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*RAIRO. Informatique théorique et applications*, tome 24, n° 6 (1990),  
p. 521-529

[http://www.numdam.org/item?id=ITA\\_1990\\_\\_24\\_6\\_521\\_0](http://www.numdam.org/item?id=ITA_1990__24_6_521_0)

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## ON DOT-DEPTH TWO (\*)

by F. BLANCHET-SADRI

Communicated by A. ARNOLD

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*Abstract* – For positive integers  $m_1, \dots, m_k$ , congruences  $\sim_{(m_1, \dots, m_k)}$  related to a version of the Ehrenfeucht-Fraissé game are defined which correspond to level  $k$  of the Straubing hierarchy of star-free languages. Given any finite alphabet  $A$ , a necessary and sufficient condition is given for the monoids  $A^*/\sim_{(m_1, \dots, m_k)}$  to be of dot-depth exactly 2.

*Résumé* – Étant donnés des entiers positifs  $m_1, \dots, m_k$ , on définit des congruences  $\sim_{(m_1, \dots, m_k)}$  en relation avec une version du jeu de Ehrenfeucht-Fraissé, et qui correspondent au niveau  $k$  de la hiérarchie de concaténation de Straubing. Étant donné un alphabet fini  $A$ , une condition nécessaire et suffisante est donnée pour que les monoïdes définis par ces congruences soient de dot-depth exactement 2.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Let  $A$  be a given finite alphabet. The regular languages over  $A$  are those subsets of  $A^*$ , the free monoid generated by  $A$ , constructed from the finite languages over  $A$  by the boolean operations, the concatenation product and the star. The star-free languages are those regular languages which can be obtained from the finite languages by the boolean operations and the concatenation product only. According to Schützenberger [15],  $L \subseteq A^*$  is star-free if and only if its syntactic monoid  $M(L)$  is finite and aperiodic. General references on the star-free languages are McNaughton and Papert [10], Eilenberg [6] or Pin [12].

Natural classifications of the star-free languages are obtained based on the alternative use of the boolean operations and the concatenation product. Let  $A^+ = A^* \setminus \{1\}$ , where 1 denotes the empty word. Let

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(\*) Received in January 1989, revised in February 1989

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$$A^+ \mathcal{B}_0 = \{ L \subseteq A^+ \mid L \text{ is finite or cofinite} \},$$

$$A^+ \mathcal{B}_{k+1} = \{ L \subseteq A^+ \mid L \text{ is a boolean combination of languages of the form } L_1 \dots L_n (n \geq 1) \text{ with } L_1, \dots, L_n \in A^+ \mathcal{B}_k \}.$$

Only nonempty words over  $A$  are considered to define this hierarchy; in particular, the complement operation is applied with respect to  $A^+$ . The language classes  $A^+ \mathcal{B}_0, A^+ \mathcal{B}_1, \dots$  form the so-called dot-depth hierarchy introduced by Cohen and Brzozowski in [4]. The union of the classes  $A^+ \mathcal{B}_0, A^+ \mathcal{B}_1, \dots$  is the class of star-free languages.

Our attention is directed toward a closely related and more fundamental hierarchy, this one in  $A^*$ , introduced by Straubing in [18]. Let

$$A^* \mathcal{V}_0 = \{ 0, A^* \},$$

$$A^* \mathcal{V}_{k+1} = \{ L \subseteq A^* \mid L \text{ is a boolean combination of languages of the form } L_0 a_1 L_1 a_2 \dots a_n L_n (n \geq 0) \text{ with } L_0, \dots, L_n \in A^* \mathcal{V}_k \text{ and } a_1, \dots, a_n \in A \}.$$

$L \subseteq A^*$  is star-free if and only if  $L \in A^* \mathcal{V}_k$  for some  $k \geq 0$ . The *dot-depth* of  $L$  is the smallest such  $k$ .

Using Eilenberg's correspondence, we have that for each  $k \geq 0$ , there is a variety  $V_k$  of finite monoids such that for  $L \subseteq A^*$ ,  $L \in A^* \mathcal{V}_k$  if and only if  $M(L) \in V_k$ . An outstanding open problem is whether one can decide if a language has dot-depth  $k$ , *i. e.*, can we effectively characterize the varieties  $V_k$ ? The variety  $V_0$  consists of the trivial monoid alone,  $V_1$  of all finite  $\mathcal{T}$ -trivial monoids [16]. Straubing [19] conjectured an effective characterization, based on the syntactic monoid of the language, for the case  $k=2$ . His characterization, formulated in terms of a novel use of categories in semigroup theory recently developed by Tilson [22], is shown to be necessary in general, and sufficient for an alphabet of two elements.

In the framework of semigroup theory, Brzozowski and Knast [1] showed that the dot-depth hierarchy is infinite. Thomas [21] gave a new proof of this result, which shows also that the Straubing hierarchy is infinite, based on a logical characterization of the dot-depth hierarchy that the obtained in [20] (Perrin and Pin gave one for the Straubing hierarchy [11]) and the following version of the Ehrenfeucht-Fraïssé game.

First, one regards a word  $w \in A^*$  of length  $|w|$  as a word model  $w = \langle \{1, \dots, |w|\}, <^w, (Q_a^w)_{a \in A} \rangle$  where the universe  $\{1, \dots, |w|\}$  represents the set of positions of letters in  $w$ ,  $<^w$  denotes the  $<$ -relation in  $w$ , and  $Q_a^w$  are unary relations over  $\{1, \dots, |w|\}$  containing the positions with letter  $a$ , for each  $a \in A$ . For a sequence  $\bar{m} = (m_1, \dots, m_k)$  of positive integers, where  $k \geq 0$ , the game  $\mathcal{G}_{\bar{m}}(u, v)$  is played between two players I and II on the word models  $u$  and  $v$ . A play of the game consists of  $k$  moves. In the

$i$ -th move, player I chooses, in  $u$  or in  $v$ , a sequence of  $m_i$  positions; then player II chooses, in the remaining word, also a sequence of  $m_i$  positions. After  $k$  moves, by concatenating the sequences chosen from  $u$  and  $v$ , two sequences  $p_1 \dots p_n$  from  $u$  and  $q_1 \dots q_n$  from  $v$  have been formed where  $n = m_1 + \dots + m_k$ .

Player II has won the play if

$$p_i <^u p_j \quad \text{if and only if} \quad q_i <^v q_j, \tag{1}$$

and

$$Q_a^u p_i \quad \text{if and only if} \quad Q_a^v q_i, \quad a \in A \quad \text{for} \quad 1 \leq i, j \leq n. \tag{2}$$

If there is a winning strategy for II in the game  $\mathcal{G}_{\bar{m}}(u, v)$  to win each play we write  $u \sim_{\bar{m}} v$ .  $\sim_{\bar{m}}$  naturally defines a congruence on  $A^*$  which we denote also by  $\sim_{\bar{m}}$ . The standard Ehrenfeucht-Fraïssé game [5] is the special case  $\mathcal{G}_{(1, \dots, 1)}(u, v)$ . Thomas [20], [21] and Perrin and Pin [11] imply that  $L \in A^* \mathcal{V}_k$  if and only if  $L$  is a  $\sim_{\bar{m}}$ -language for some  $\bar{m} = (m_1, \dots, m_k)$  (or  $L$  is a union of classes of the congruence  $\sim_{\bar{m}}$ ). This congruence characterization implies that the problem of deciding whether a language has dot-depth  $k$  is equivalent to the problem of effectively characterizing the monoids  $M = A^*/\sim$  with  $\sim \cong \sim_{\bar{m}}$  for some  $\bar{m} = (m_1, \dots, m_k)$ , *i. e.*,

$$V_k = \{ A^*/\sim \mid \sim \cong \sim_{\bar{m}} \text{ for some } \bar{m} = (m_1, \dots, m_k) \}.$$

This paper is concerned with an application of the above congruence characterization. We show that  $A^*/\sim_{(m_1, m_2, m_3)}$  is of dot-depth exactly 2 if and only if  $m_2 = 1$ . The proof relies on some properties of the congruences  $\sim_{\bar{m}}$  stated in the next section. [2] and [3] include other applications: among them are an answer to a conjecture of Pin [13] concerning tree hierarchies of monoids and also systems of equations satisfied in natural sublevels of level 1 of the Straubing hierarchy. The reader is referred to the books by Eilenberg [6], Lallement [9], Pin [12], Enderton [7] and Fraïssé [8] for all the algebraic and logical terms not defined here.

## 2. SOME PROPERTIES OF THE CHARACTERIZING CONGRUENCES

### 2.1. An induction lemma

The following lemma is a basic result (similar to one in [14] regarding  $\sim_{(1, \dots, 1)}$ ) which allows to resolve games with  $k + 1$  moves into games with

$k$  moves and thereby allows to perform induction arguments. In what follows,  $u^{<p}$  ( $u^{>p}$ ) denotes the subword of  $u$  to the left (right) of position  $p$  and  $u_{>p}^{<q}$  the subword of  $u$  between positions  $p$  and  $q$ .

LEMMA 2.1.: Let  $\bar{m} = (m_1, \dots, m_k)$ .  $u \sim_{(m, m_1, \dots, m_k)} v$  if and only if

(1) for every  $p_1, \dots, p_m \in u (p_1 \leq \dots \leq p_m)$  there are  $q_1, \dots, q_m \in v (q_1 \leq \dots \leq q_m)$  such that

(i)  $Q_a^u p_i$  if and only if  $Q_a^v q_i$ ,  $a \in A$  for  $1 \leq i \leq m$ ,

(ii)  $u^{<p_1} \sim_{\bar{m}} v^{<q_1}$ ,

(iii)  $u_{>p_i}^{<p_{i+1}} \sim_{\bar{m}} v_{>q_i}^{<q_{i+1}}$  for  $1 \leq i \leq m-1$ ,

(iv)  $u_{>p_m} \sim_{\bar{m}} v_{>q_m}$  and

(2) for every  $q_1, \dots, q_m \in v (q_1 \leq \dots \leq q_m)$  there are  $p_1, \dots, p_m \in u (p_1 \leq \dots \leq p_m)$  such that (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv) hold.

## 2.2. A lemma for inclusion

Define

$$\mathcal{N}_{(m_1, \dots, m_k)} = m_1 + \dots + m_k + \sum_{1 \leq i_1 < i_2 \leq k} m_{i_1} m_{i_2} + \dots + \sum_{1 \leq i_1 < \dots < i_{k-1} \leq k} m_{i_1} \dots m_{i_{k-1}} + m_1 \dots m_k.$$

One can show that  $x^N \sim_{(m_1, \dots, m_k)} x^{N+1}$  ( $N = \mathcal{N}_{(m_1, \dots, m_k)}$ ) and that  $N$  is the smallest  $n$  such that  $x^n \sim_{(m_1, \dots, m_k)} x^{n+1}$  (the proof is similar to the one of a property of  $\sim_{(1, \dots, 1)}$  in [21]). We see that if  $u, v \in A^*$  and  $u \sim_{(m_1, \dots, m_k)} v$ , then  $|u|_a = |v|_a < \mathcal{N}_{(m_1, \dots, m_k)}$  or  $|u|_a, |v|_a \geq \mathcal{N}_{(m_1, \dots, m_k)}$  (here  $|w|_a$  denotes the number of occurrences of the letter  $a$  in  $w$ ). The following lemma follows easily from Lemma 2.1 and the above remarks.

LEMME 2.2 :

$$\sim_{(m_1, \dots, m_k)} \subseteq \sim_{(\mathcal{N}_{(m_1, \dots, m_k)})} \quad \text{and} \quad \sim_{(m_1, \dots, m_k)} \not\subseteq \sim_{(\mathcal{N}_{(m_1, \dots, m_k)} + 1)}.$$

If  $k \leq k'$  and  $\exists 0 = j_0 < \dots < j_{k-1} < j_k = k'$  such that  $m_i \leq \mathcal{N}_{(m'_{j_{i-1}+1}, \dots, m'_{j_i})}$  for  $1 \leq i \leq k$ , then  $\sim_{(m'_1, \dots, m'_k)} \subseteq \sim_{(m_1, \dots, m_k)}$ .

## 3. A SEQUENCE OF MONOIDS OF DOT-DEPTH 2

In this section, we show that for positive integers  $m_1, m_2$  and  $m_3$ ,  $A^*/\sim_{(m_1, m_2, m_3)}$  is of dot-depth exactly 2 if and only if  $m_2 = 1$ . The following lemma shows the necessity of the condition.

LEMMA 3.1: Let  $m_1$  and  $m_3$  be positive integers. Then  $A^*/\sim_{(m_1, 2, m_3)}$  is of dot-depth exactly 3.

*Proof:* Let  $m > 0$ . Consider  $u_m = ((xy)^m x (xy)^{2m} y (xy)^m)^m$ ,  $v_m = ((xy)^m y (xy)^{2m} x (xy)^m)^m$ . A result of Straubing [17] implies that monoids in  $V_2$  are 2-mutative and hence satisfy  $u_m = v_m$  for all sufficiently large  $m$ . However, for every  $N \geq \mathcal{N}_{(1, 2, 1)}$ ,  $u_N x_{(1, 2, 1)} v_N$ . To see this, we illustrate a winning strategy for player I in the game  $\mathcal{G}_{(1, 2, 1)}(u_N, v_N)$ .  $(I, i)$  denotes a position chosen by player I in the  $i$ -th move,  $i = 1, 2, 3$ . Similarly,  $(II, i)$  denotes a position chosen by player II in the  $i$ -th move. Player I, in the first move, chooses the

$$\begin{array}{c}
 \begin{array}{ccccccc}
 & & & & 2N & & N \\
 & & & & \overbrace{\hspace{10em}} & & \overbrace{\hspace{10em}} \\
 u_N = \dots (xy)^N & x & (xy)(xy) \dots (xy)(xy) & y & (xy)(xy) \dots (xy)(xy) \\
 & \uparrow & & \uparrow \uparrow & & & \\
 & (II, 1) & & (I, 2) & & & 
 \end{array} \\
 \\
 \begin{array}{ccccccc}
 & & & & 2N & & N \\
 & & & & \overbrace{\hspace{10em}} & & \overbrace{\hspace{10em}} \\
 v_N = \dots (xy)^N & x & (xy)(xy) \dots (xy)(xy) & y & (xy)(xy) \dots (xy)(xy) \\
 & & & & & & \\
 & & & & & & \\
 \overbrace{\hspace{10em}} & & & & \overbrace{\hspace{10em}} & & \\
 (xy)(xy) \dots (xy)(xy) & x & (xy)(xy) \dots (xy)(xy) \dots (xy)(xy) \\
 & \uparrow & & \uparrow \uparrow & & & \\
 & (I, 1) & & (II, 2) & & & 
 \end{array}
 \end{array}$$

last  $x$  followed immediately by an  $x$  in  $v_N$ . Player II, in the first move, has to choose the last  $x$  followed immediately by an  $x$  in  $u_N$  (if not, player I in the next two moves could win by choosing in the second move the last two consecutive  $x$ 's in  $u_N$ ). Player I, in the second move, chooses the last two consecutive  $y$ 's in  $u_N$ . Player II, in the second move, cannot choose two consecutive  $y$ 's in  $v_N$  to the right of the previously chosen position. Hence he is forced to choose two  $y$ 's separated by an  $x$ . Player I, in the third move, selects that  $x$ . But player II loses since he cannot choose an  $x$  between the two consecutive  $y$ 's chosen in the preceding move by I. The result follows. [ ]

Assume  $|u|_a, |v|_a > 0$ . Let  $u = u_0 a u_1 \dots a u_{|u|_a}$ ,  $v = v_0 a v_1 \dots a v_{|v|_a}$ . If  $Q_a^u p_i, Q_a^v q_j$  for  $i = 1, \dots, |u|_a, j = 1, \dots, |v|_a$ , then  $u_i = u_{>p_i+1}^{<p_i+1}$ ,  $i = 1, \dots, |u|_a - 1, v_j = v_{>q_j+1}^{<q_j+1}, j = 1, \dots, |v|_a - 1. u_0 = u^{<p_1}, v_0 = v^{<q_1}, u_{|u|_a} = u_{>p_{|u|_a}}, v_{|v|_a} = v_{>q_{|v|_a}}$ .

The next two lemmas will be used in showing that for positive integers  $m_1$  and  $m_3, A^*/\sim_{(m_1, 1, m_3)}$  is of dot-depth exactly 2.

LEMMA 3.2.: Assume  $u \sim_{(m'_1, m'_2)} v$ . Then

$$u^{<p}(s-1)m'_2+i \sim_{(m'_1-s, m'_2)} v^{<q}(s-1)m'_2+i, \tag{1}$$

$$u_{>p|u|_{a+1-(s-1)m'_2-i}} \sim_{(m'_1-s, m'_2)} v_{>q|v|_{a+1-(s-1)m'_2-i}} \tag{2}$$

for  $i=1, \dots, m'_2$  and  $s=1, \dots, m'_1-1$ .

*Proof:* (1) Let  $1 \leq i \leq m'_2$  and  $1 \leq s \leq m'_1-1$ . Let  $p'_1, \dots, p'_{m'_1-s}$  ( $p'_1 \leq \dots \leq p'_{m'_1-s}$ ) be positions in  $u^{<p}(s-1)m'_2+i$ . Consider the following play of the game  $\mathcal{G}_{(m'_1, m'_2)}(u, v)$ . Player I, in the first move, chooses  $p_{m'_2}, p_{2m'_2}, \dots, p_{(s-1)m'_2}, p_{(s-1)m'_2+i}, p'_1, \dots, p'_{m'_1-s}$ . Hence by the lemma of Induction 2.1, there exist positions  $q'_1, \dots, q'_{m'_1-s}$  ( $q'_1 \leq \dots \leq q'_{m'_1-s}$ ) in  $v^{<q}(s-1)m'_2+i$  such that player II, by choosing  $q_{m'_2}, q_{2m'_2}, \dots, q_{(s-1)m'_2}, q_{(s-1)m'_2+i}, q'_1, \dots, q'_{m'_1-s}$  for the corresponding positions, wins this play of the game. It is clear that

- (i)  $u^{<p_1} \sim_{(m'_2)} v^{<q_1}$ ,
- (ii)  $u^{<p_j+1} \sim_{(m'_2)} v^{<q_j+1}$  for  $1 \leq j \leq m'_1-s-1$ ,
- (iii)  $u^{<p_{(s-1)m'_2+i}} \sim_{(m'_2)} v^{<q_{(s-1)m'_2+i}}$ .

Note that player II has to choose  $q_{m'_2}, q_{2m'_2}, \dots, q_{(s-1)m'_2}, q_{(s-1)m'_2+i}$  because there is a number of  $a$ 's  $< m'_2$  between any two consecutive positions among  $p_{m'_2}, p_{2m'_2}, \dots, p_{(s-1)m'_2}, p_{(s-1)m'_2+i}$ .

The proof is similar, when starting with positions in  $v^{<q}(s-1)m'_2+i$ .

For (2), we consider  $p_{|u|_{a+1-m'_2}}, p_{|u|_{a+1-2m'_2}}, \dots, p_{|u|_{a+1-(s-1)m'_2}}, p_{|u|_{a+1-(s-1)m'_2-i}}, p'_1, \dots, p'_{m'_1-s}$ . [ ]

LEMMA 3.3: Assume  $u \sim_{(m'_1, m'_2)} v$ . Then

- (1)  $u_{>p_{(s-1)m'_2+i}} \sim_{(m'_1-s, m'_2)} v_{>q_{(s-1)m'_2+i}}$
- (2)  $u^{<p}|u|_{a+1-(s-1)m'_2-i} \sim_{(m'_1-s, m'_2)} v^{<q}|v|_{a+1-(s-1)m'_2-i}$  for  $i=1, \dots, m'_2$  and  $s=1, \dots, m'_1-1$ .

*Proof:* Similar to Lemma 3.2. [ ]

In the following theorem we talk about positions spelling the first and last occurrences of every subword of length  $\leq m$  of a word  $w$ . We illustrate what we mean by this with the following example. Let  $A = \{a, b, c\}$  and

$$u = abcccbaabbabbaccabababccaaaabbaa \dots$$

$$\uparrow \uparrow \uparrow \uparrow \uparrow \uparrow \quad \uparrow \quad \uparrow \uparrow \uparrow \uparrow \uparrow \uparrow \uparrow \uparrow \uparrow \uparrow$$

$p$

The six arrows on the left point to the positions which spell the first occurrences of every subword of length  $\leq 2$  in  $u^{<p}$  and the eight arrows on the right (before the one pointing to  $p$ ) to the positions which spell the last occurrences of every subword of length  $\leq 2$  in  $u^{<p}$ .

**THEOREM 3.4:** *Let  $m_1, m_2$  and  $m_3$  be positive integers. Then  $A^*/\sim_{(m_1, m_2, m_3)}$  is of dot-depth exactly 2 if and only if  $m_2 = 1$ .*

*Proof:* If  $A^*/\sim_{(m_1, m_2, m_3)}$  is of dot-depth exactly 2, then  $m_2 < 2$  by

**LEMMA 3.1.:** *Conversely, for  $|A| = r > 1$ , we show that for any positive integers  $m'_1, m'_2, \sim_{(m'_1+(m'_1+1)2m'_2(r+1)^{m'_2}, m'_2)} \subseteq \sim_{(m'_1, 1, m'_2)}$ .*

*To see this, suppose  $u \sim_{(m'_1+(m'_1+1)2m'_2(r+1)^{m'_2}, m'_2)} v$ . Then there is a winning strategy for player II in the game  $\mathcal{G}_{(m'_1+(m'_1+1)2m'_2(r+1)^{m'_2}, m'_2)}(u, v)$  to win each play. A winning strategy for player II in the game  $\mathcal{G}_{(m'_1, 1, m'_2)}(u, v)$  to win each play is described as follows. Let  $p'_1, \dots, p'_{m'_1}$  ( $p'_1 \leq \dots \leq p'_{m'_1}$ ) be positions in  $u$  chosen by player I in the first move. Player II chooses positions  $q'_1, \dots, q'_{m'_1}$  ( $q'_1 \leq \dots \leq q'_{m'_1}$ ) by considering the following play of the game  $\mathcal{G}_{(m'_1+(m'_1+1)2m'_2(r+1)^{m'_2}, m'_2)}(u, v)$ . In the first move, player I chooses  $p'_1, \dots, p'_{m'_1}$  and the positions which spell the first and last occurrences of every subword of length  $\leq m'_2$  in  $u^{<p'_1}, u^{<p'_2}, \dots, u^{<p'_{m'_1-1}}$  and  $u_{>p'_{m'_1}}$  for a total of no more than  $m'_1 + (m'_1 + 1)2m'_2(r+1)^{m'_2}$  positions (there are  $r^{m'_2}$  possible words of length  $m'_2$  for a total of no more than  $m'_2(r+1)^{m'_2}$  positions to spell the first (last) occurrences of every subword of length  $\leq m'_2$ ). More details follow for the special case  $u \sim_{(1+4m'_2(r+1)^{m'_2}, m'_2)} v$ . We have a winning strategy for player II in the game  $\mathcal{G}_{(1+4m'_2(r+1)^{m'_2}, m'_2)}(u, v)$  to win each play. Let us describe a winning strategy for player II in the game  $\mathcal{G}_{(1, 1, m'_2)}(u, v)$  to win each play. Let  $p$  be a position in  $u$  chosen by player I in the first move. Suppose  $Q_a^u p$  for some  $a \in A$ . If  $p$  is the  $i$ -th occurrence of  $a$  in  $u$  ( $1 \leq i \leq \mathcal{N}_{(1, m'_2)} = 2m'_2 + 1$ ), then player II chooses the same occurrence of  $a$  in  $v$ , say position  $q$ . The fact that  $u^{<p} \sim_{(1, m'_2)} v^{<q}$  and  $u_{>p} \sim_{(1, m'_2)} v_{>q}$  follows from Lemmas 3.2 and 3.3 ( $\mathcal{N}_{(1, m'_2)} \leq (4m'_2(r+1)^{m'_2})m'_2$ ). If  $p$  is the  $|u|_a + 1 - i$ -th occurrence of  $a$  in  $u$  ( $1 \leq i \leq \mathcal{N}_{(1, m'_2)}$ ), player II chooses the  $|v|_a + 1 - i$ -th occurrence of  $a$  in  $v$ . If  $p$  is among  $p_{2m'_2+2}, \dots, p_{|u|_a-2m'_2-1}$ , then player II chooses position  $q$ , an  $a$ , among  $q_{2m'_2+2}, \dots, q_{|v|_a-2m'_2-1}$  by considering the following play of the game  $\mathcal{G}_{(1+4m'_2(r+1)^{m'_2}, m'_2)}(u, v)$ . In the first move, player I chooses  $p$ , the positions which spell the first and last occurrences of every subword of length  $\leq m'_2$  in  $u^{<p}$  and in  $u_{>p}$ . Hence there exists a position  $q$  in  $v$  such that player II, by choosing  $q$ , the positions which spell the first and last occurrences of every subword of length  $\leq m'_2$  in  $v^{<q}$  and in  $v_{>q}$ , wins the play of the game. Let us show that  $u^{<p} \sim_{(1, m'_2)} v^{<q}$  (the proof that  $u_{>p} \sim_{(1, m'_2)} v_{>q}$  is similar). Let  $p'$  be*

a position in  $u^{<p}$  (the proof is similar when starting with a position in  $v^{<q}$ ). Assume  $Q_{a_i}^u p'$ .

Case 1:  $p'$  is among the first  $m'_2$  occurrences of  $a_i$  in  $u^{<p}$ .

Let  $q'$  be the same occurrence among the first  $m'_2$  occurrences of  $a_i$  in  $v^{<q}$ . It is clear that  $u_{>p'}^{<p} \sim_{(m'_2)} v_{>q'}^{<q}$ , and  $u^{<p'} \sim_{(m'_2)} v^{<q'}$ .

Case 2:  $p'$  is among the last  $m'_2$  occurrences of  $a_i$  in  $u^{<p}$ . Similar to case 1.

Case 3:  $p'$  is not among the first  $m'_2$  nor the last  $m'_2$  occurrences of  $a_i$  in  $u^{<p}$ .

Let  $p''$  and  $p'''$  ( $p'' < p'''$ ) be the closest positions to  $p'$  in  $u^{<p'}$  and  $u_{>p'}^{<p}$ , respectively among the chosen positions by player I. Let  $q''$  and  $q'''$  ( $q'' < q'''$ ) be the corresponding positions chosen by player II.

Since  $u_{>p'''}^{<p'''} \sim_{(m'_2)} v_{>q'''}^{<q'''}$ , there is  $q'$  in  $v_{>q'''}^{<q'''}$  such that  $Q_{a_i}^v q'$ .

Let us show that  $u_{>p'}^{<p} \sim_{(m'_2)} v_{>q'}^{<q}$ .  $u^{<p'} \sim_{(m'_2)} v^{<q'}$  follows similarly.

Let  $w = w_1 \dots w_{|w|}$ ,  $|w| \leq m'_2$  in  $v_{>q'}^{<q}$ . The proof is similar when starting with  $w$  in  $u_{>p'}^{<p}$ . If  $w \in v_{>q'''}^{<q'''}$ , it is clear that  $w \in u_{>p'''}^{<p''}$ , hence in  $u_{>p'}^{<p}$ . So let us assume  $w \notin v_{>q'''}^{<q'''}$ . Let  $p_{w_1}, \dots, p_{w_{|w|}}$  in  $v_{>q'}^{<q}$ , at least  $p_{w_1}$  being in  $v_{>q'''}^{<q'''}$ , which spell  $w_1 \dots w_{|w|} \cdot p_{w_1}, \dots, p_{w_{|w|}}$  are hence positions which spell an occurrence of a subword of length  $\leq m'_2$  in  $v^{<q}$ . Hence they are smaller than or equal to those positions which spell the last occurrence of  $w$  in  $v^{<q}$  which are in  $v_{\geq q'''}^{<q}$ . Hence  $w \in u_{>p'}^{<p}$ . [ ]

The following corollary gives another result for inclusion (one was Lemma 2.2).

COROLLARY 3.5: Let  $|A| = r$ . Then

$$\sim_{(m'_1 + (m'_1 + 1) 2m'_2 (r + 1)^{m'_2}, m'_2)} \subseteq \sim_{(m'_1, \mathcal{N}(1, m'_2))}$$

Proof: From Theorem 3.4 and Lemma 2.2. [ ]

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This research was partially supported by F.C.A.R. (Quebec). We would like to thank the referees for their comments and suggestions.

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