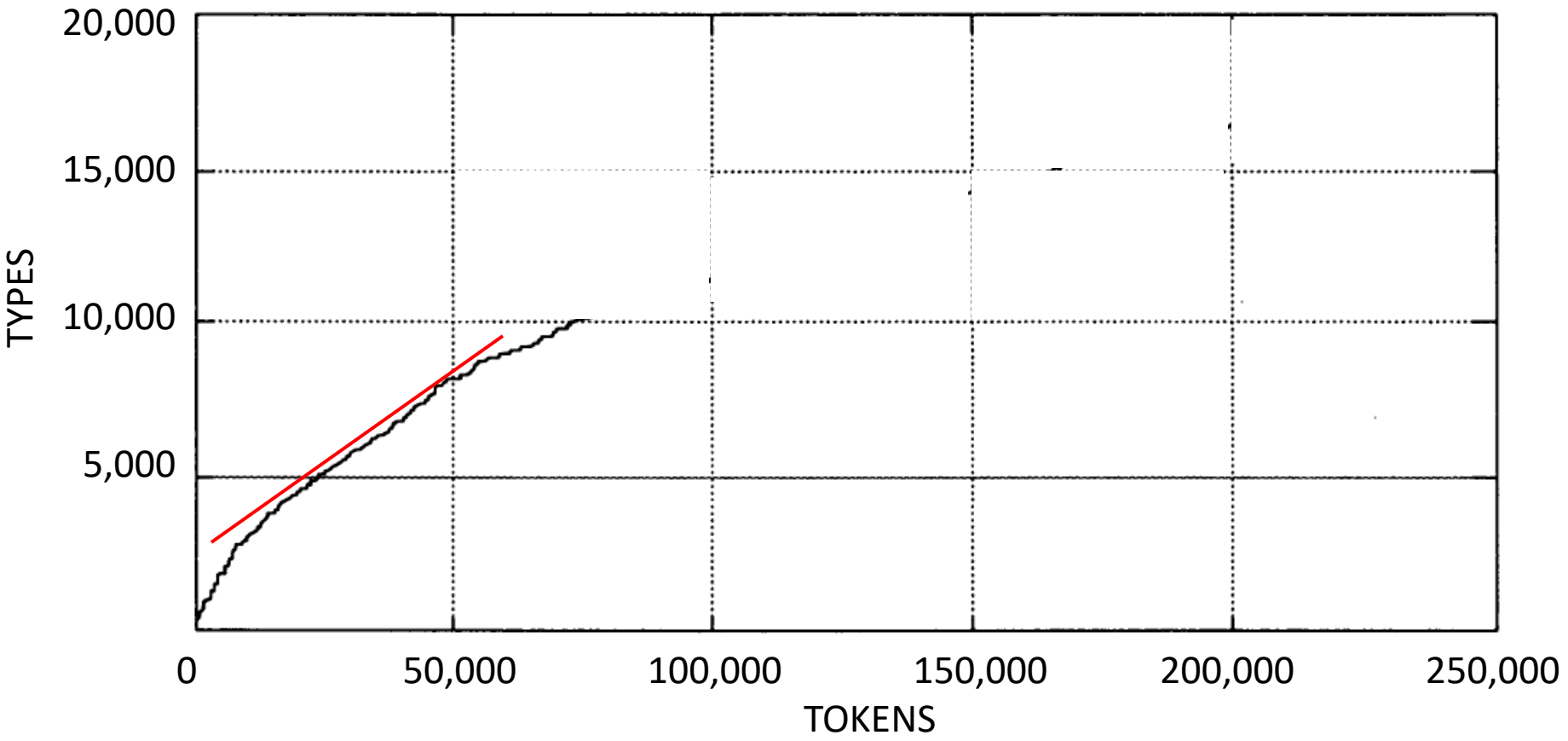
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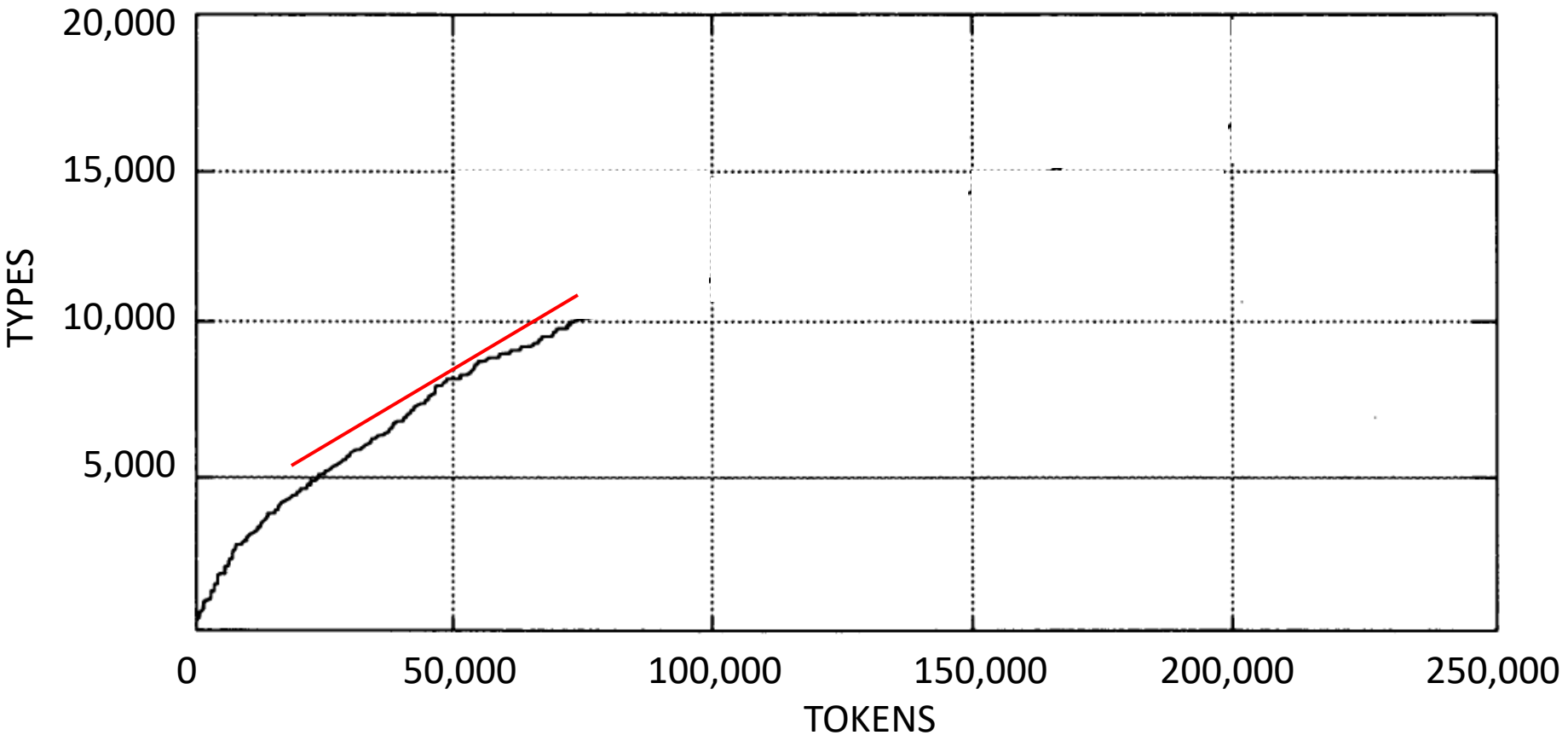
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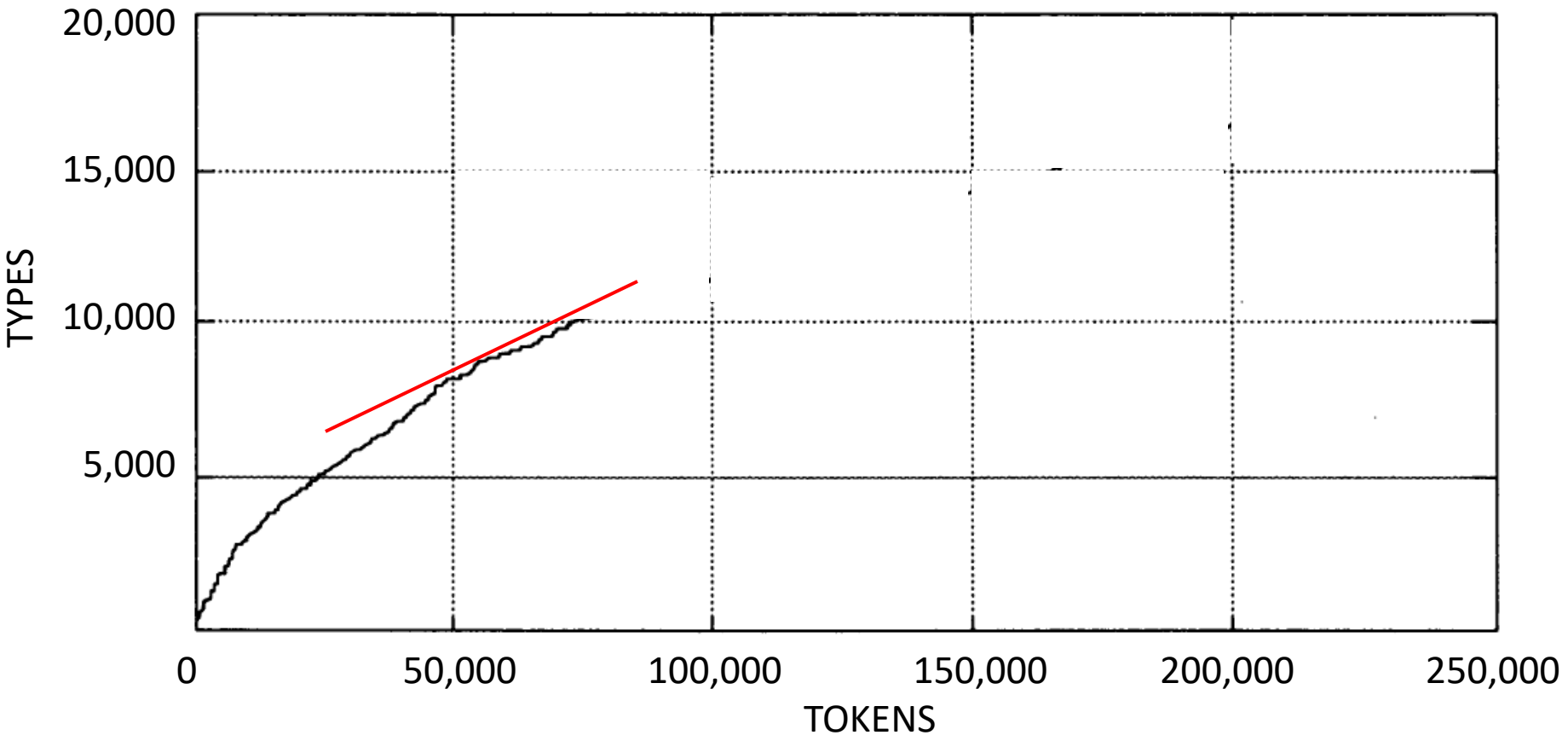
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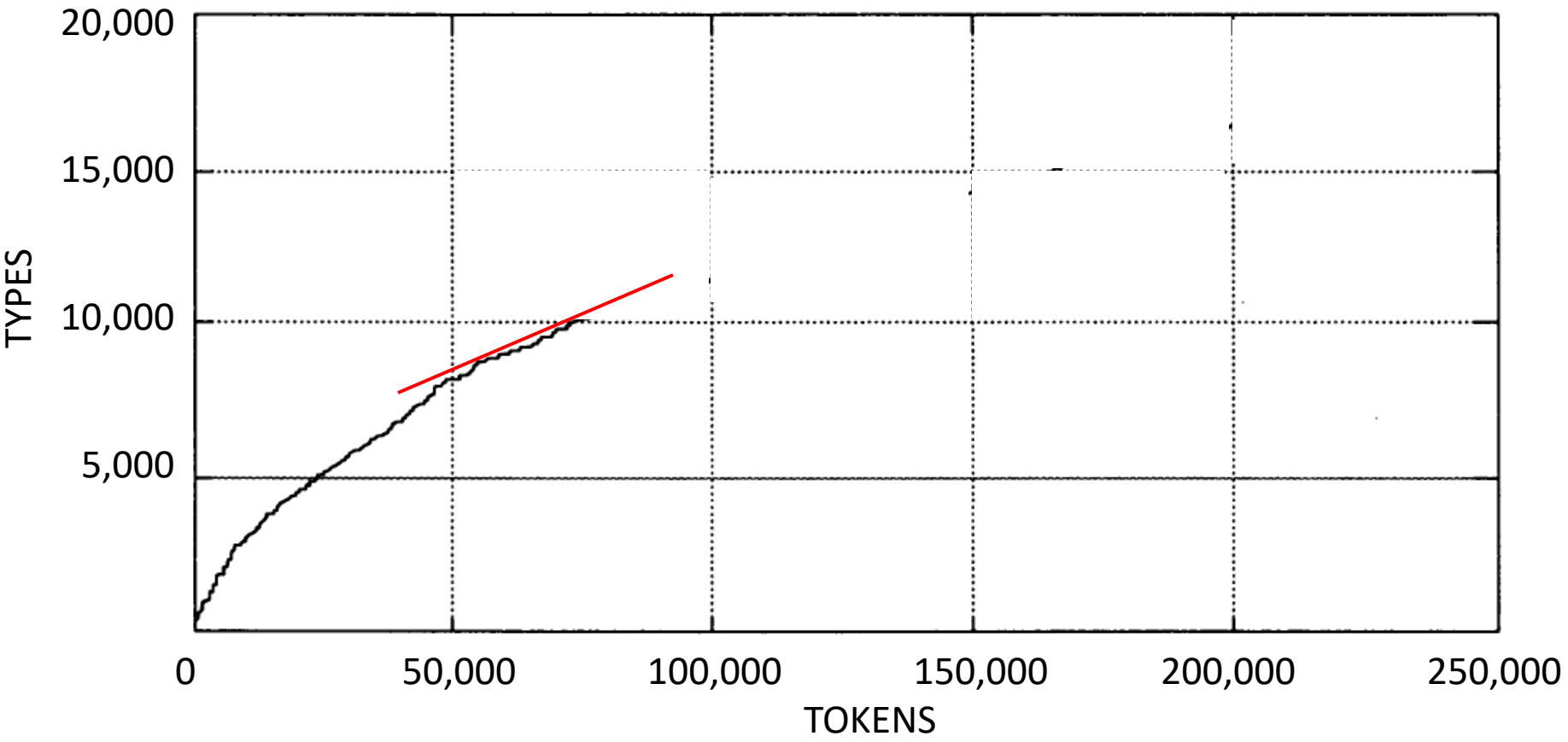
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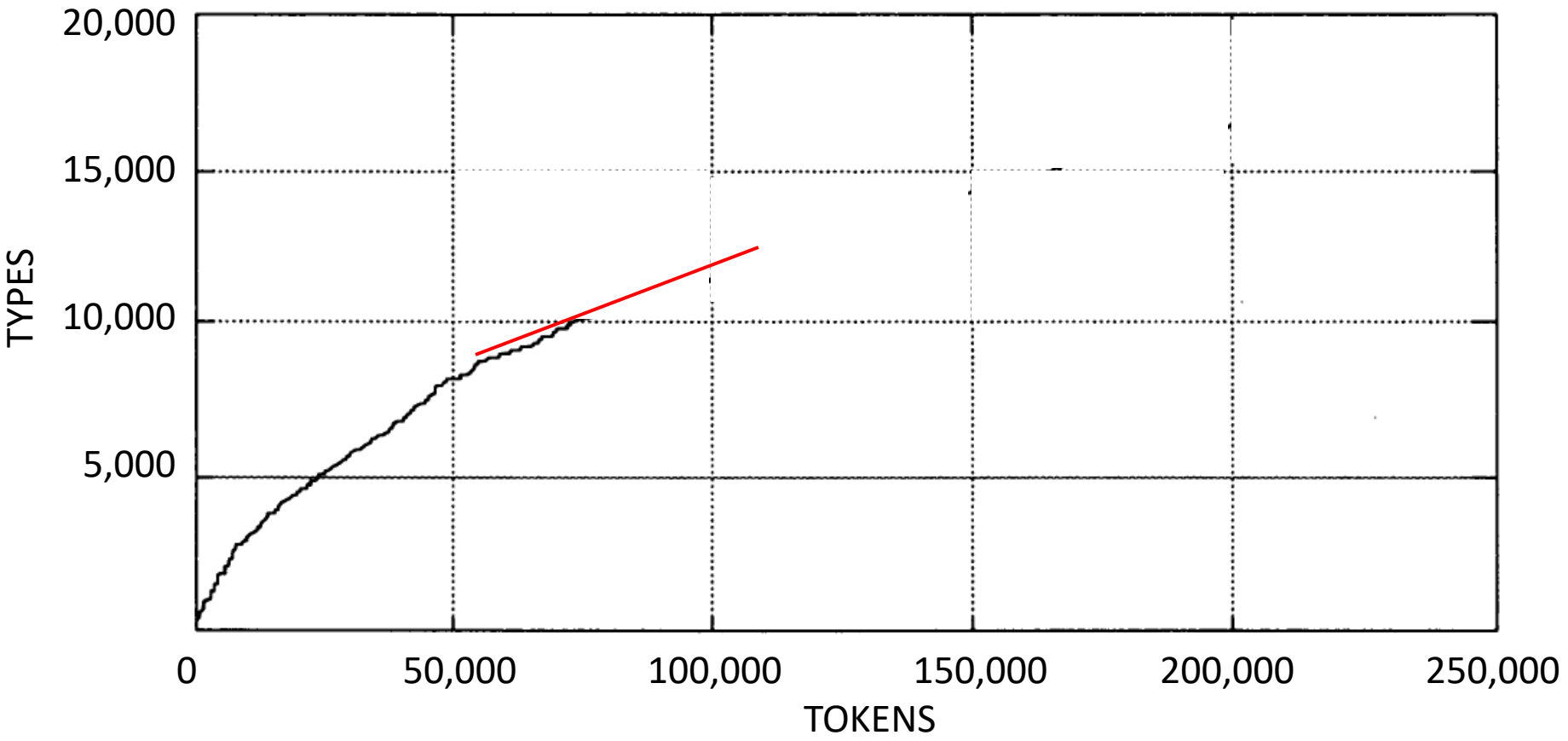
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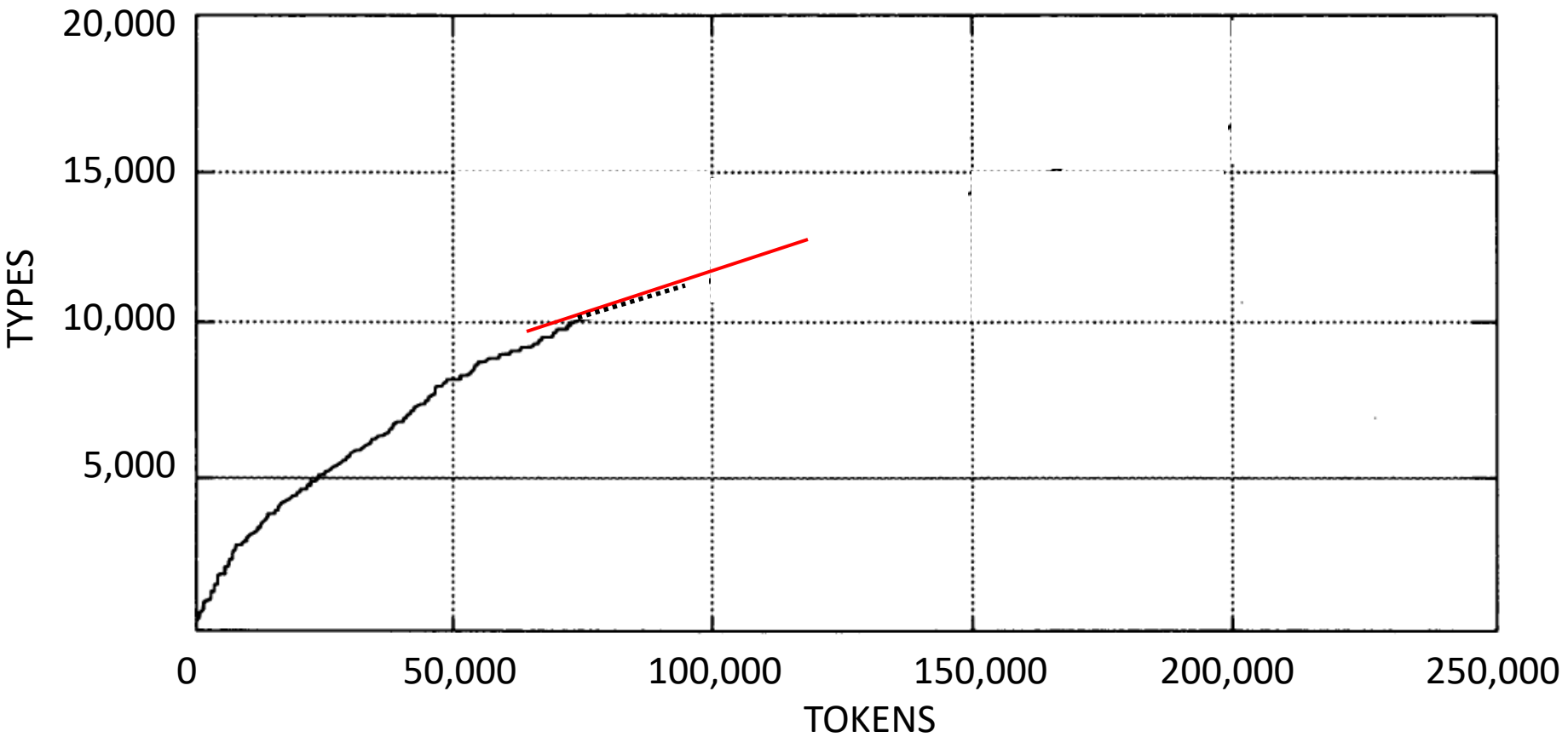
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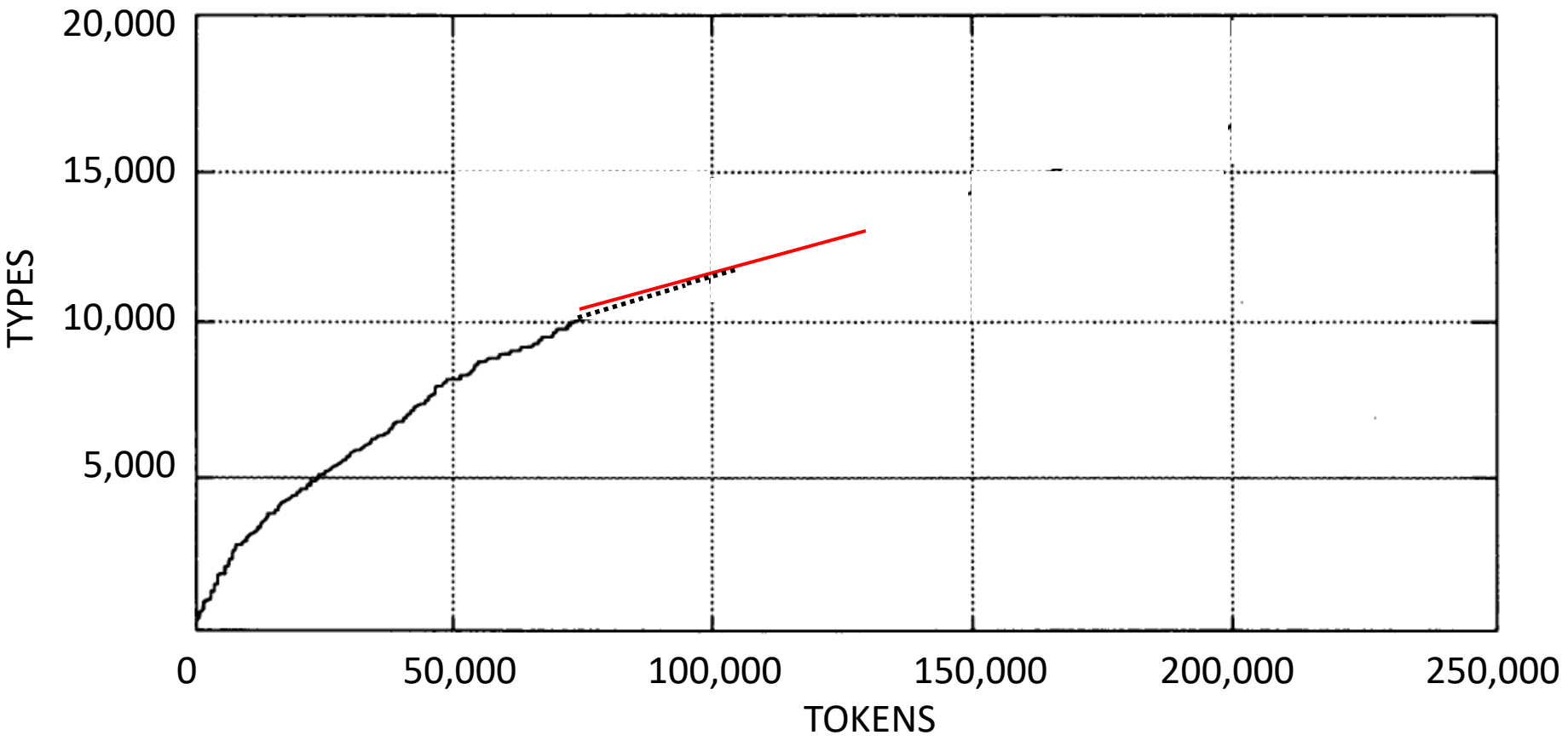
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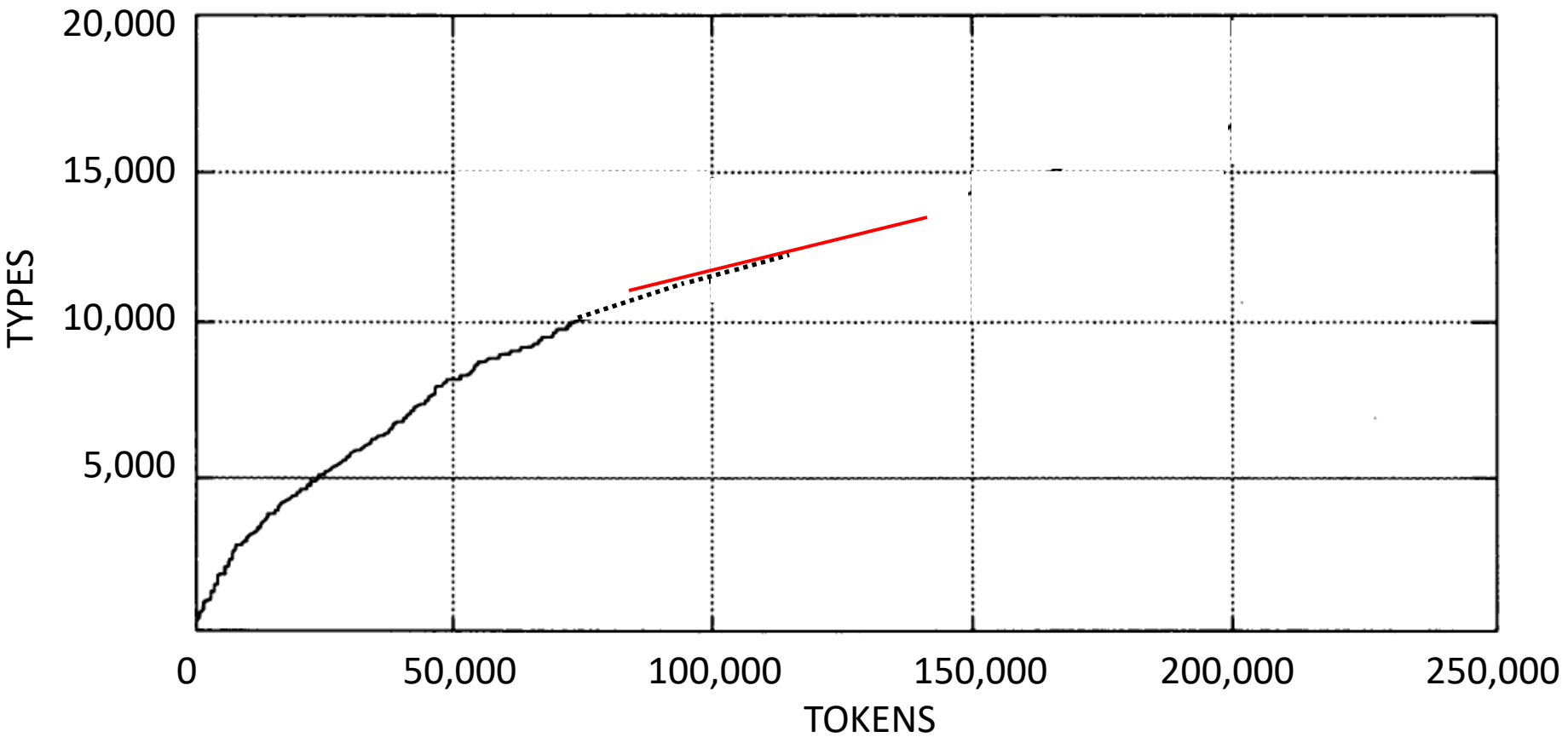
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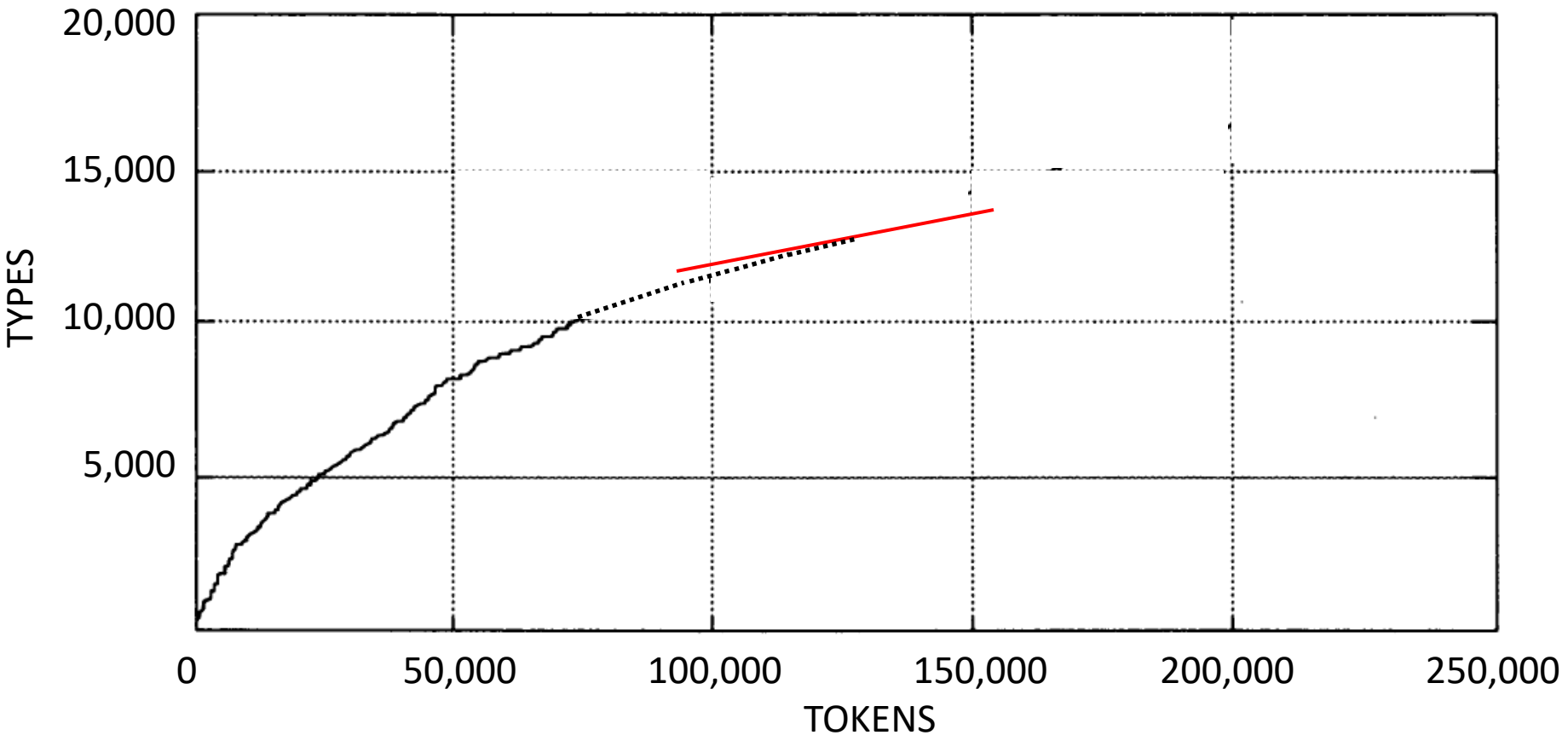
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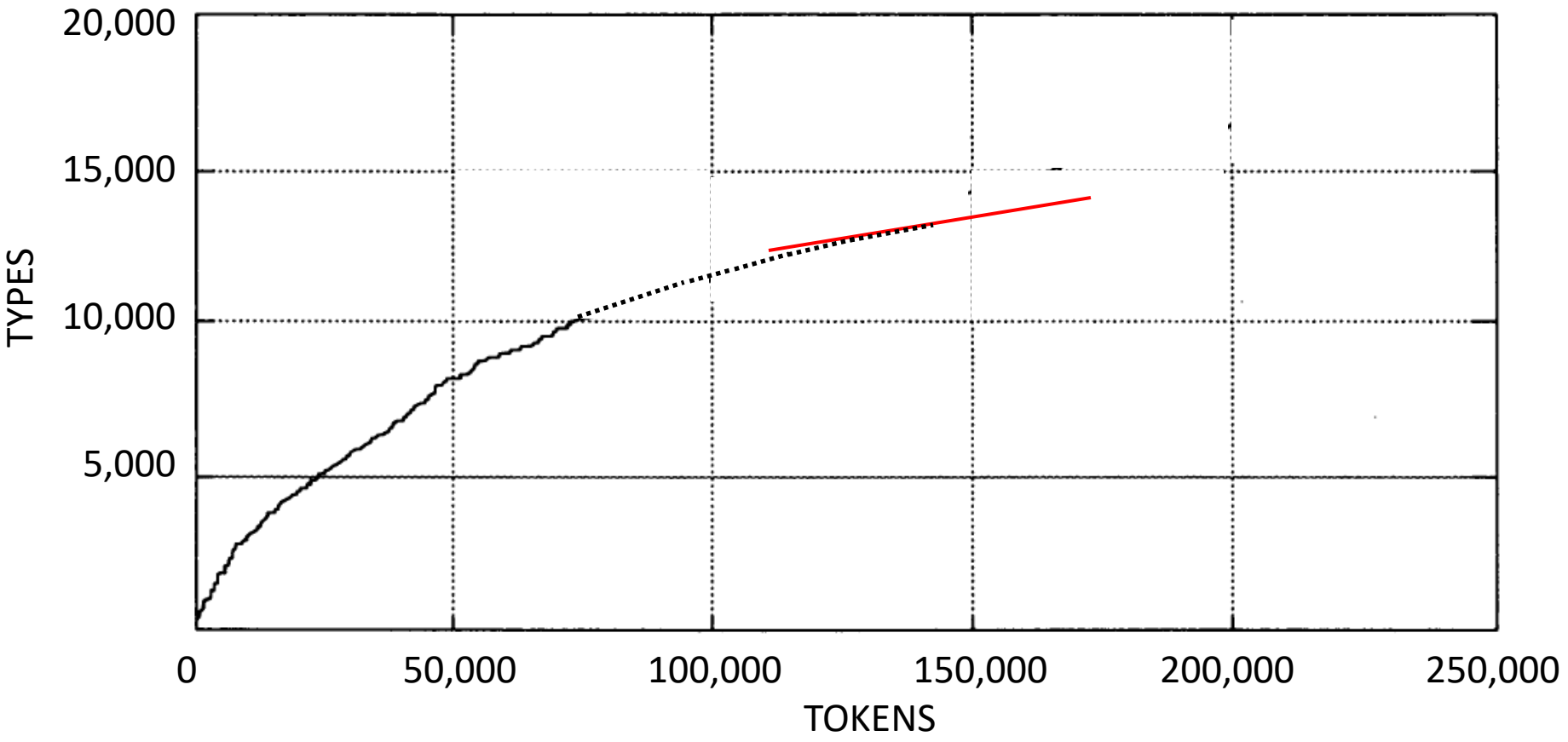
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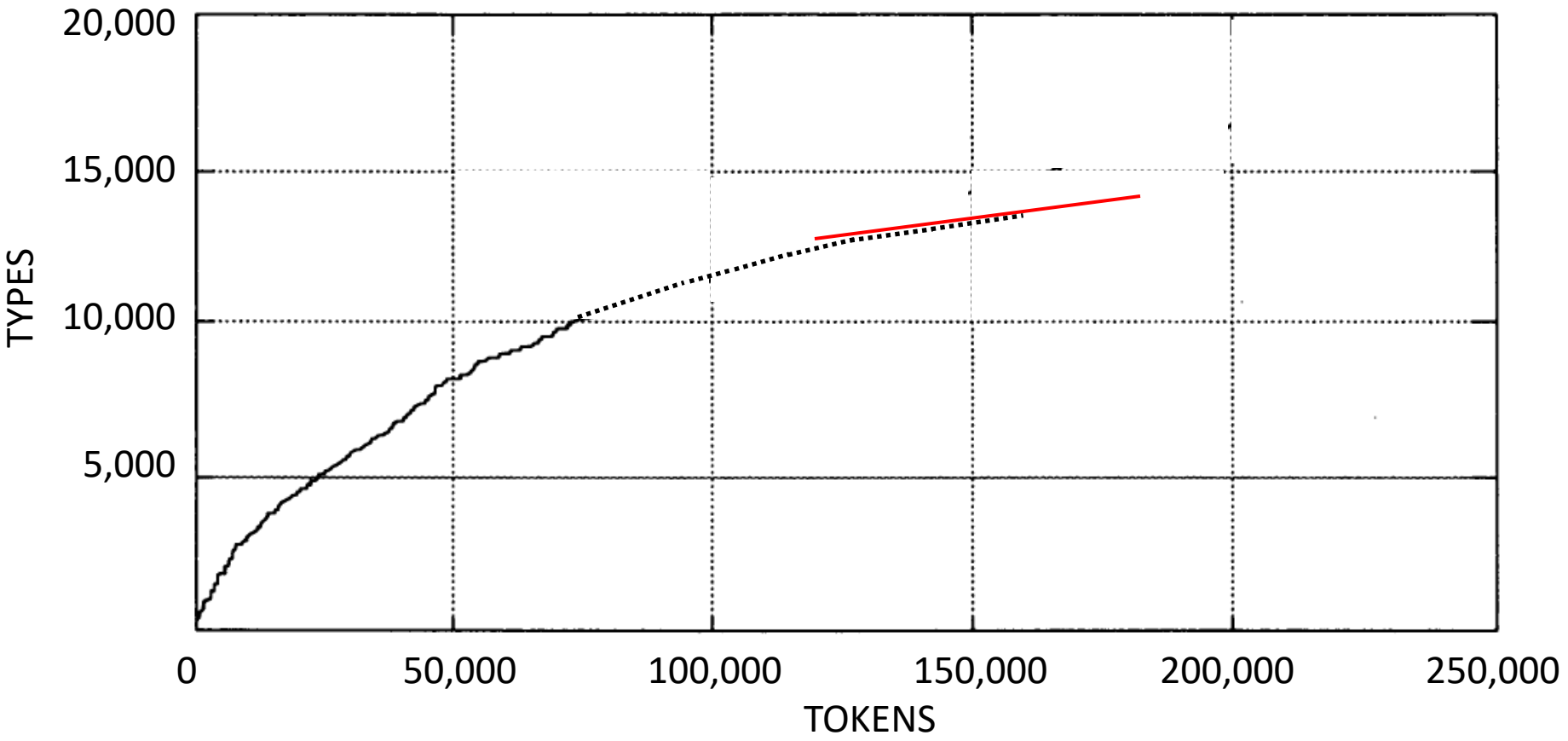
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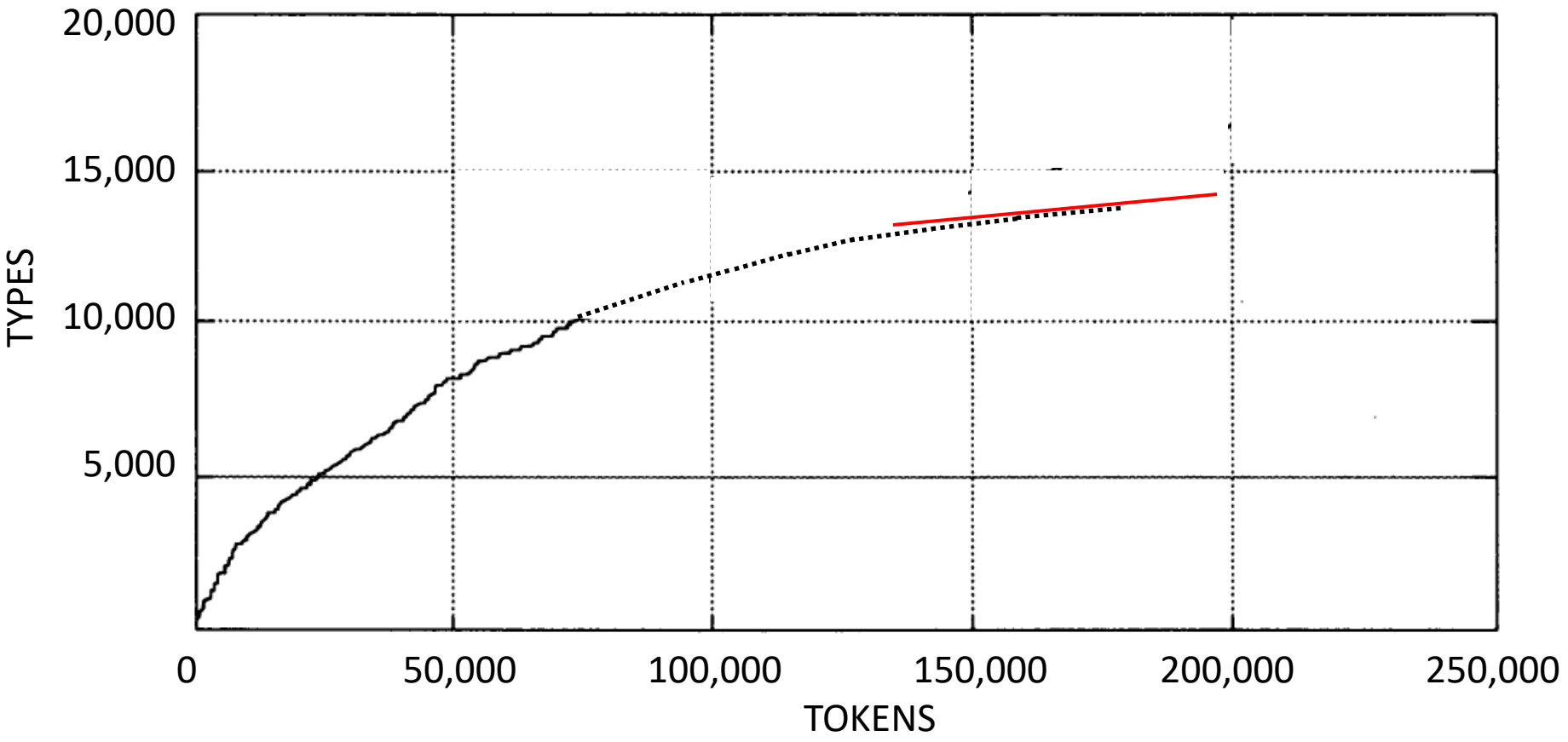
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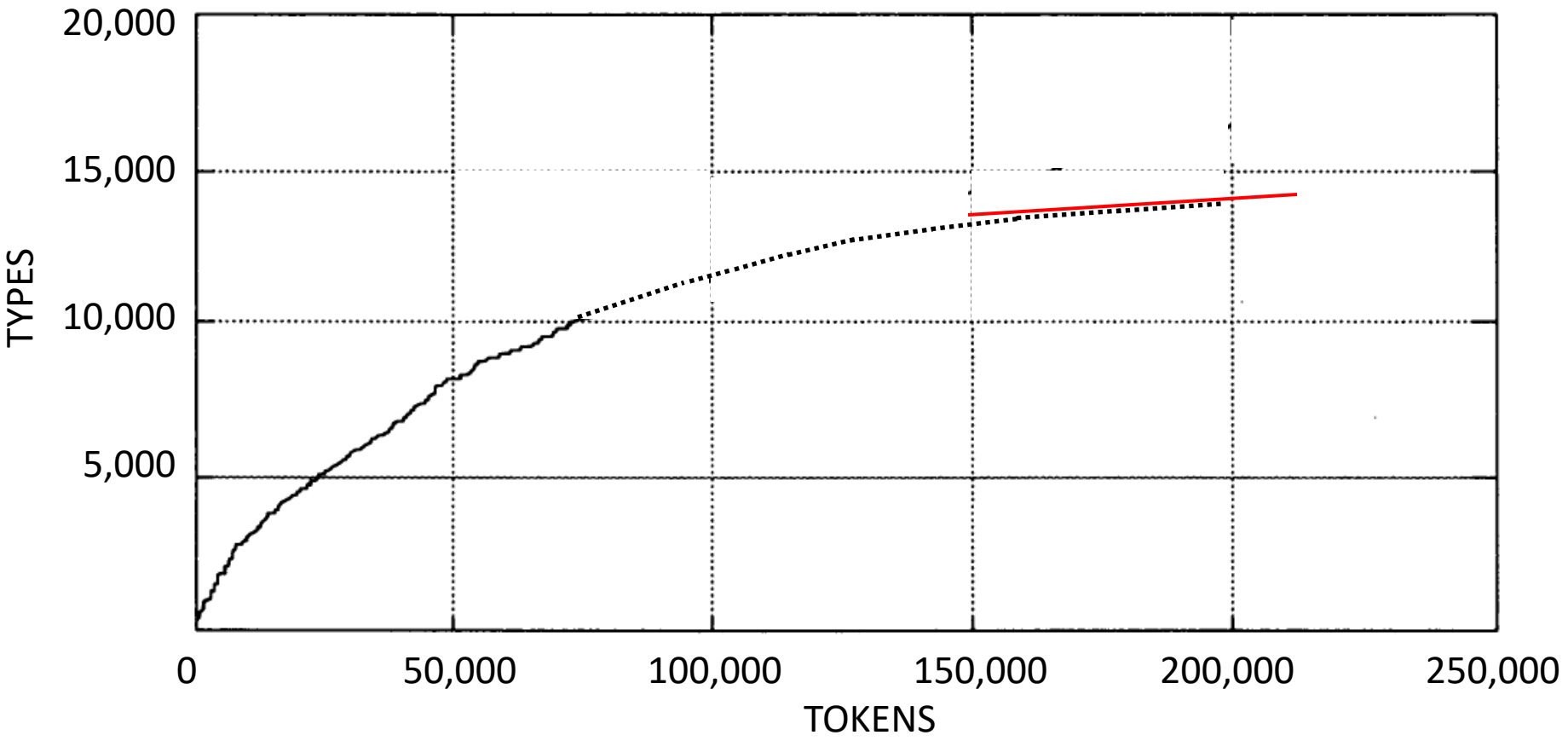
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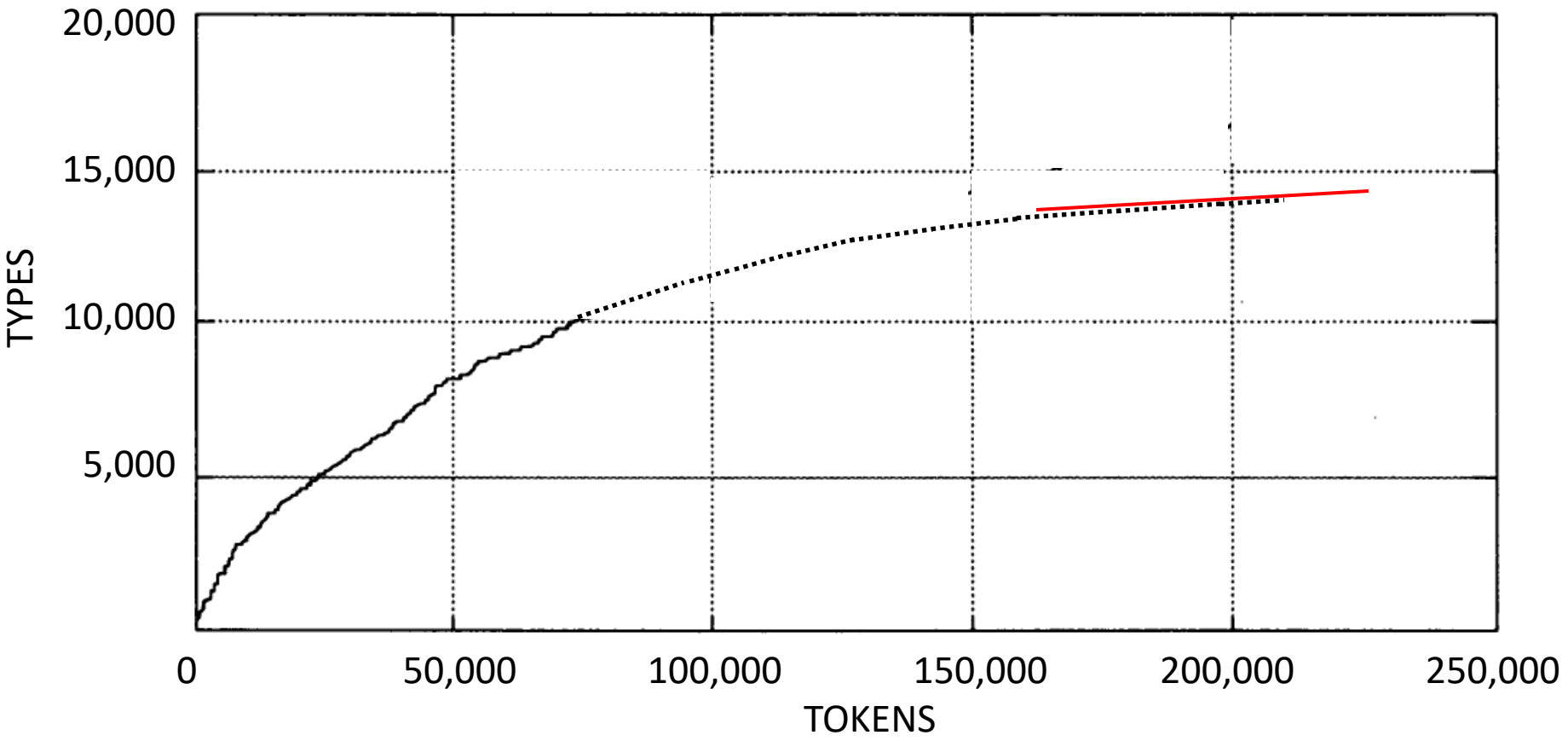
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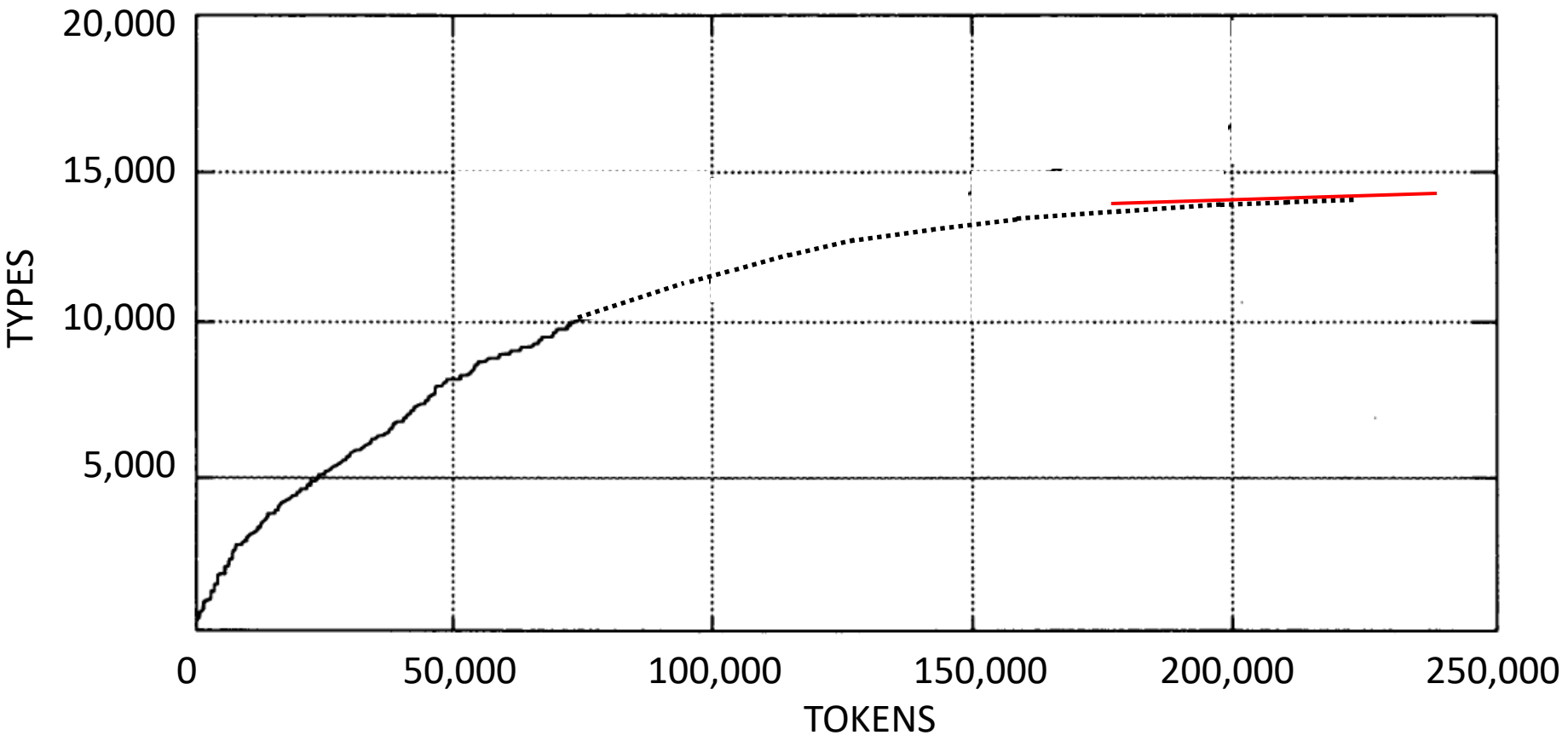
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George Chapman 12
All Fools
The Blind Beggar of Alexandria
Bussy D'Ambois
The Tragedy of Charles Duke of Byron
Caesar and Pompey
Sir Giles Goosecap
The Gentleman Usher
A Humorous Day's Mirth
May-Day
Monsieur D'Olive
The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois
The Widow's Tears

John Fletcher 15
Bonduca
Monsieur Thomas
Rule a Wife and Have a Wife
The Chances
The Faithful Shepherdess
The Humourous Lieutenant
The Island Princess
The Loyal Subject
The Mad Lover
The Pilgrim
The Wild Goose Chase.txt
The Woman's Prize
Valentinian
Women Pleased
A Wife for a Month

Robert Greene 4
Alphonsus, King of Aragon
Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay
Orlando Furioso
James IV

Ben Jonson 16
The Alchemist
Bartholomew Fair
Catiline's Conspiracy
Cynthia's Revels
The Devil is an Ass
Every Man In his Humour
Every Man Out of his Humour
Epicoene
The Magnetic Lady
The New Inn
Poetaster
Sejanus's Fall
The Sad Shepherd
The Staple of News
The Tale of a Tub
Volpone

Christopher Marlowe 6
1 Tamburlaine
2 Tamburlaine
Edward II
Doctor Faustus
The Jew of Malta
The Massacre at Paris

Thomas Middleton 16
The Second Maiden's Tragedy
A Chaste Maid in Cheapside
A Game at Chess
Hengist King of Kent
More Dissemblers Besides Women
Michaelmas Term
A Mad World My Masters
No Wit No Help Like a Woman's
The Phoenix
The Puritan
The Revenger's Tragedy
A Trick to Catch the Old One
Women Beware Women
The Widow
The Witch
Your Five Gallants

Peele 5
The Battle of Alcazar
The Love of King David and Fair Bethsabe
Edward I
The Old Wives Tale
The Arraignment of Paris

Shakespeare 27
1 Henry IV
2 Henry IV
Much Ado About Nothing
Antony and Cleopatra
All's Well that Ends Well
As You Like It
Coriolanus
Cymbeline
The Comedy of Errors
Henry V
Hamlet
Julius Caesar
Love's Labour's Lost
King Lear
A Midsummer Night's Dream
The Merchant of Venice
Othello
Richard II
Richard III
Romeo and Juliet
The Taming of the Shrew
The Two Gentlemen of Verona
The Tempest
Twelfth Night
Troilus and Cressida
The Merry Wives of Windsor
The Winter's Tale

the, be, of, and, a, in, to, have, it, for, I, that, you, he, on, with, do, at, by, not, this, but, from, they, his, that, she, or, which, as, we, an, say, will, would, can, if, their, go, what, there, all, get, her, make, who, as, out, up, see, know, time, take, them, some, could, so, him, year, into, its, then, think, my, come, than, more, about, now, last, your, me, no, other, give, just, should, these, people, also, well, any, only, new, very, when, may, way, look, like, use, her, such, how, because, when, as, good, find

(The 100 most-used words in early modern drama)

GUESSER	GUESSEE
Is it a *d*?	
	No, it's a *t*
(writes *t*)	(Puts a *t* above the *t*)
Is it an *h*?	
	Yes
(writes *h*)	(Puts a dash above the *h*)
Is it an e?	
	Yes
(writes *e*)	(Puts a dash above the *e*)
Is it a space?	
	Yes
(writes a space)	(Puts a dash above the space)

	`t---`
`the`	`the`

if u cn rd ths u cn bcm a sec & gt a gd jb wi hi pa

If this author uses another one of our 100 function words within 5 words of using *the*, there is a 10% probability that the function word he will choose is *of*.

	the	be	of	and	a	in	. . .
the	0.23	0.20	0.10	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .
be	0.31	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .
of	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .
and	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .
a	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .
in	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .
. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .

With one auspicious and one dropping eye,
With mirth in funeral and with dirge in marriage,
In equal scale weighing delight and dole,
(Shakespeare *Hamlet* 1.2.11-13)

With one auspicious **and one** dropping eye,
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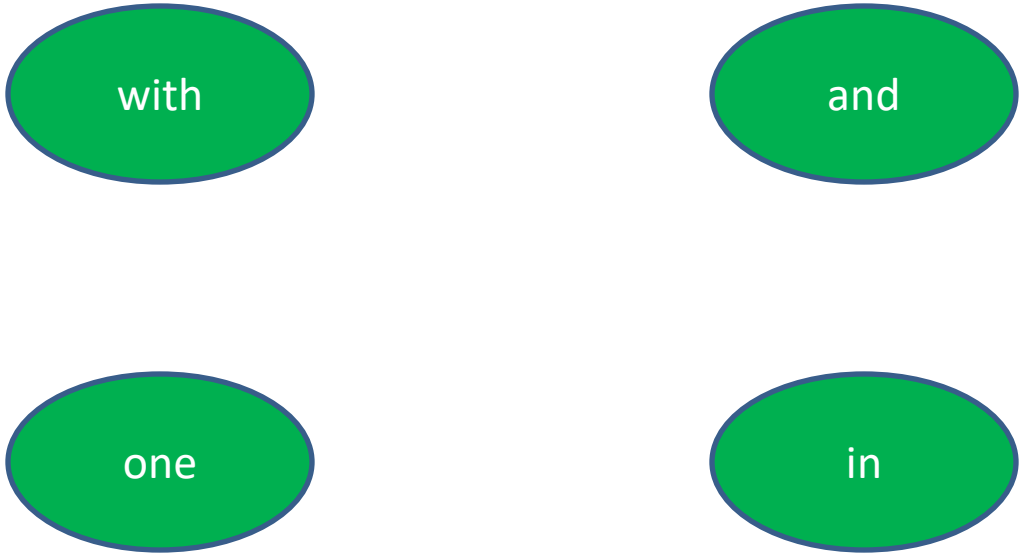

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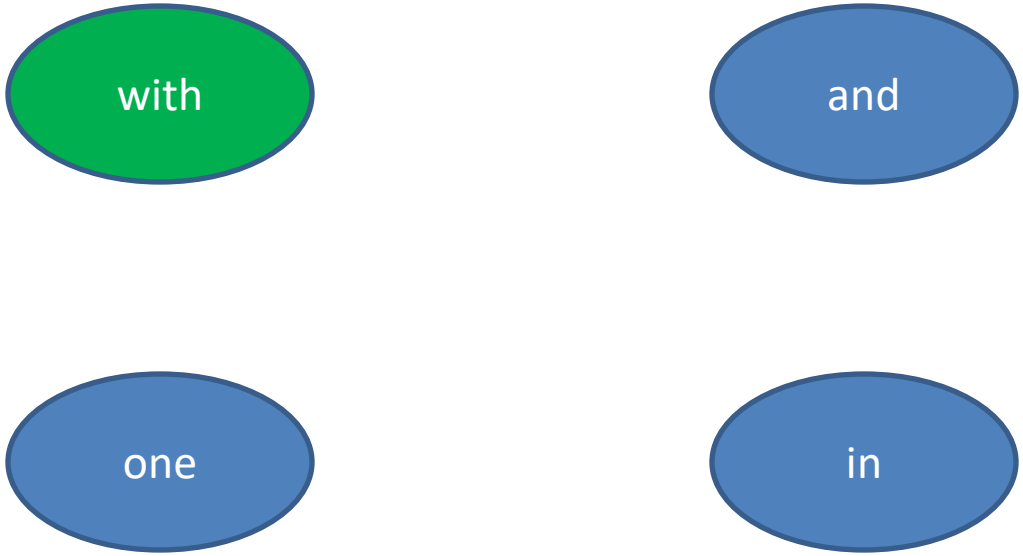
With mirth **in** funeral **and with** dirge **in** marriage,
In equal scale weighing delight **and** dole,
(Shakespeare *Hamlet* 1.2.11-13)



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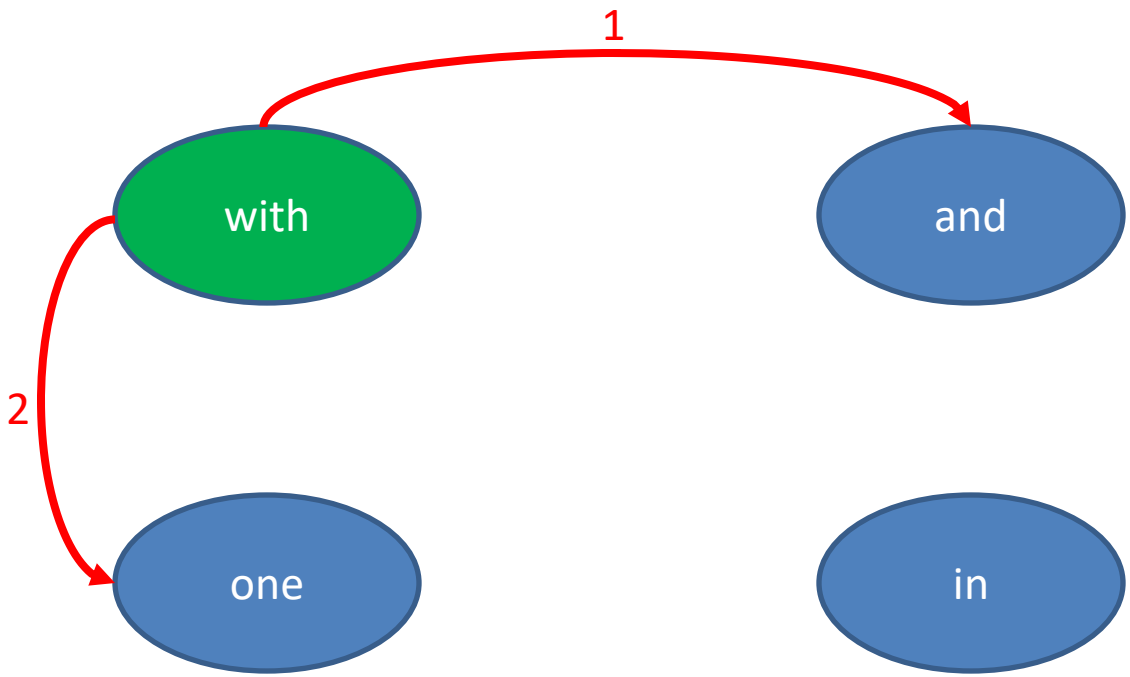
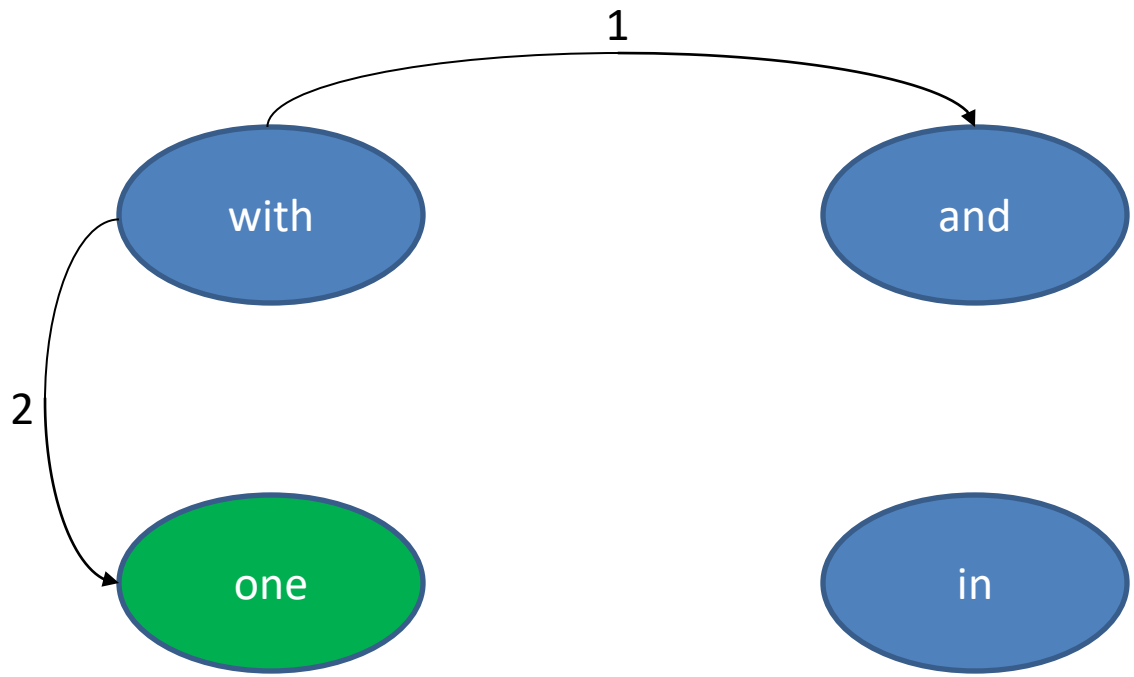
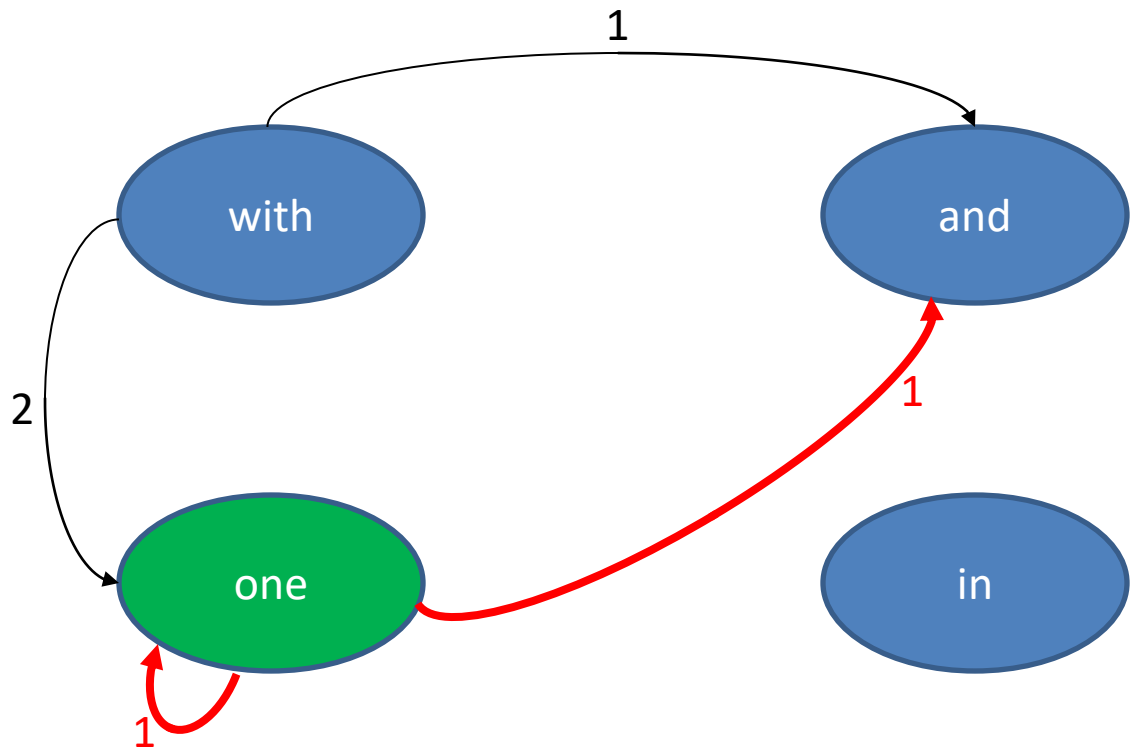
With mirth **in** funeral **and with** dirge **in** marriage,
In equal scale weighing delight **and** dole,
(Shakespeare *Hamlet* 1.2.11-13)



With one [auspicious **and one** dropping eye],
With mirth **in** funeral **and with** dirge **in** marriage,
In equal scale weighing delight **and** dole,
(Shakespeare *Hamlet* 1.2.11-13)



With one [auspicious **and one** dropping eye],
With mirth **in** funeral **and with** dirge **in** marriage,
In equal scale weighing delight **and** dole,
(Shakespeare *Hamlet* 1.2.11-13)



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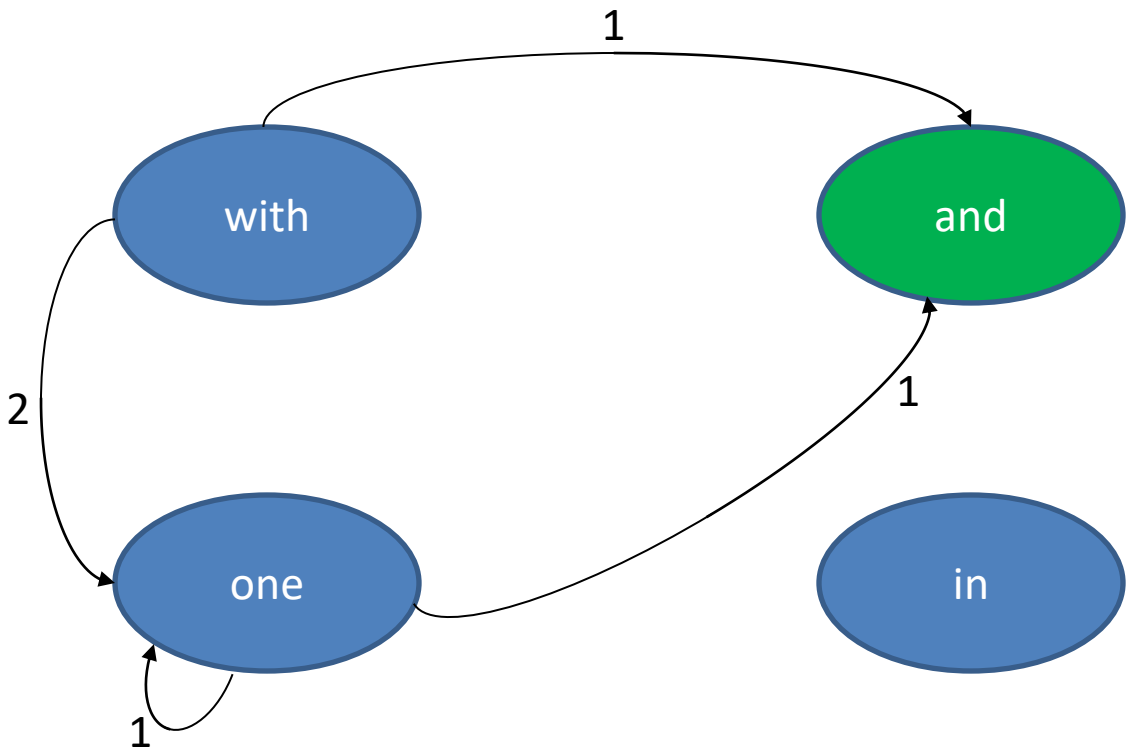

With one auspicious **and** [**one** dropping eye,
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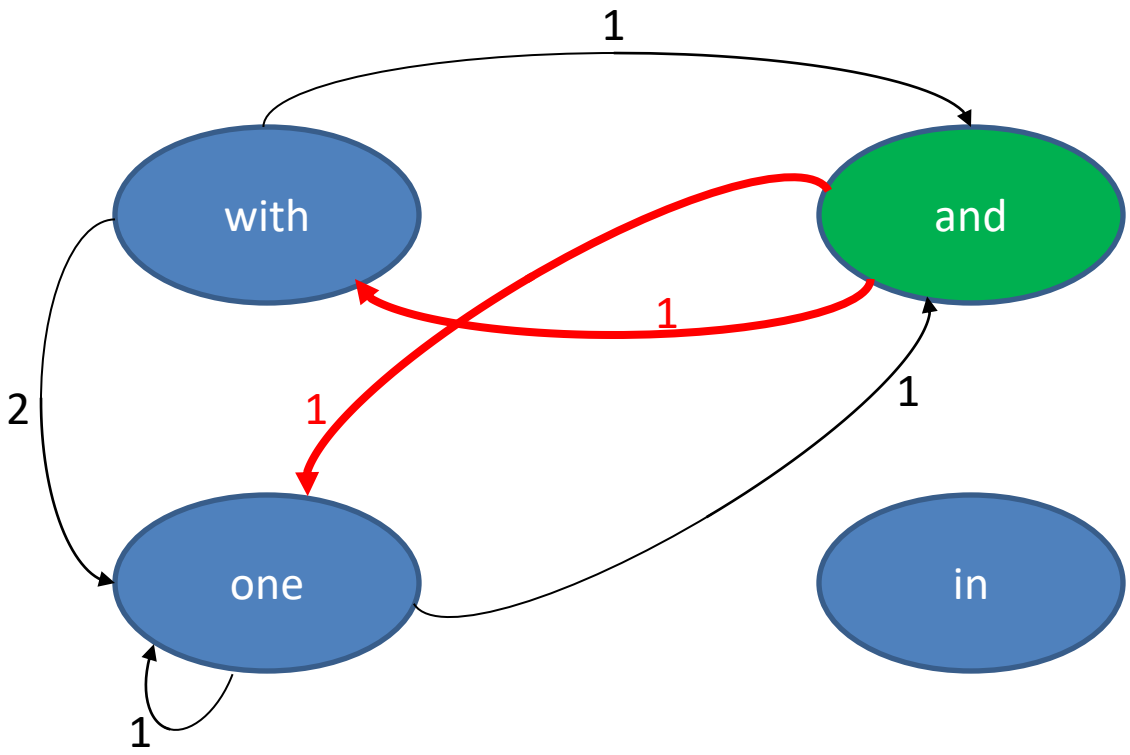

With one auspicious **and one** [dropping eye,
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In equal scale weighing delight **and** dole,
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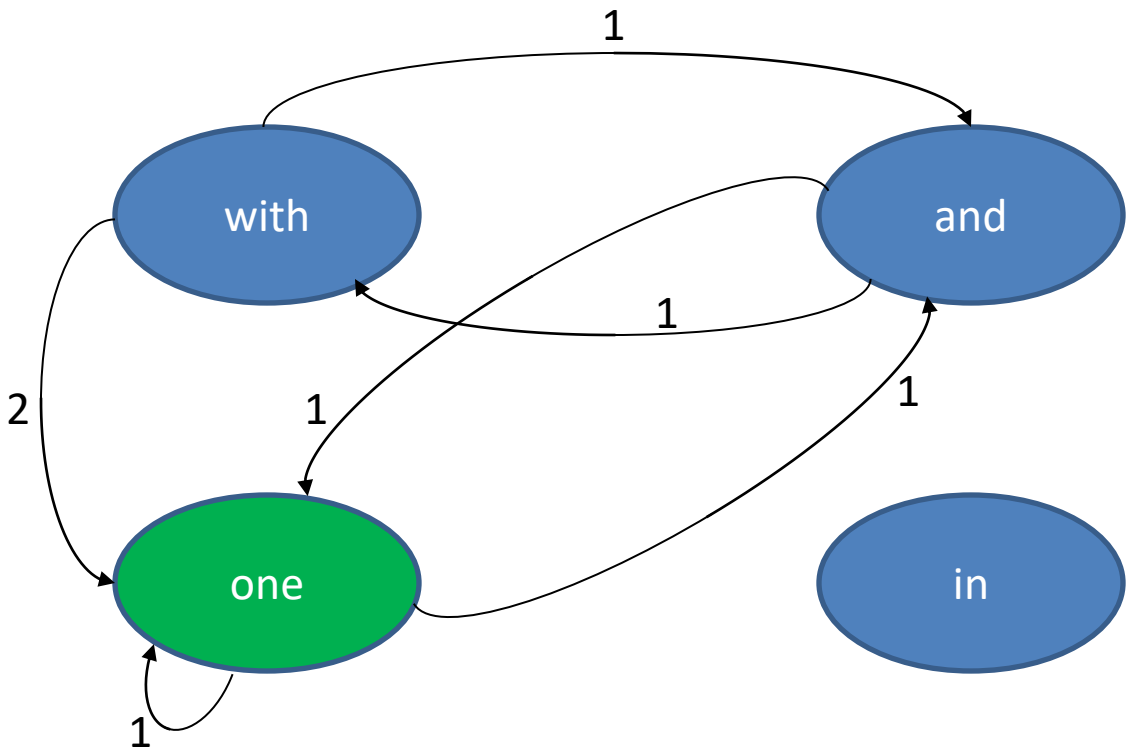

With one auspicious **and one** [dropping eye,
With mirth **in**] funeral **and with** dirge **in** marriage,
In equal scale weighing delight **and** dole,
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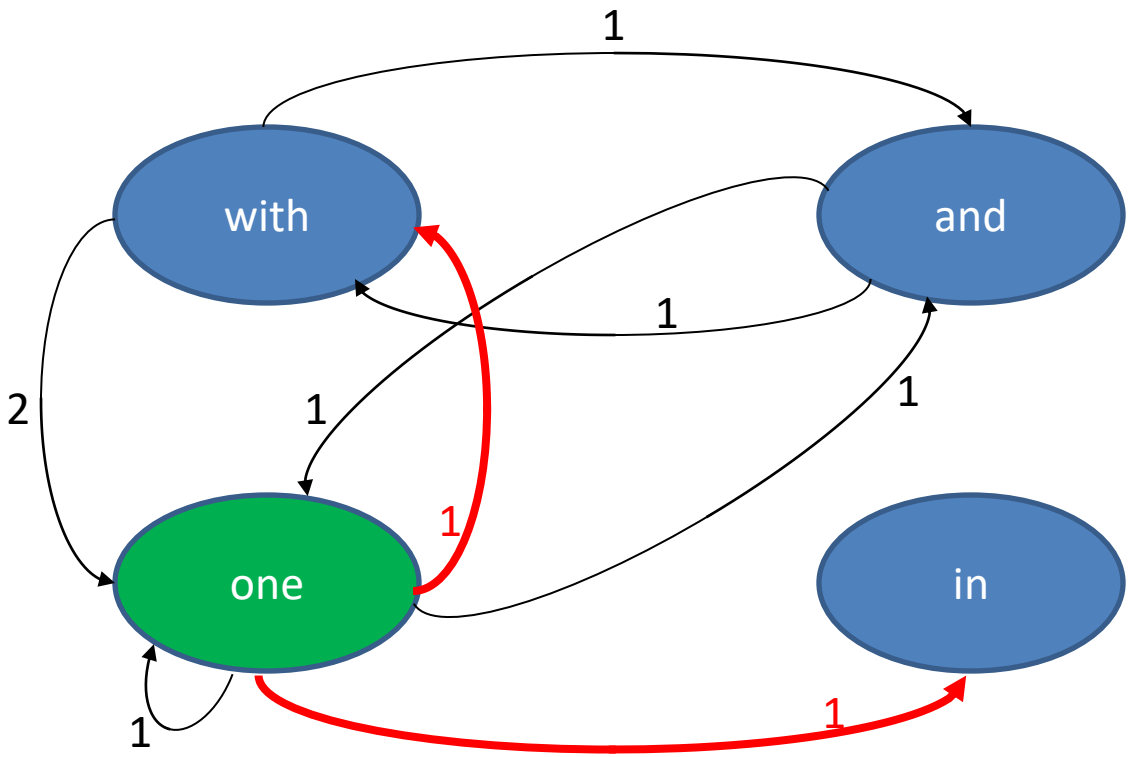
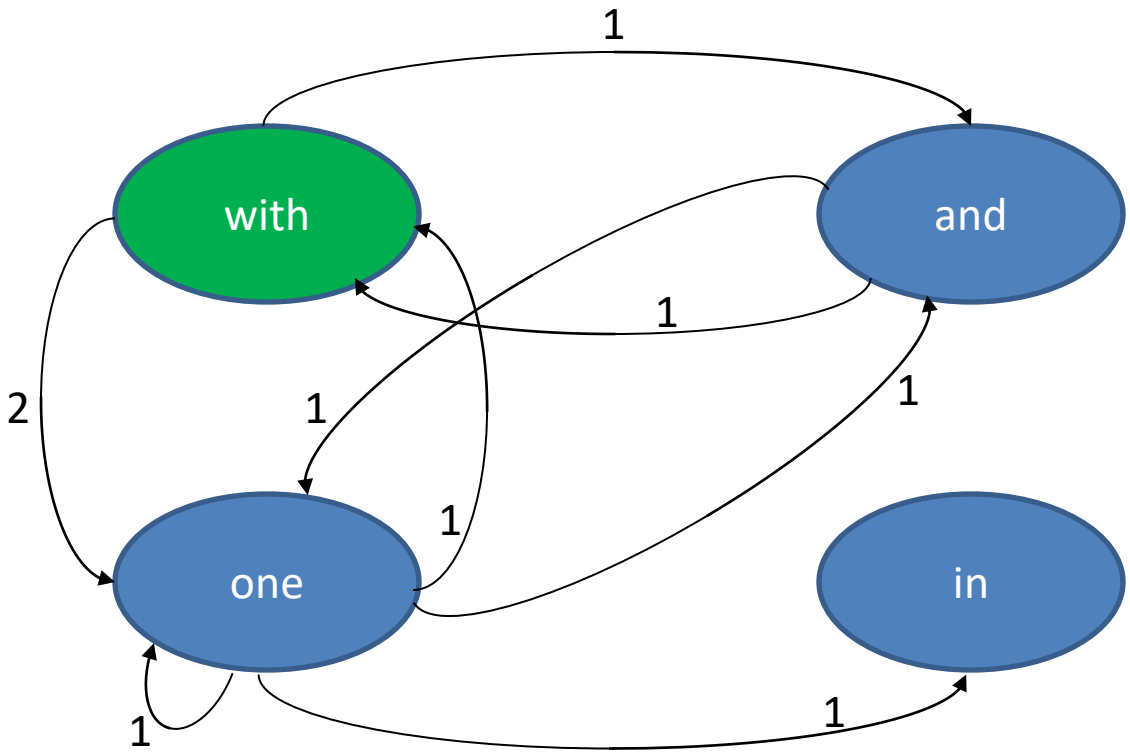
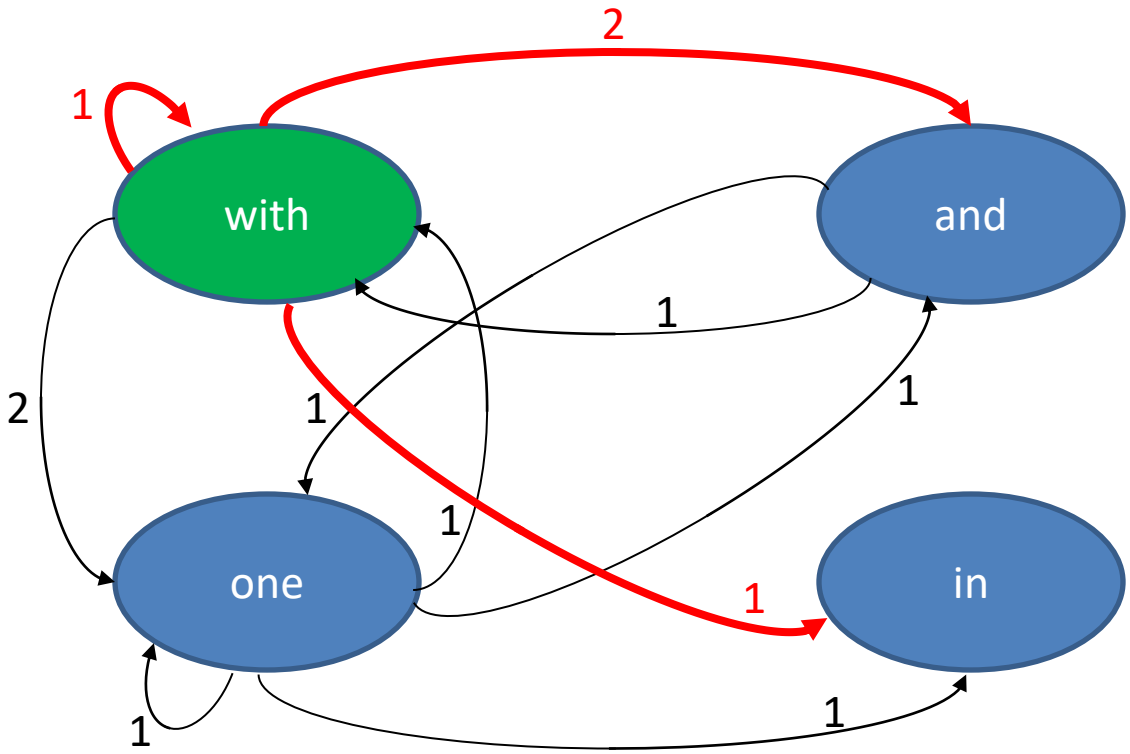


With one auspicious **and one** dropping eye,
With [mirth **in** funeral **and with**] dirge **in** marriage,
In equal scale weighing delight **and** dole,
(Shakespeare *Hamlet* 1.2.11-13)



With one auspicious **and one** dropping eye,
With [mirth **in** funeral **and with**] dirge **in** marriage,
In equal scale weighing delight **and** dole,
(Shakespeare *Hamlet* 1.2.11-13)



With one auspicious **and one** dropping eye,
With mirth **in** [funeral **and with** dirge **in**] marriage,
In equal scale weighing delight **and** dole,
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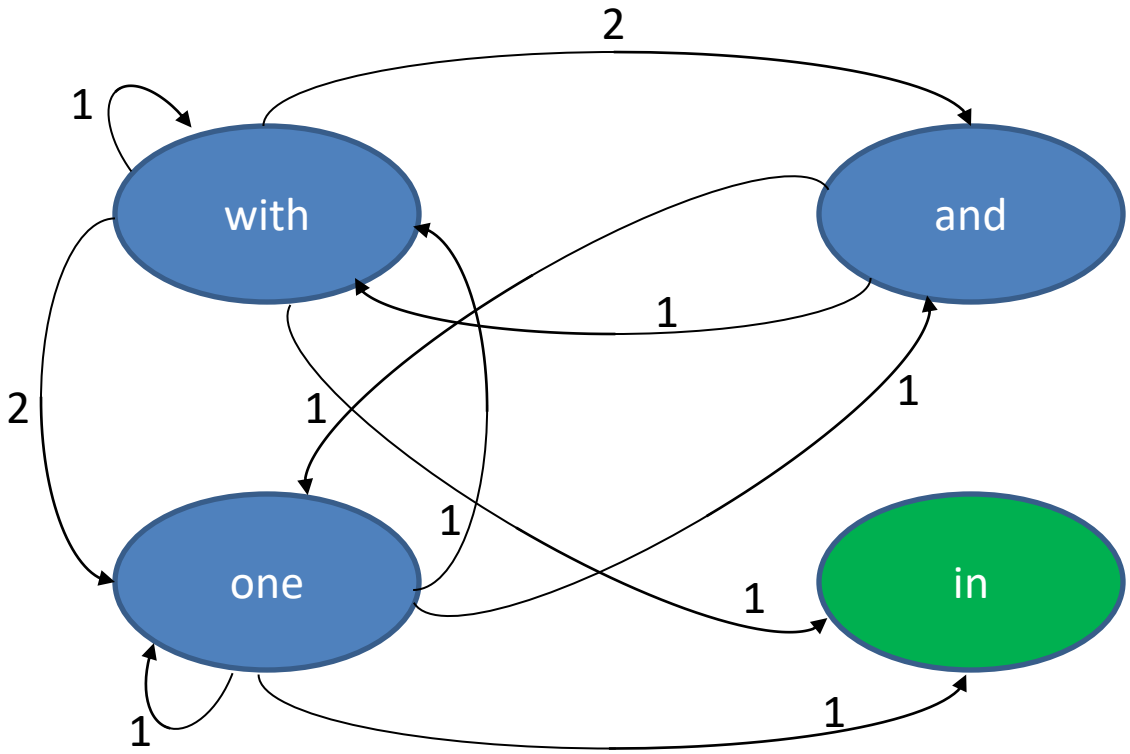

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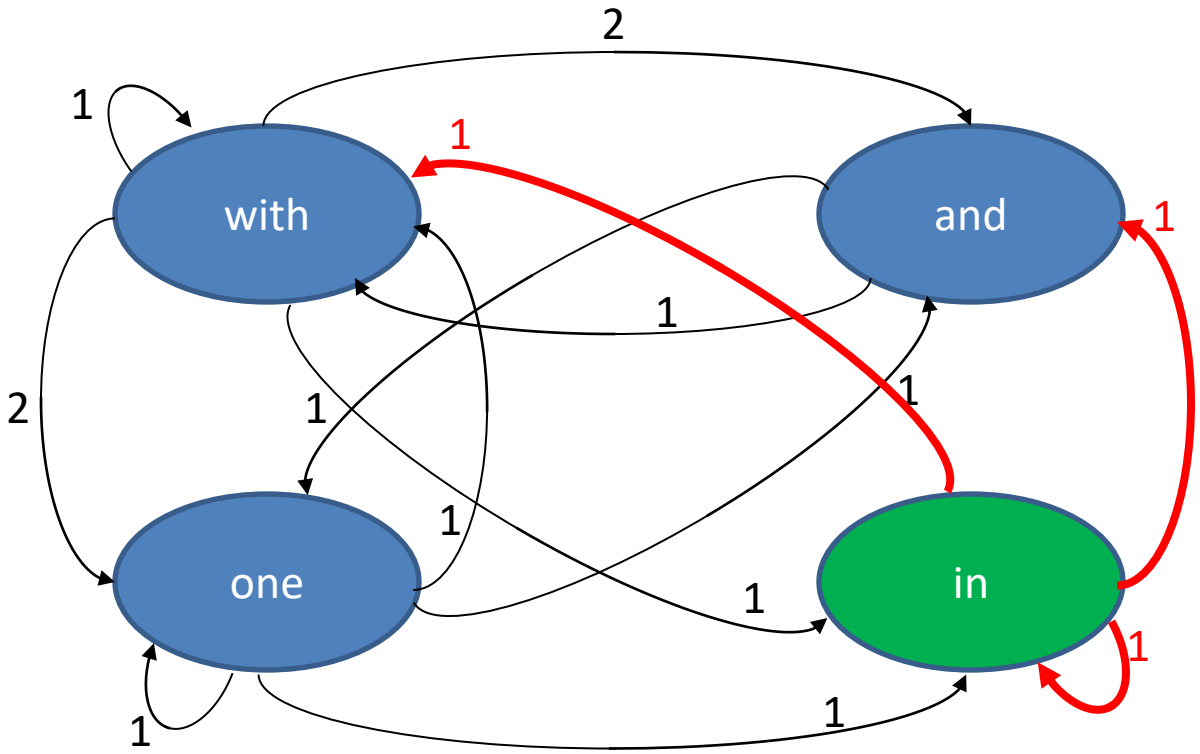

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In] equal scale weighing delight **and** dole,
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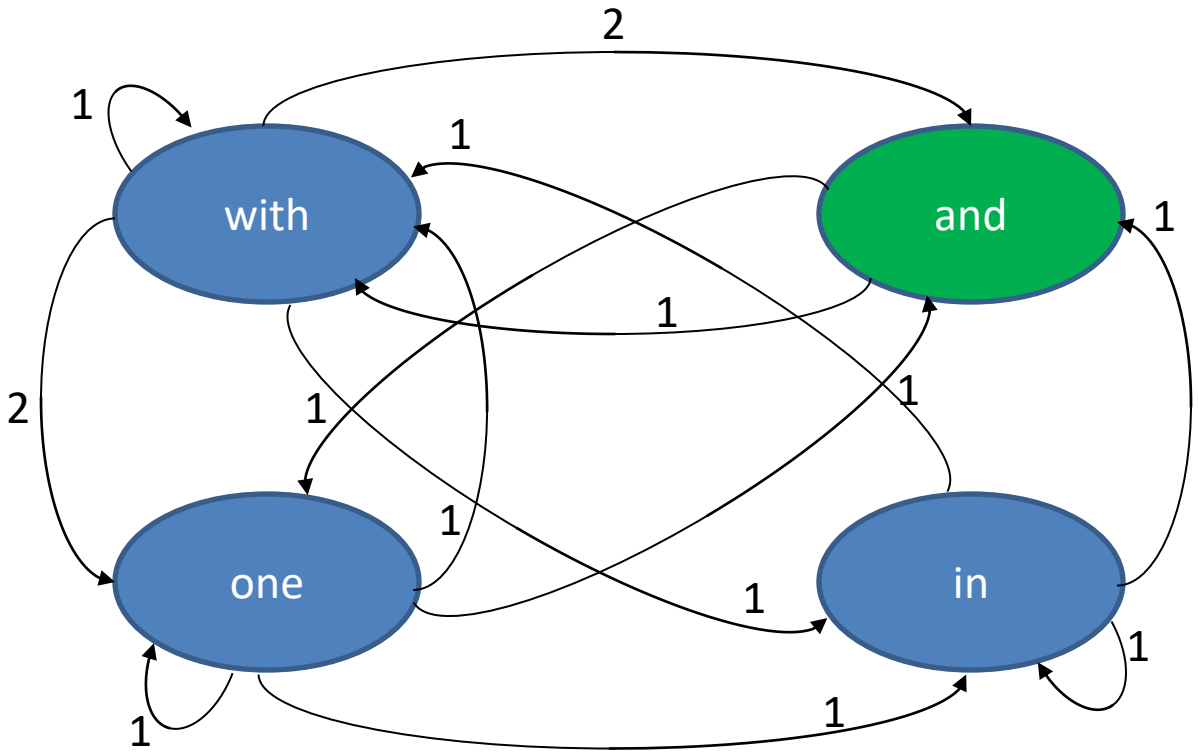

With one auspicious **and one** dropping eye,
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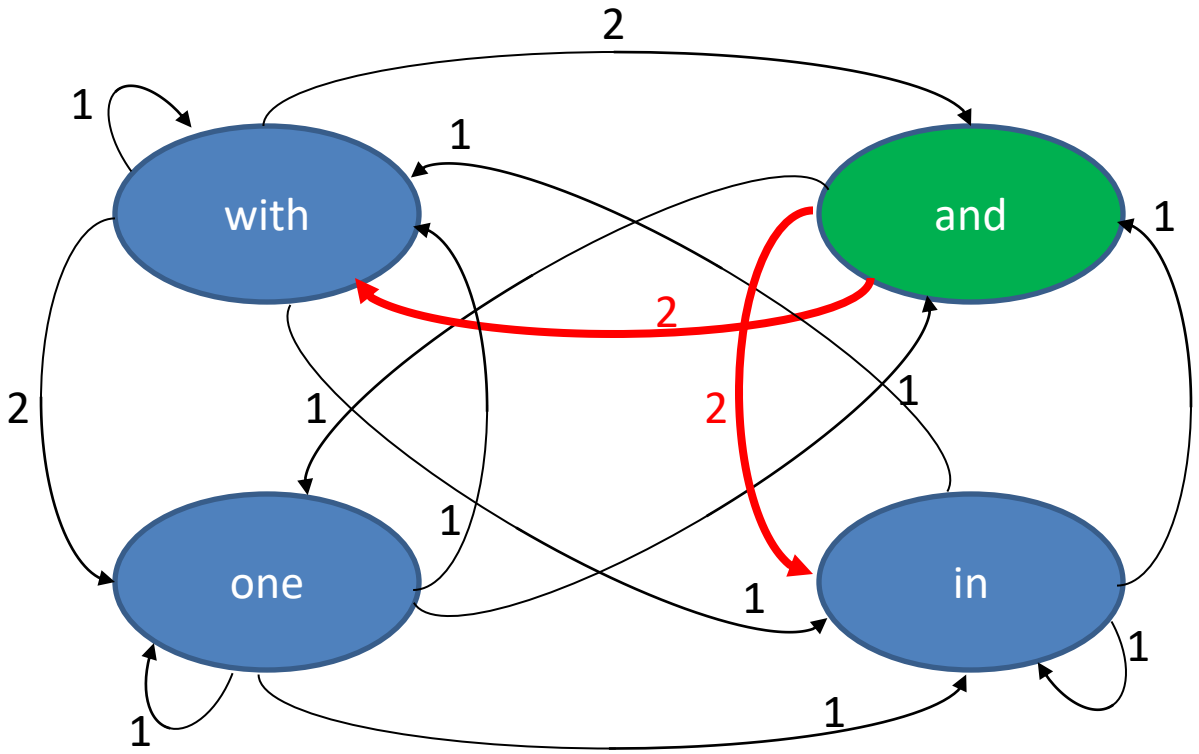

With one auspicious **and one** dropping eye,
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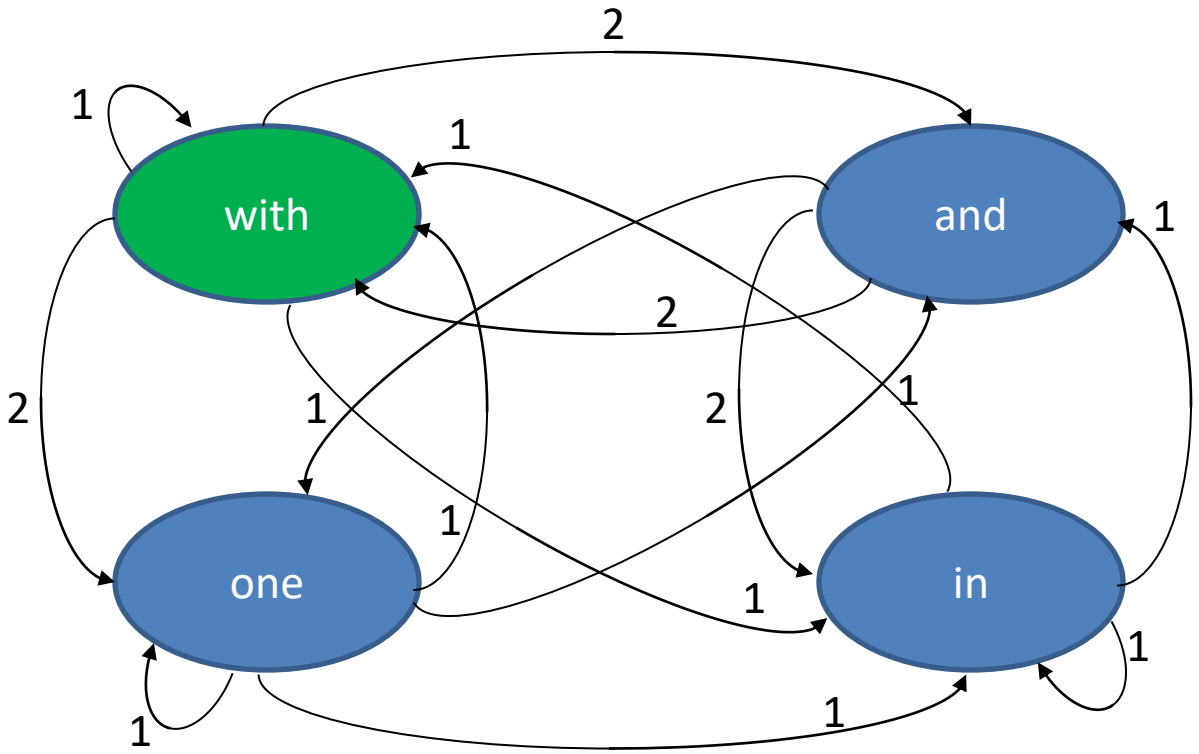

With one auspicious **and one** dropping eye,
With mirth **in** funeral **and with** [dirge **in** marriage,
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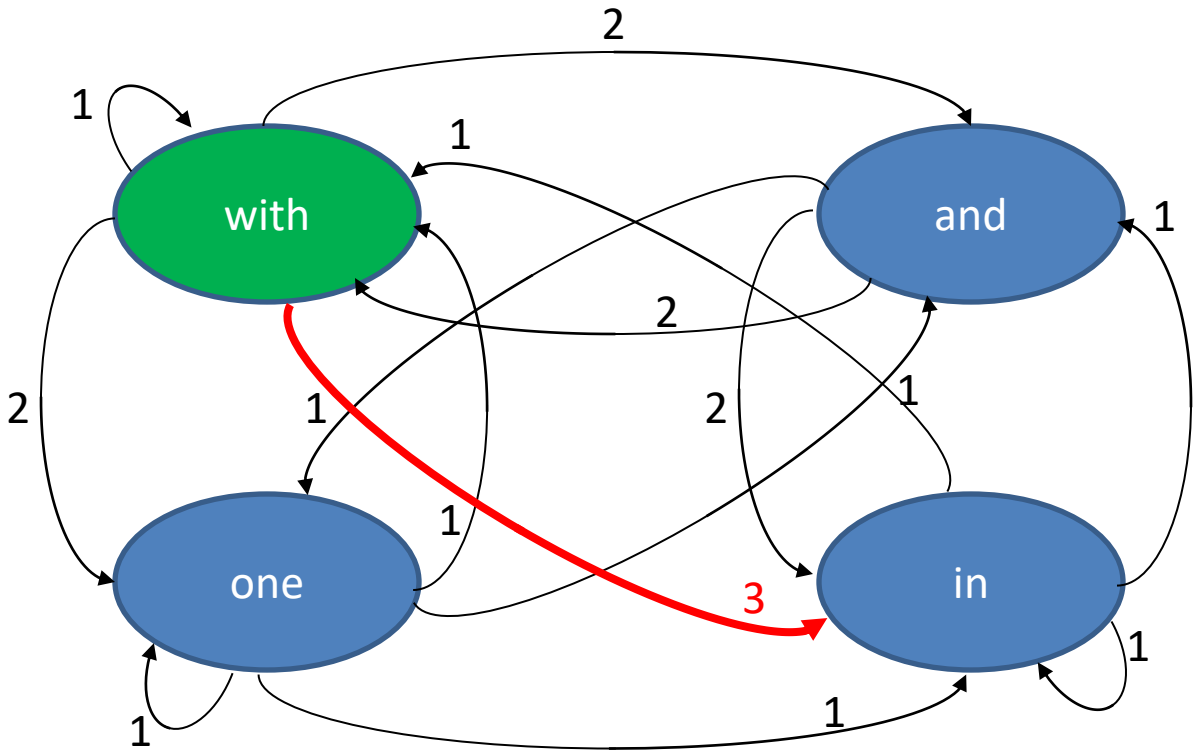

With one auspicious **and one** dropping eye,
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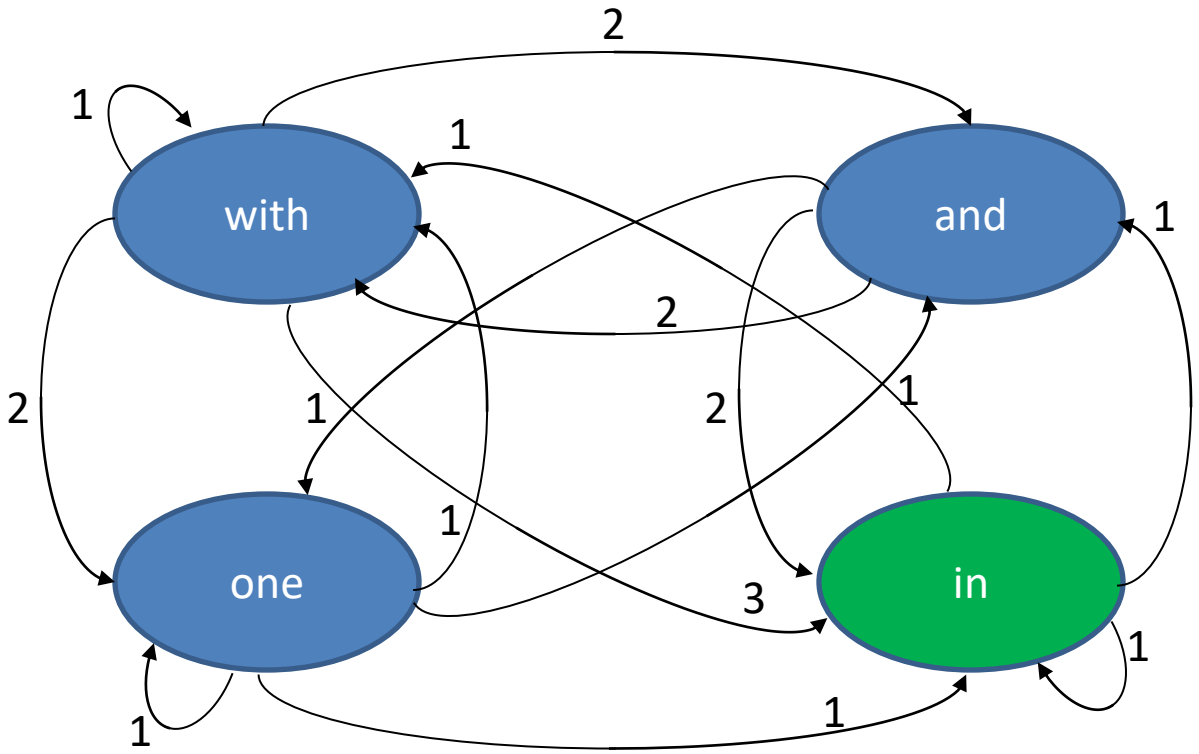
In equal scale weighing] delight **and** dole,
(Shakespeare *Hamlet* 1.2.11-13)



With one auspicious **and one** dropping eye,
With mirth **in** funeral **and with** dirge **in** [marriage,
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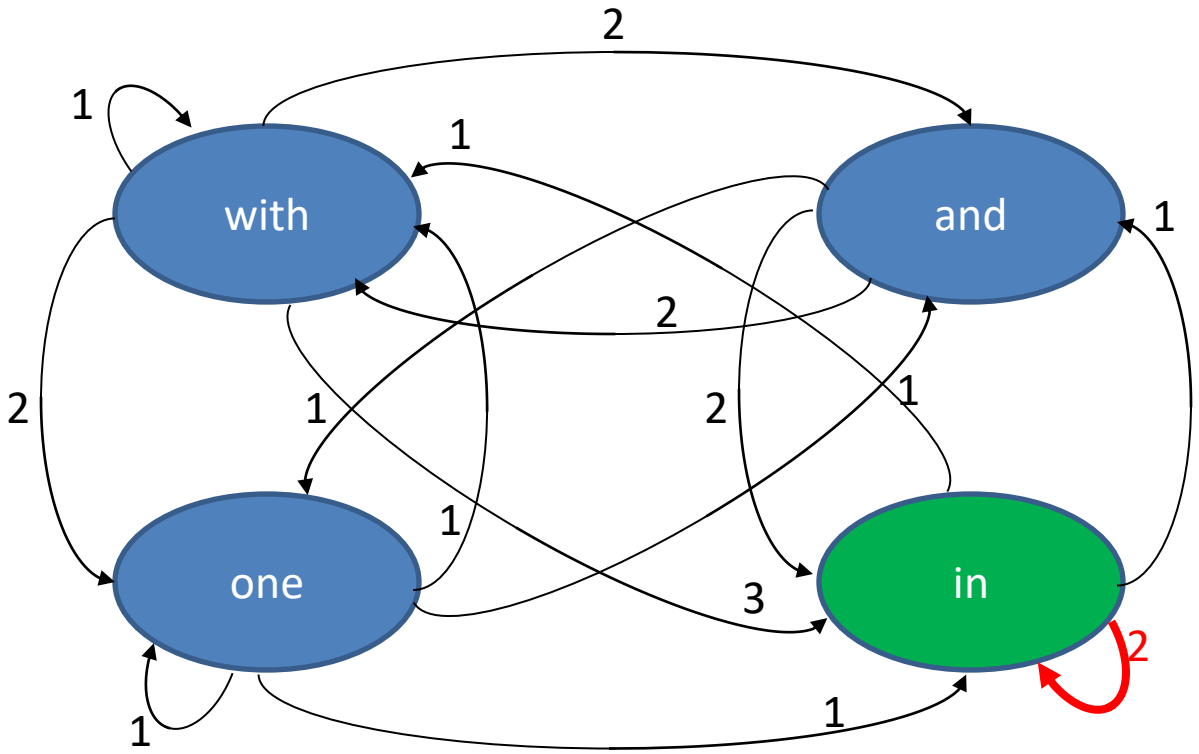

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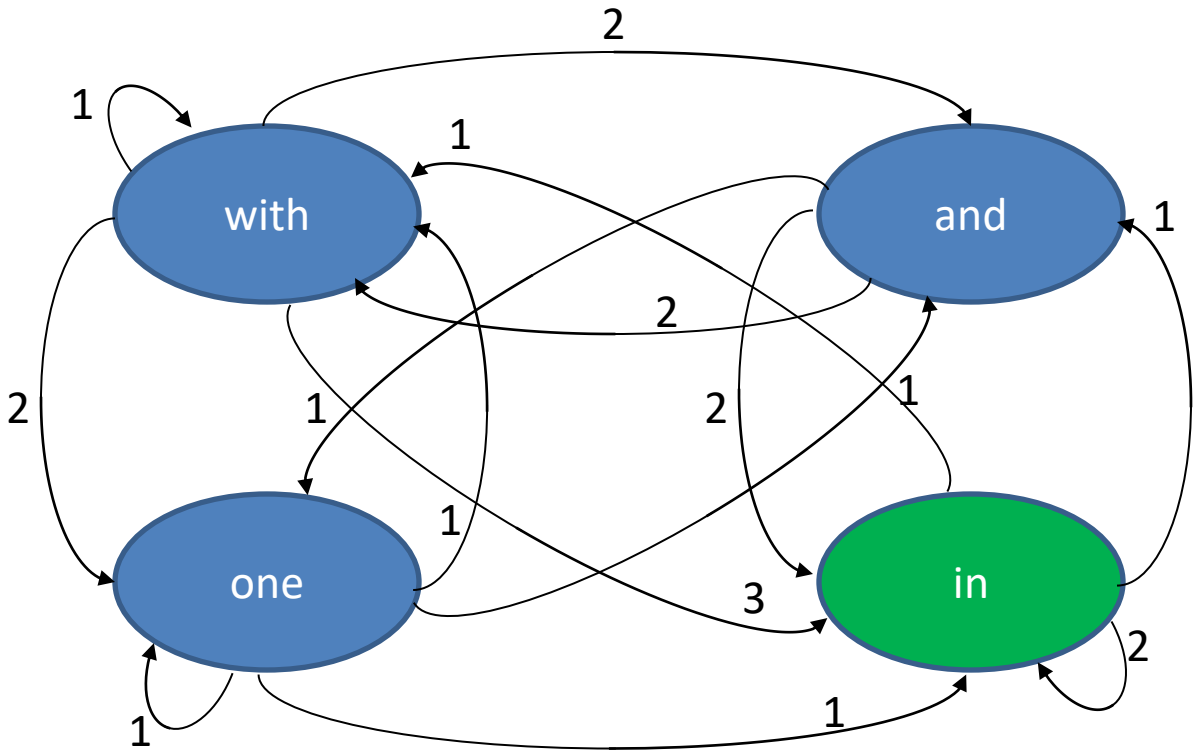

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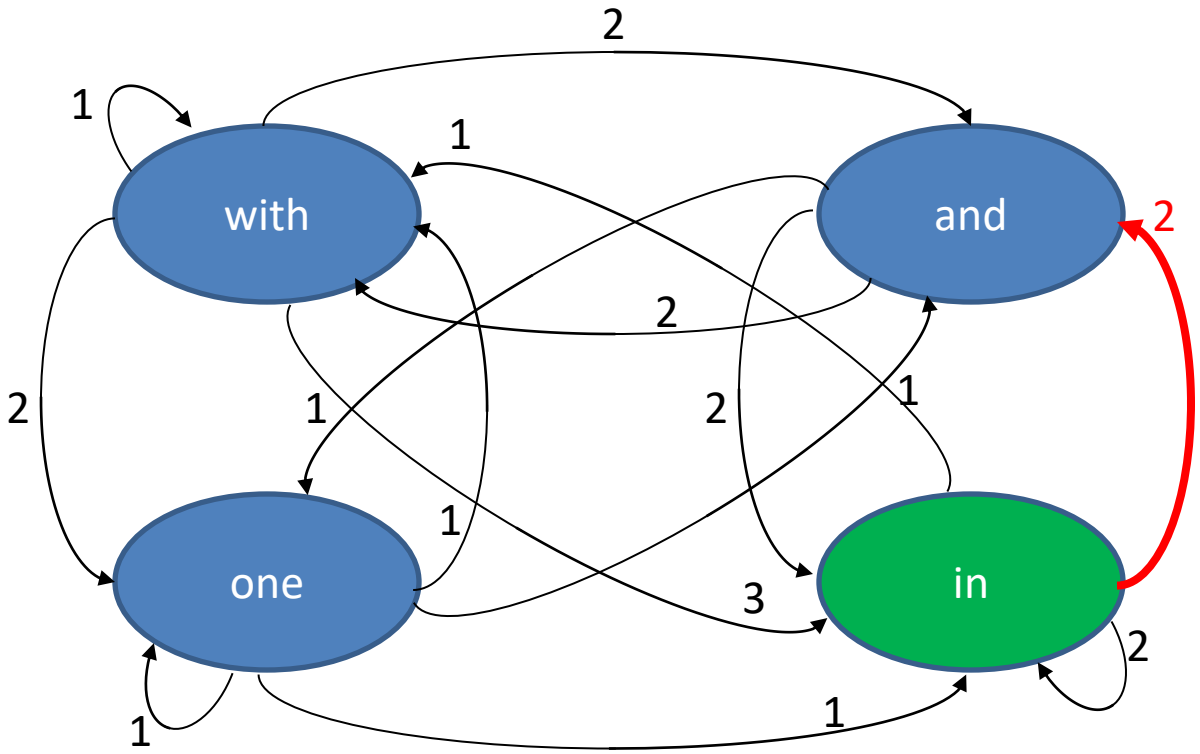
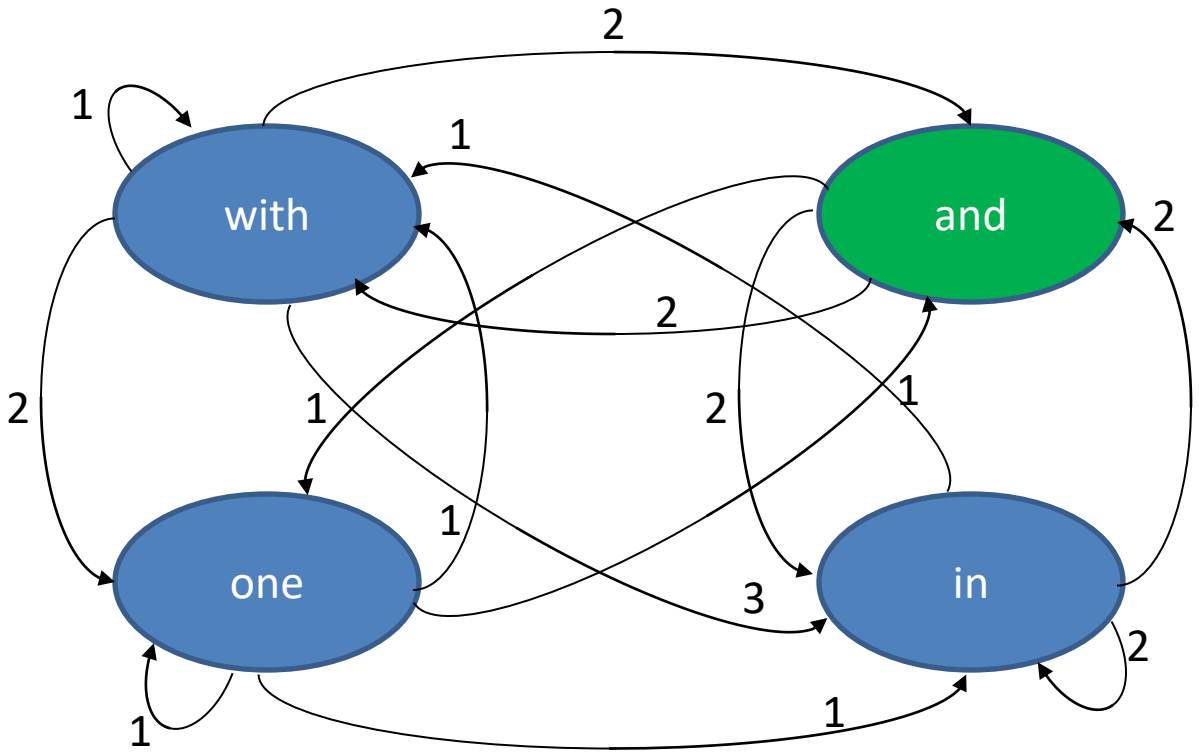
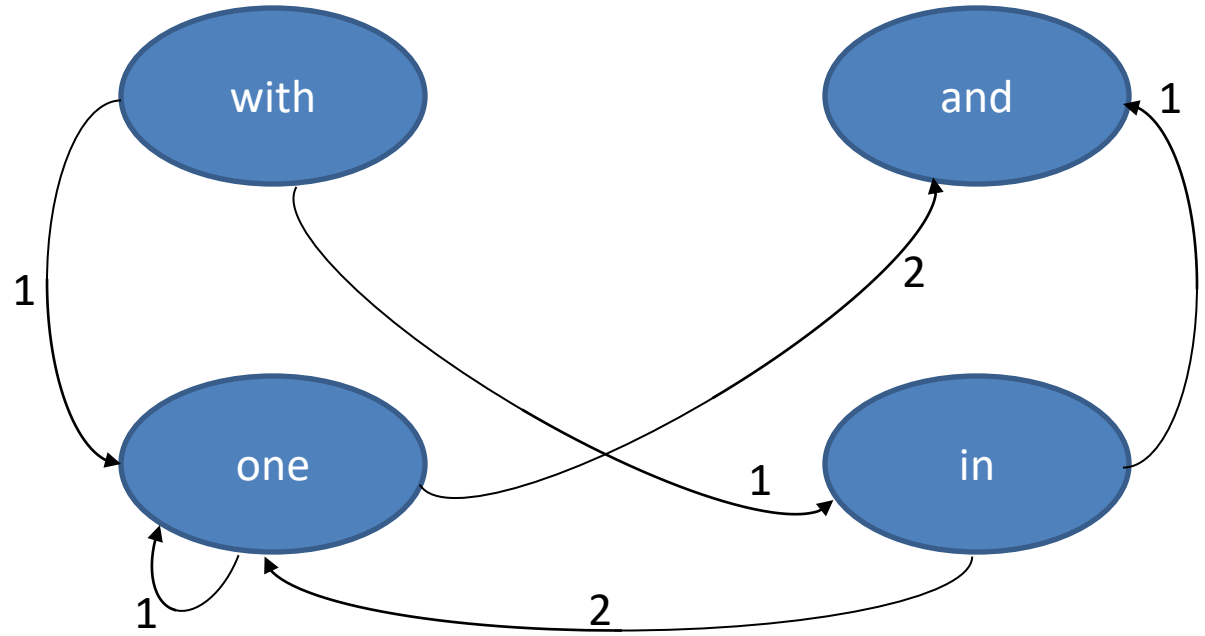


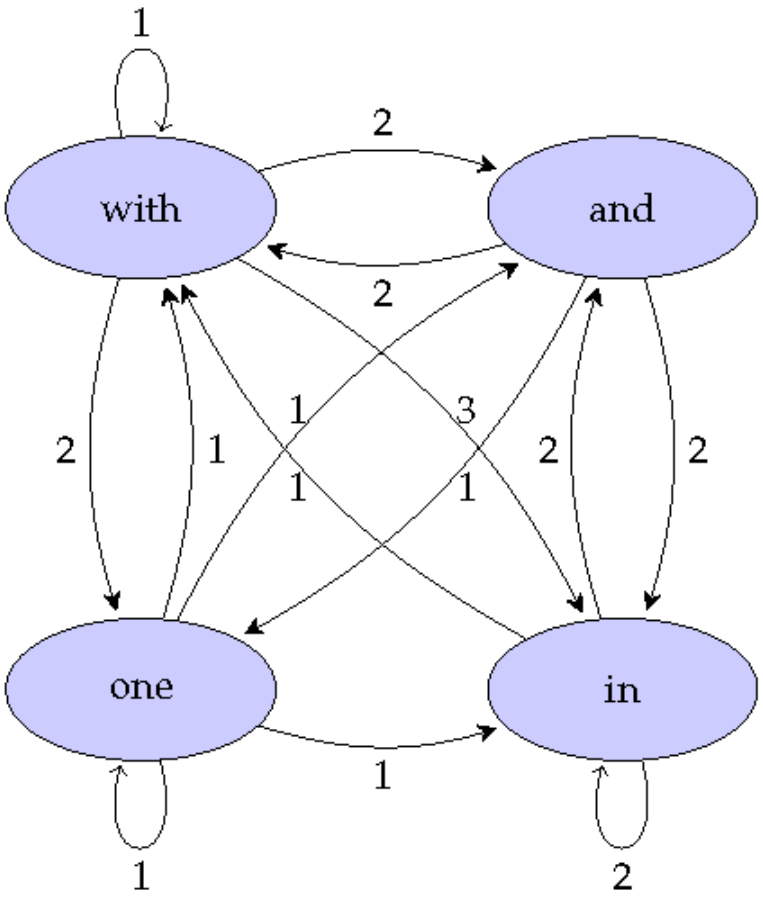
With one auspicious **and one** dropping eye,
With mirth **in** funeral **and with** dirge **in** marriage,
In equal scale weighing delight **and** [dole, ...]
(Shakespeare *Hamlet* 1.2.11-13)



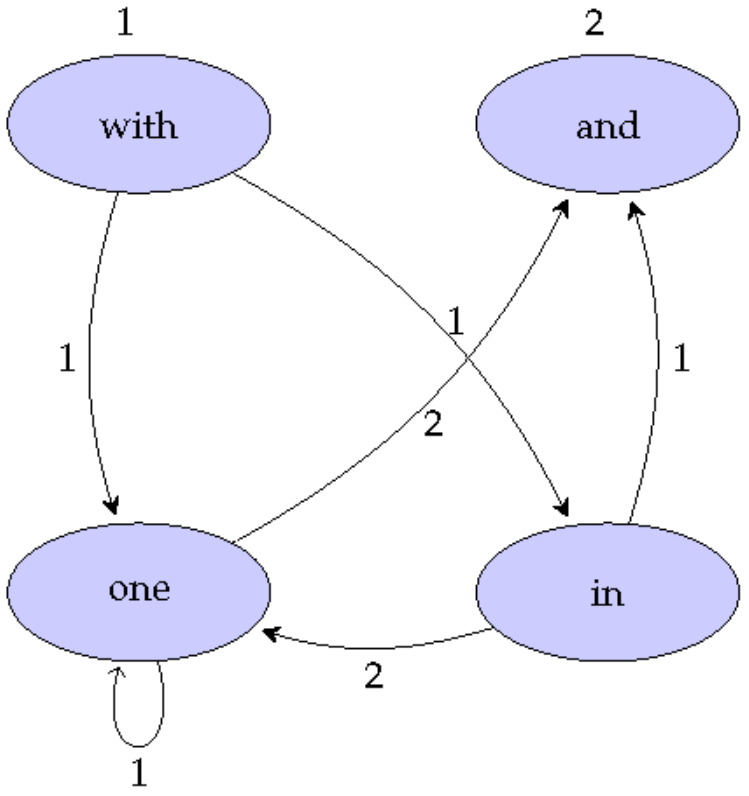
Note to self: STOP, you went too far

I wonder then, that of five hundred, four,
Should all point **with** their fingers **in one** instant
At **one and** the same man?
(Thomas Dekker *Satiromastix* 1.2.242-44)

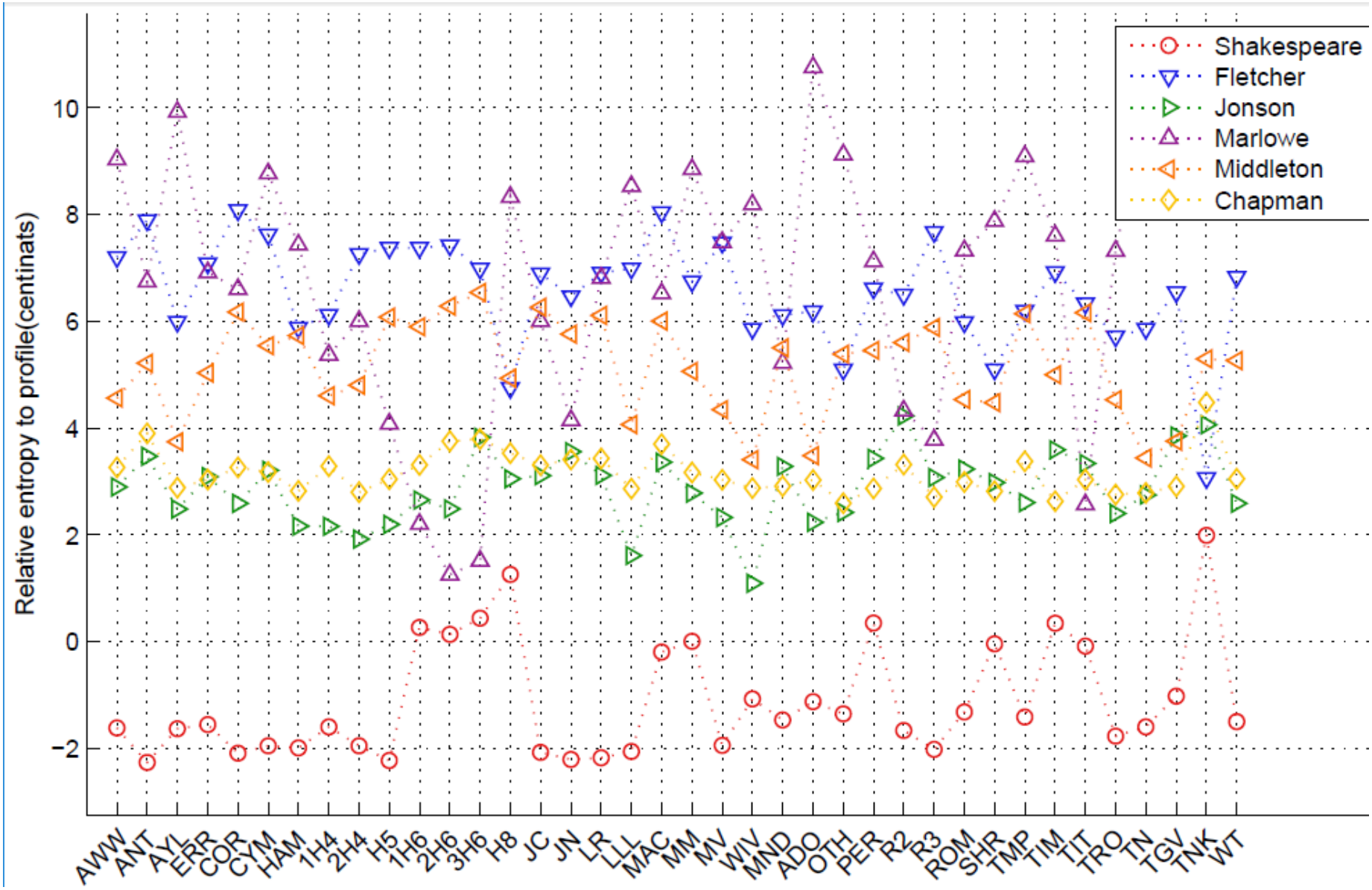




Word Adjacency Network for *Hamlet*



Word Adjacency Network for *Satiromastix*


Relative entropy to profile(centinats)
10
8
6
4
2
0
−2
Shakespeare
Fletcher
Jonson
Marlowe
Middleton
Chapman
AWW
ANT
AYL
ERR
COR
CYM
HAM
1H4
2H4
H5
1H6
2H6
3H6
H8
JC
JN
LR
LLL
MAC
MM
MV
WIV
MND
ADO
OTH
PER
R2
R3
ROM
SHR
TMP
TIM
TIT
TRO
TN
TGV
TNK
WT