TokenTurbine: a pipeline for LLM pre-training

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Contents

1 Introduction & project overview

Building an end-to-end pipeline for LLM pre-training requires several steps from data acquisition to final inspection of the cleaned dataset. TokenTurbine aims to provide a self-contained solution to such a problem. The Github repository is structured as follows:

```
TokenTurbine/
├── src/
│   ├── main.py (Pipeline orchestrator)
│   ├── data_load.py (data injection and initial filtering)
│   ├── filtering.py (data cleaning)
│   ├── deduplication.py (deduplication stage)
│   ├── tokenization.py (tokenization stage)
│   └── utils/
│       ├── config_loader.py (config management)
│       ├── single_jsonl.py (write final output)
│       └── helper.py (helper functions)
├── configs/
│   └── base.yaml (config parameters)
├── scripts/
│   └── download_data.sh
├── notebooks (Jupyter notebooks for output analysis)
│   ├── read_input.ipynb (Analysis of the raw dataset)
│   └──inspect_dataset.ipynb (Analysis of the cleaned dataset)
├── data/ (Not synched with GitHub)
│   ├── raw/ (initial dataset)
│   └── processed/ (cleaned non-tokenized dataset)
│       └── tokenized/ (tokenized files)
├── reports/
│   ├── report_mainpipe.pdf (this file)
│   └── plots/
│       ├── Char_Words_Dist.png
│       ├── Dedup_Check.png
│       ├── Integrity_Check.png
│       ├── Language_Check.png
│       ├── Perplexity_Dist.png
│       ├── PII_Check.png
│       ├── pipeline_steps.png
│       └── Toxicity_Check.png
├── Dockerfile (container definition)
```

```
├── docker-compose.yml (container orchestrator)
├── requirements.txt (Python dependencies)
├── Makefile (Helper commands)
└── README.md
```

I highlight that the data directory is not synced with the Github repository to avoid the upload of large files. Additionally, there is also a .dockerignore and a .gitignore file. Throughout this project, I aim to provide a reproducible and containerised pipeline that can easily be run on any OS and environment providing the same end result. Additionally, despite the fact that the initial dataset provided is not particularly large (less than 0.5 Gb), this solution is highly scalable to significantly larger datasets given my choice to use Ray Data, to perform vectorised operation with Pyarrow, and to use multiprocess (except in the deduplication step, see 3). Throughout the code I adhere to the best coding practices adding docstrings to explain what each function does and including logger for code observability.

This report is organised as follows: Section 2 describes the data ingestion (load and initial formatting), Section 3 describes the cleaning of the dataset from the initial language detection and quality filter up to deduplication. In Section 4 I briefly discuss the final export and tokenization, while in Section 5 I will inspect the final result and present various metric results and finally, in Section 6 I will summarise the key aspects of TokenTurbine and discuss the scalability of this pipeline.

2 Data acquisition and initial formatting

Here I will describe the ingestion stage of the TokenTurbine data pipeline. Its objective is to read the raw JSONL document, clean and normalize its content, remove code-like or low-quality samples, and emit a normalized Arrow table containing processed text and metadata. This is done in /src/data_load.py. Our starting point is a sample of unprepared data (a single .jsonl file of 460.6 Mb) which I inspected with a Python function (read_input.ipynb) to find that the actual text is contained in the field 'text', the average document size is 1.7kb, max document size is 372kb, the metadata present is 'url' and the number of documents is 269378. The modules used in data_load.py are Ray for parallel distributed processing, PyArrow for columnar data transformation, BeautifulSoup for HTML stripping, Regex, XXHash, Unicodedata for text normalization and hashing and Logging and warnings for runtime diagnostics. I decided not to use the function load_dataset from the Hugging Face library. While this would have been an excellent choice to train a model on a personal laptop, I have decide to use Ray Data since it is a distributed compute engine which allows to automatically distribute the tasks across multi-nodes without any major change in the

code. Conversely, Hugging Face relies on multiprocessing (num_proc) and it is bound to a single machine. If the dataset was significantly larger ($\sim$ tens of TB) it is not possible to easily distribute the workload across various machines using just the datasets library and instead we would need to manually shard the files. load_data.py consists of two main components:

- **IngestionWorker**: a Ray actor responsible for cleaning and filtering batches of documents.
- **IngestionStep**: an orchestration class that loads data and dispatches batches to the workers.

2.1 IngestionWorker

IngestionWorker is instantiated as a Ray actor and executed in parallel. Its responsibilities are:

- Clean HTML
- Normalize Unicode
- Filter short or code-like text
- Compute metadata (word count, character count, hashes)
- Emit a clean Arrow Table

Firstly, we initialise the class by taking the configuration parameters in /configs/base.yaml which include the location of the raw dataset, the minimum text length (set to 100 by default to include data with at least one sentence) and batch_size[1]. I also added two flags in order to clean html text (normalize_text) and to exclude code (filter_code). These parameters are loaded in /utils/config_loader.py. The init function also defines regular expressions optimize code detection including keywords commonly found in JavaScript, C/C++, Python, and general code and syntactic symbols.

Then with _get_output_schema I define the standardized structure of the processed table which includes the document id, text, url, word and character count, source and the UTC timestamp of ingestion. I also define an empty table for documents without text.

[1]the default value is set to None to let Ray to optimize it; however, since we have inspected the file and know the average size of each document, in base.yaml we set this value to 2000 which would give us a $\sim$ 3.4 Mb per batch which is small enough to prevent any OOM errors on any laptop.

_is_code_like determines whether a text is likely to be computer code. This heuristic check consists of two steps: (i) if there are any programming keyword (if not it exits immediately to avoid unnecessary computation); (ii) if there are at least 5 programming keywords or if the ratio of symbols over the total characters is larger than 5% then the text is classified as code. I highlight that, while modern LLMs actually benefit from code in training data as it improves reasoning and logical thinking capabilities and enhances the model's ability to work with structured information, code in training data can introduce several issues. It may contain sensitive information (API keys, credentials, internal endpoints), bias toward programming patterns that aren't representative of general language use, and it can skew the model's learned distributions (especially if the dataset has disproportionate amounts of code). For a general-purpose LLM, like the one in this assignment, I wanted to have a broad, balanced linguistic diversity. Additionally, by requiring at least 5 coding keywords or a high density of symbols, code snippets inside larger documents are likely to pass this check and not classified as codes. Finally, this pipeline is flexible enough so that, if we want to keep codes instead, we can simply set the flag filter_code in base.yaml to False.

Each cleaning is defined in _clean_text. Specifically, it implements:

1. HTML removal (using BeautifulSoup, unless it fails and regex fallback comes in to remove HTML tags): parse the text, remove elements such as <script> and <header> and extracts human-readable text.

2. HTML Entity decoding: Converts encoded entities such as , & into their plain-text equivalents.

3. Unicode normalization: canonical normalization (NFC) to ensure consistency across accented characters and composed glyphs.

4. Control character filtering: remove all category C* Unicode characters except \n and \t to eliminates invisible characters, null bytes, etc.

5. Whitespace normalization and line processing: produce a readable, paragraph-structured text by converting non-breaking spaces to normal spaces, tabs into spaces and repeated internal spaces in a singles space.

Each batch is then processed in ___call___. We first validate the input; since we have inspected the file we know that the column name is 'text'. Another possible choice was to include a candidate search for different key words such as 'body', 'text' and 'content'. Then, if normalization is enabled, _clean_text is called and I proceed with an initial filtering. For each text we filter short documents (length below the minimum length) and code-like text (applying _is_code_like). In _process_batch we do the initial "fast" filtering operations such as remove null text

values and with length below the minimum length. Then I reconstruct the arrow table by selecting rows corresponding to valid texts. This operation is performed using the PyArrow library which allows zero-copy operations (no spikes in RAM usage) and vectorised operations (crucial to achieve high-performance). The final step is to generate IDs for each text object (this passage is crucial for deduplication). For this task, I used xxhash due to its superior performance compared to other packages such as md5 ($\sim 5 - 10$ faster). Additionally, at this stage we are not worried about the non cryptographic nature of xxHash as ID generation is not a security-sensitive application. Together with the doc_id we also generate the other metadatas (character and word count, url and timestamp). The end result is a final table with all these pieces of information. I highlight that in word_counts I use utf8_split_whitespace to handle all the possible whitespaces.

2.2 IngestionStep

This class sets up and executes the ingestion process. It is firstly initialized to read user configurations such as the input_path, batch_size. It then constructs a worker configuration dictionary that will be passed to all Ray actors. Then, it runs the pipeline through the function run() by loading the input dataset with ds = ray.data.read_json(self.input_path) and perform the distributed cleaning with processed_ds = ds.map_batches().
Specifically, compute=ray.data.ActorPoolStrategy(min_size=1, max_size=4) creates a pool of 1 to 4 Ray actors, each running an IngestionWorker and then ray distributes batches across workers, enabling parallel processing. I have chosen a max_size of 4 to ensure this pipeline can be run on any laptop, potentially, the maximum number of Ray actors could be increased depending on the available resources. This method returns the processed dataset. This final passage concludes the initial step of our pipeline: loading the dataset, normalize it and perform the initial filtering.

3 Data cleaning and deduplication

After correctly loading the dataset and performing a first fast filtering, I now proceed to a more thorough cleaning and filtering of the dataset. The filters I have decided to apply are the following:

- **Language (English)**: filtering.py
- **Quality (punctuation vs alpha-numeric characters)**: filtering.py
- **PII detection and redaction**: filtering.py

- **Toxicity detection**: filtering.py
- **Deduplication**: deduplication.py

The order of these operations is determined by their computational cost. I have started from the language (English) and quality filtering [2] on the dataset before the deduplication, since these operations are computationally cheaper and reduce the size of the dataset before the most expensive calculation.

3.1 Filtering

Similarly to data ingestion within the filtering step (filtering.py) I have defined a worker class (FastTextPredictor) and the orchestrator class (QualityFilterStep). I have chosen this strategy for better scalability. Specifically, by using Ray's ActorPoolStrategy instead of the map_batches function, heavy objects are loaded only once per worker (in the function _load_model) instead of once per batch, massively increasing performance when we have a large number of batches.

3.1.1 FastTextPredictor

FastTextPredictor is responsible for language identification, PII detection / redaction or dropping, toxicity filtering, and a final quality heuristic based on punctuation density. It combines a pre-trained FastText language model (model-based) with lightweight regex and ratio heuristics (rule-based). I configured FastTextPredictor in ___init___ to take the correct language model path (English) and picked as thresholds for FastText confidence 0.65, and 0.3 for punctuation ratio. I have also truncate text to 1000 characters for faster FastText inference. Other parameters include the toxicon list (focused on hate speech rather than removing words such as sex or murder which might be included in legit documents), the max ratio of toxic words allowed and the PII action (set to redact). To find sensitive information we compile several regexes for email, phone, IPs.

I defined some helper functions for the language filtering such as _load_model (for lazy loading of the FastText model for language detection) and _smart_sample to samples characters from the middle (25% offset) of the document to avoid headers/footers that often bias language models. The rationale behind this choice is that headers and navigation often contain repeated or multilingual tokens; sampling from the middle improves quality with lower cost. Then, in _predict_language I clean the text only for FastText (without overwriting the actual dataframe) and then perform the prediction with model.predict which returns the

[2] The only quality filtering I have decided to apply is on the punctuation ratio (non alphanumeric characters over total characters) to avoid junk lines such as "....." or "<html >...".

top language guess and the associated score. _handle_pii runs regexes to detect email, IP, phone. It allows two operational modes via pii_action. "drop": if regex matches, marks has_pii=True and drops the document. "redact" (the default choice): replaces matches with <EMAIL>, <IP>, <PHONE> via pattern.subn(...) and returns the redacted string. Such a redaction still uses simple token replacement and it can leave context that still reveals PII (e.g., usernames embedded in URLs, other personal IDs). However, for this assignment I have decided to use only this simple redaction as a proof of concept. A similar argument holds also for the toxicity filter in _check_toxicity. This is also performed via regex search checking that: 1) if toxicity_re is empty then there is no toxicity filtering. 2) If max_toxic_ratio is set to 0 (zero tolerance) then immediate boolean search. Otherwise, it finds all matches (findall) and computes ratio = n_matches / word_count and drops document only if ratio exceeds max_toxic_ratio (set to 0.1%). Using lexicon-based matching is efficient but not fully accurate. For contextual toxicity detection it would be better to use packages such as Detoxify. In _compute_punc_ratio, I compute the punctuation ratio to flag very noisy content, markup remnants or binary blobs which often have high punctuation density. Finally, ___call___ performs the full filtering (calling all the functions defined above starting from the language identification up to the final quality filter based on the punctuation ratio) for each batch. This function returns the filtered table without the temporary columns lang_label, lang_score, punc_ratio. I finally highlight that in several parts of this code, arrow columns are converted to Python lists. (to_pylist()). While this allows using Python regex and model calls, it copies data to Python, which can be slow.

3.1.2 QualityFilterStep

FastTextPredictor is called by the orchestrator QualityFilterStep via the function run specifying the minimum and maximum number of worker actors running at all times. As for the orchestrator IngestionStep, for this demo this code is expected to run on any personal laptop, hence I set these values to 1 and 4 respectively; however, for larger datasets and in large compute clusters, these values can be modified.

3.2 Deduplication

I then moved onto the deduplication stage (deduplication.py). I have chosen to implement a document-level deduplication rather than a more aggressive such as a paragraph or sentence level to keep the computational cost low. I performed a two step process: an exact deduplication (fast and cheap, within the class ExactDedu-

plicator) followed by a Fuzzy deduplication (slower and more sophisticated, within the class MinHashDeduplicator).

3.2.1 Exact deduplication

The first stage uses the docids assigned in the ingestion process to drop documents that have already appeared exactly before; hence this catches only perfect duplicates. A single stateful Ray actor (ExactDeduplicator) is responsible for maintaining a global set of previously observed identifiers across all batches. As each new batch of documents arrives, the actor iterates through all doc_id values in order. If a hash has not been seen before, it is added to the global set and the document is preserved. If the hash already exists in the set, the document is removed as a duplicate. Because all state is held in a single actor, global consistency is guaranteed without cross-worker communication. This stage is extremely fast and typically eliminates large volumes of trivial duplicates.

3.2.2 Fuzzy deduplication

For the near-duplicates (frequent in multi-domain datasets), I have implemented a fuzzy deduplication algorithm. For this, I relied on MinHash LSH indexes (see class MinHashDeduplicator). When initialized, I set the number of permutations to 128, the size of shingles to 5 and the maximum Jaccard similarity index to 0.85 (see below). In the function _get_shingles, the text is firstly normalized by removing punctuation and lowercasing. Then, tokens are extracted and grouped into shingles (contiguous n-grams), typically of length 5. Extremely short documents fall back to using the entire text as a single shingle to avoid empty representations. This produces a set representation of each document, suitable for MinHash. Within the function ___call___, a MinHash object with 128[3] is created for each document. All shingles are hashed and fed into the signature generator. Using these signatures we can compute the Jaccard similarity index which we use to discard similar documents (we set a threshold of 0.85, using LSH query). If no matches are found, the document is considered unique, it is inserted into the LSH index and the document ID is stored in a global seen_docs set. If any match is returned, the document is flagged as a near-duplicate and removed. Within this function, I have inserted a LSH memory guardrail in order to check memory limit: if LSH already has too many items it will accept remaining documents without any fuzzy deduplication check. While this prevents the code from failing, I have added a warning message highlighting that deduplication is not performed anymore and suggesting to increase max_lsh_items or process in chunks.

[3]This is a commonly adopted choice to balance computational efficiency and accuracy.

3.2.3 DeduplicationStep

Finally I have set up deduplication.py in a similar fashion as filtering.py and data_load.py (actors with ActorPoolStrategy). The DeduplicationStep orchestrates the full process calling ExactDeduplicator first and then MinHashDeduplicator. However, this time I chose a Stateful Actor pattern (both classes are called with ActorPoolStrategy with max_size=1). While this limits CPU parallelism (single-threaded hashing), it allows for a unified in-memory LSH index with strict memory caps (max_lsh_items). This trade-off ensures the pipeline is robust against OOM errors on smaller nodes, whereas a distributed shuffle approach would require complex tuning of partition sizes. This would only work on scales up to $\sim$ 10 Gb. At terabyte scale, I would refactor this into a Map-Reduce LSH: 1. Map: Calculate MinHash signatures in parallel. 2. Banding: Hash segments of the signature to bucket IDs. 3. Shuffle: GroupBy bucket ID. 4. Reduce: Compute Jaccard Similarity only within buckets. This would allow horizontal scaling while maintaining O(N) complexity.

4 Final export and tokenization

After ingestion, filtering, and deduplication, the pipeline performs two final processing stages: (i) exporting the cleaned corpus into a consolidated JSONL file (as required by the take-home assignment), and (ii) tokenizing the dataset into model-ready numerical representations. These stages convert the curated text into a durable, structured, and training-compatible format, suitable for downstream LLM pre-training. While this second step was not explicitely required for this assignment, tokenization is an absolutely necessary step in order to perform LLM pre-training; hence I have decided to include it anyway.

4.1 Export of the cleaned dataset

The export phase is responsible for converting the intermediate Ray dataset into a single, newline-delimited JSON file. This requires consolidating many distributed shards into one final artifact while maintaining reproducibility and I/O safety. This happens within main.py and using helper functions such as consolidate_json_shards and prepare_for_export defined in utils/single_jsonl.py. After making sure that the final output directory exists, each batch is exported in a temporary json file. Because Ray processes data in parallel, individual worker blocks are first written to a temporary directory as sharded json fragments. This avoids memory pressure and allows the system to stream documents to disk in batches. Once all shards have been written, the pipeline performs a controlled merge step in consolidate_json_shards that concatenates all fragment files into a single jsonl file.

This ensures that the final dataset contains one document per line. Finally, the size of the single jsonl file is computed and printed for observability. Optionally (if compute_counts = True in base.yaml), it is possible to show the counts the number of records after each processing stage. This provides a transparent audit trail reflecting how many documents survived filtering and deduplication, and is useful for estimating retention rates and quality yields. However, this operation significantly slows down the pipeline as this computation requires ds.count (see function compute_count_safe in utils/helper.py).

4.2 Tokenization

This final step is defined in tokenization.py. As in all the other steps, it uses Ray Actors for distributed parallelism through TokenizationWorker, which performs the per-batch tokenization logic inside Ray actors, and TokenizationStep which orchestrates the distributed tokenization and writes the resulting dataset to disk (Parquet or JSONL). I decided to use the tiktoken package: a fast BPE tokeniser for use with OpenAI's models (I picked gpt2 by default). I preferred this package over HuggingFace given its better performance.

4.2.1 TokenizationWorker

Each worker is initialized specifying tokenizer model (gpt2 by default, but configurable), whether to keep original text in the output (useful for debugging, False by default), whether to allow special tokens and the optional maximum sequence length for truncation. Then, I proceed with the lazy loading of the tokenizer model in _get_tokenizer. The tokenizer is instantiated only on the first batch, reducing overhead. If the requested tokenizer model cannot be loaded, the worker falls back to gpt2 and logs a warning. This lazy-initialization is crucial because every actor loads its own tokenizer, and tens or hundreds of parallel workers may run in large-scale execution. Finally, each batch is processed in ___call___ after being initially validated (if the batch has no text column or is empty, an empty table is returned, otherwise the tokenizer is retrieved and the texts are extracted as Python list). There is also a special token control to avoid user-injected control tokens (unless allowed in the configuration options). For each document, the worker performs encoding (assign ids based on the tokenizer model) and a subsequent check for empty or unusually long (>100000 tokens) documents (these are assigned to an empty token list). There is also an optional check to truncate tokens to a maximum length (not configured by default). The worker returns a new PyArrow Table containing: doc_id, input_ids (jagged token lists stored in Arrow's nested list format), token_count (token length per document), metadata (source, url, ingest_time) and the text column (only if flag keep_text = True).

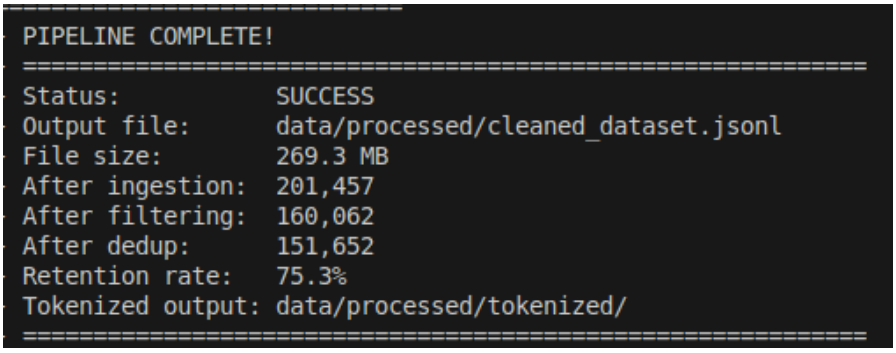

Figure 1: Screenshot with the log message at the end of the pipeline (with compute_counts = True

4.2.2 TokenizationStep

The orchestrator TokenizationStep contains 2 functions: ___init___ and run. In the former is loaded the configuration, specifically we allow for both jsonl and parquet shards for export, and the default output path is in a separate directory (/data/processed/tokenized). Run executes the tokenization and the final exports. The final files are in Parquet format (default). Data are split into multiple shards and I use Snappy compression (standard choice for ML pipelines).

5 Inspection & metrics

After running the full pipeline, I end up with the file cleaned_dataset.jsonl inside the directory data/processed. As seen in the Figure 1, after the pipeline is completed, a final log message giving the main information (size, number of documents at each step) is printed. On a laptop with 8GB RAM and using 4 CPUs (max_actors=4) the code runs in $\sim$ 28 minutes (1:30 for ingestion, 2 for filtering, 8:30 for deduplication, 8 for jsonl export and 8 for tokenization). However, the large majority of this time is spent in computing the document counts after each step of the pipeline. If compute_counts is set to False, the time to execute this pipeline drops to $\sim$ 17 minutes as only the export and tokenization steps (which also writes files) take up most of the time. In this section I will investigate a few important metrics to evaluate the effectiveness of the pipeline I ran.

In Figure 2 I show the retention rate (number of final documents / number of initial documents) after each step of the pipeline. The initial file contained 269,378 documents. The initial ingestion removed around 25% of those documents meaning that these were either code or too short (<100 characters) files. The subsequent filtering (PII, toxicity, language and punctuation ratio) removed another $\sim$ 40,000

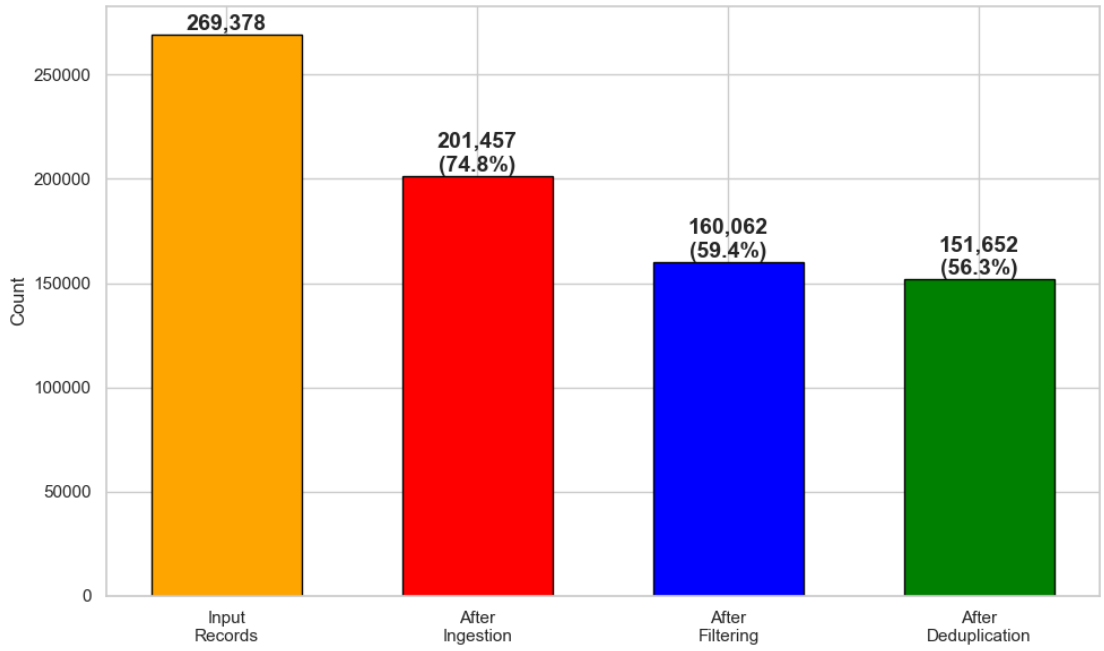

Figure 2: Retention rate after each step of the pipeline.

documents and the final deduplication ~ 9000 documents leaving the final dataset to 56% of the total original dataset. This barplot shows my choice of performing the more aggressive and cheap filtering at the start in order to have a lighter file to process with the most expensive filters (deduplication).

In Figure 3, I show the histogram of lengths for both the input raw dataset (upper panels, orange bars) and the output cleaned dataset (lower panels, green bars). Left (right) panels show the character (word) lengths distribution together with their average values (red/blue dashed line for the input/output dataset). Overall, the average values of the output distributions are slightly larger than the input ones. This is a consequence of removing very short documents as it is evident from the left panels (i.e. the orange distribution has a low tail below 100 characters which does not appear in the green one.) This is a consequence of the cleaning performed in the initial ingestion of not accepting documents with less than 100 characters.

The integrity check analysis highlights the effectiveness of the cleaning pipeline in removing undesirable artifacts from the dataset. As shown in Figure 4, the raw input data contains substantial amounts of HTML markup (24.7%), code snippets (37.8%), and excessive whitespace (31.1%). After processing, these artifacts are dramatically reduced, with HTML and code-like content dropping to 5.2% and 16.8% respectively, while excessive whitespace is eliminated entirely. This confirms

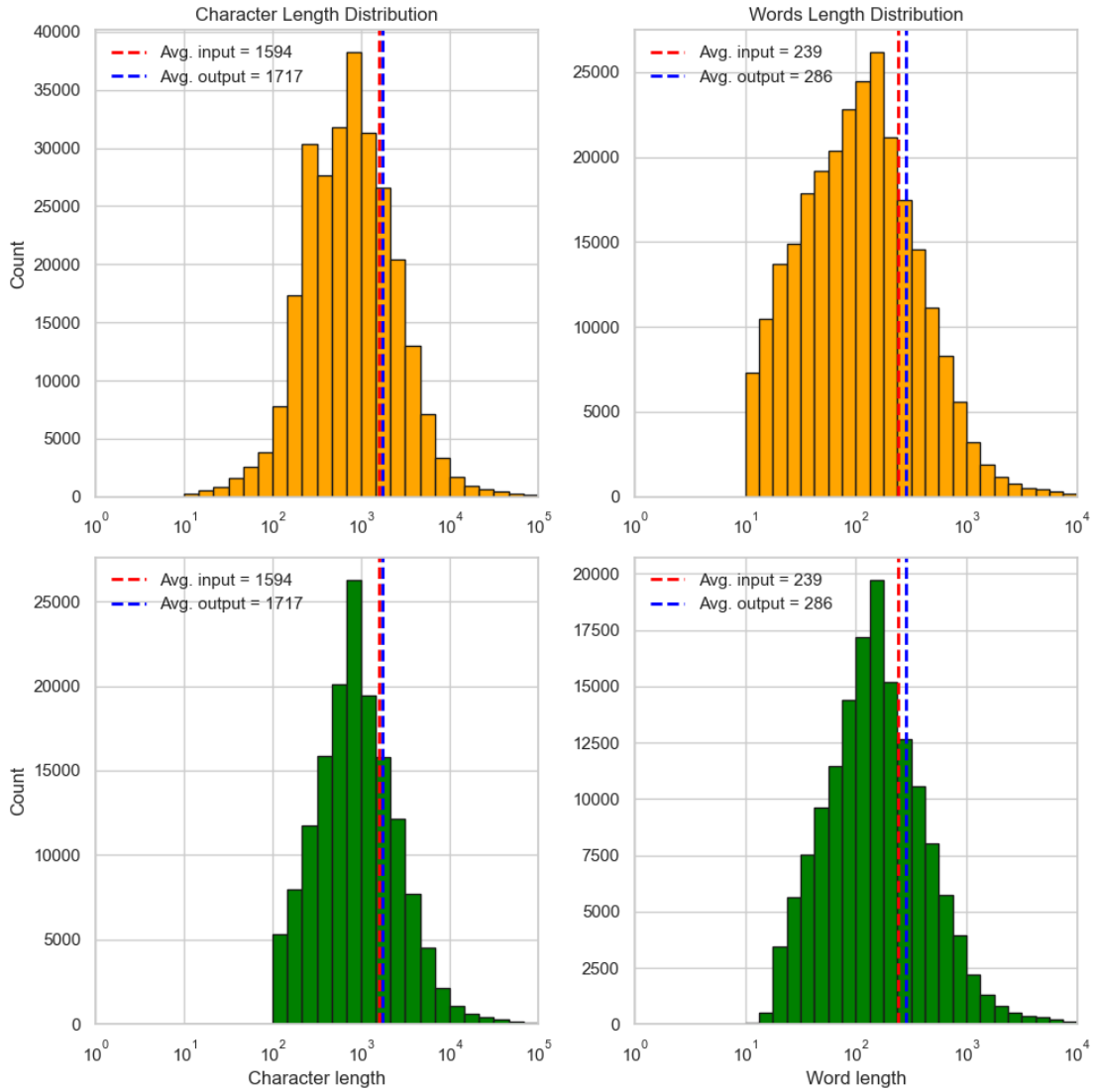

Figure 3: Histograms of character (left panels) and word (right panels) lengths for the input raw dataset (upper panels, orange bars) and the cleaned dataset (lower panels, green bars).

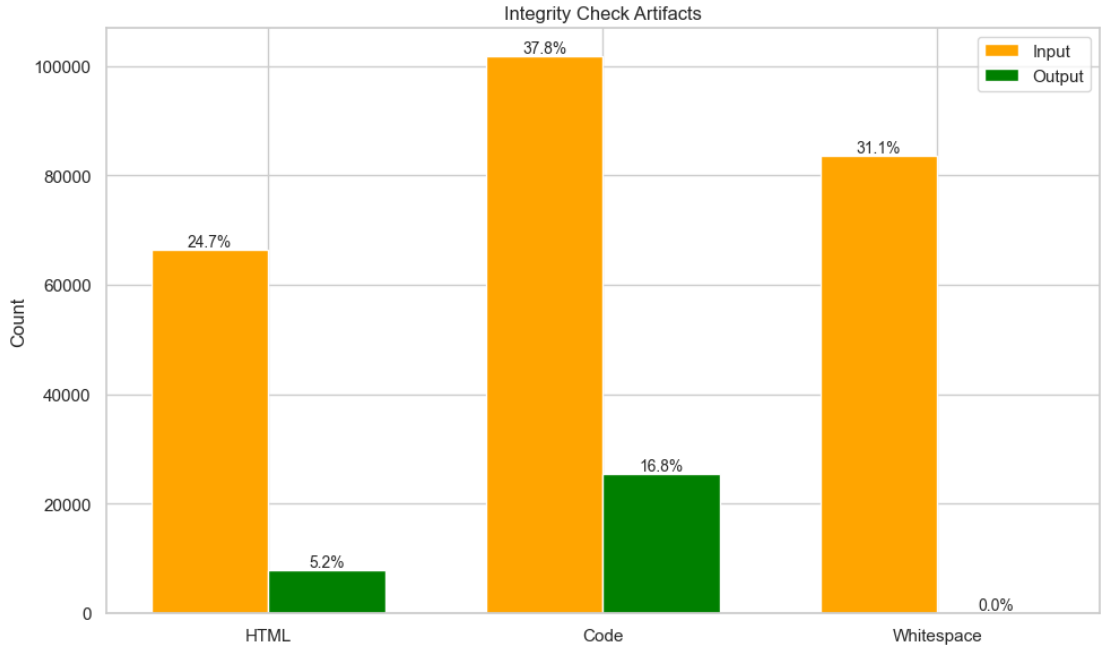

Figure 4: Bar chart comparing the prevalence of HTML content, code-like text, and excessive whitespace in the raw input dataset (orange bars) versus the cleaned output dataset (green bars). Percentages above each bar indicate the proportion of affected documents within each dataset.

that the filtering and normalization steps significantly improve dataset quality by reducing noise and formatting-related issues that can negatively affect downstream model training. Additionally, I highlight that, as discussed in Section 2, the code filtering performed was not too aggressive as I still wanted to retain code snippets that may be present in documents such as posts and blog discussions. Hence, the fact that I still retain $\sim 17\%$ of code-like content reflects the aim of the pipeline.

Figure 5 shows the results of the PII detection step, focusing on three categories: email addresses, phone numbers, and IP addresses. These are explicitly targeted and filtered by the pipeline. In the input dataset, these PII elements appear with non-trivial frequency (1.7% emails, 2.2% phone numbers, and 2.4% IP addresses). Following processing, all three categories are successfully removed, resulting in 0% occurrence across the output dataset. This demonstrates the effectiveness of the PII filtering mechanisms implemented in the pipeline. It is important to note that this analysis covers only the types of PII explicitly included in the filtering process. Other forms of sensitive information, such as social media handles, document identifiers, or less structured PII, were not evaluated in this report and not filtered in the pipeline. While the results confirm successful removal of the targeted PII

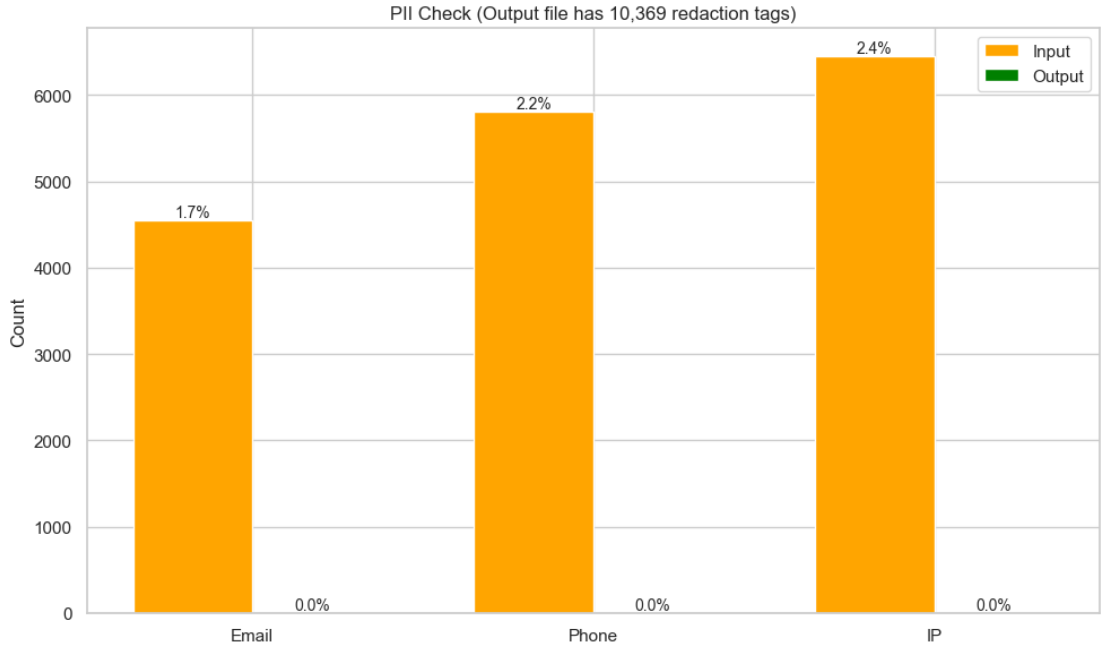

Figure 5: Bar chart comparing the frequency of detected email addresses, phone numbers, and IP addresses in the raw input dataset (orange bars) versus the cleaned output dataset (green bars). Percentages above each bar represent the proportion of documents containing each type of PII.

categories, additional work would be required to ensure comprehensive protection against all potential PII types.

Figure 6 summarises the toxicity evaluation performed on a stratified sample of 1,000 documents from both the input and output datasets. Using the Detoxify library, which provides a multi-label toxicity classifier, each sampled document was assessed across several toxicity dimensions: overall toxicity, severe toxicity, obscene language, identity attack, insult, and threat. The results indicate that the prevalence of toxic content was already low in the input dataset, with overall toxicity at 0.9%, obscene content at 0.2%, and insults at 0.3%. After processing, these rates decrease further: overall toxicity falls to 0.7%, and other categories either halve or drop to zero—demonstrating that the cleaning pipeline helps reduce residual toxic content. Because Detoxify is computationally expensive, this check was intentionally limited to a sample rather than the full dataset. As such, the results should be interpreted as an estimate rather than an exhaustive toxicity audit. However, the observed reductions across categories provide evidence that the filtering pipeline is directionally effective at mitigating unwanted toxic content. This result could be further improved by using the Detoxify package also in

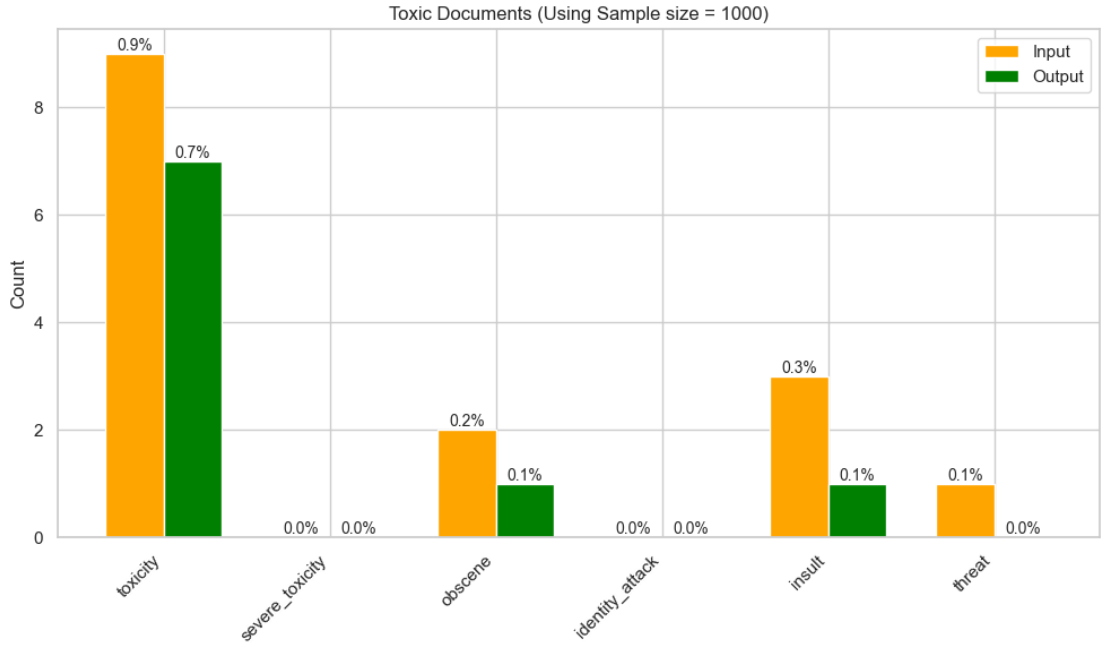

Figure 6: Bar chart showing the number of documents flagged as toxic across five categories—toxicity, severe toxicity, obscene language, identity attack, insult, and threat—for both the input (orange) and output (green) datasets. Percentages above the bars represent the proportion of toxic documents within the evaluated sample (1000 documents) using a toxicity threshold score of 0.5.

the pipeline rather than a regex search for toxic words. However, this would be computationally more expensive. Finally, in this plot I took a toxicity threshold score of 0.5, which is somewhat low and might be affected by false positive counts.

The following check I performed is on the language content. Figure 7 demonstrates the effectiveness of the pipeline in removing non-English documents leaving only 63 non-English documents (0.04%) compared to the initial 23376 (8.68%). The few non-English documents left in the cleaned dataset might have been not correctly identified because the language evaluation was performed only on a sample of 1000 characters starting after the first quarter of the document which might have left multi-language documents.

After assessing the language filtering, I now investigate the linguistic fluency using the perplexity distribution. Here, I computed perplexity using the distilgpt2 language model on a random sample of 1,000 documents from both the input and output dataset. As shown in Figure 8, the input dataset exhibits a very broad perplexity distribution, with a mean of 436.9 and a median of 31.7, indicating a heavy long-tail of highly incoherent or noisy text. In contrast, the output dataset

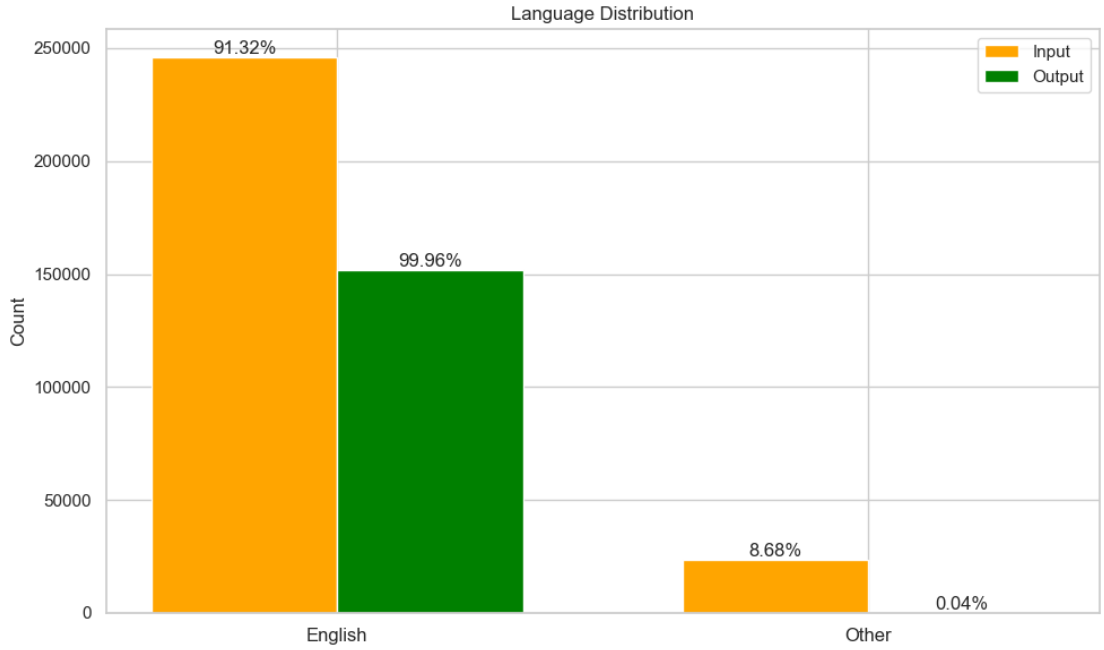

Figure 7: Bar chart comparing the frequency of English and non-English ("other") documents in the raw input dataset (orange bars) versus the cleaned output dataset (green bars). Percentages above each bar represent the proportion of English and non-English documents on the total dataset.

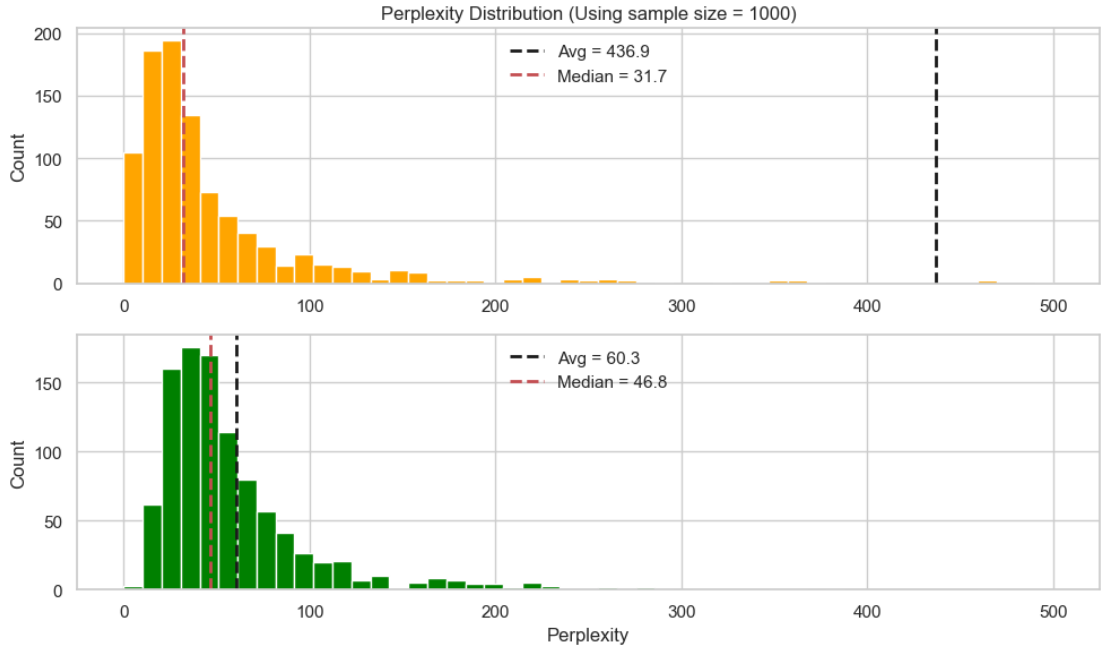

Figure 8: Histograms showing the distribution of perplexity scores computed using a sample of 1,000 documents from both the input (top panel) and output (bottom panel) datasets. Vertical dashed lines indicate the mean (black) and median (red) perplexity for each dataset.

shows a much more compact distribution, with a mean perplexity of 60.3 and a median of 46.8, suggesting that the cleaning pipeline significantly improved overall text quality while reducing extreme outliers. It is important to note that the pipeline did not include explicit filtering based on language quality (e.g., fluency or coherence) beyond checks on punctuation ratio and code-like structure. The improvements reflected in the perplexity scores arise primarily from structural cleaning and artifact removal rather than direct perplexity-based filtering.

Finally, to assess the effectiveness of the deduplication stage in the data-cleaning pipeline, a simple comparison was performed between the total number of documents and the number of unique records in the output dataset. As shown in Figure 9, the dataset contains 151,595 unique documents (99.96%) and only 57 duplicates (0.04%). The plot uses a logarithmic scale due to the strong imbalance between the two categories. These results confirm that the deduplication process is working as intended, with duplicates representing only a negligible fraction of the overall dataset.

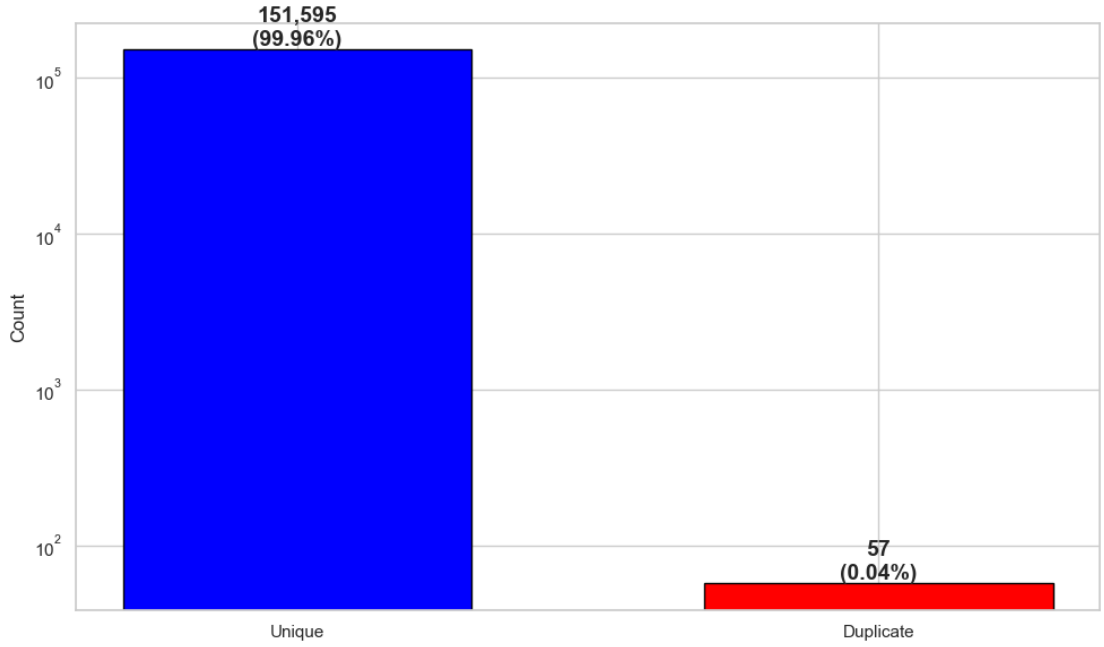

Figure 9: Bar chart showing the number of unique (blue) and duplicate (red) documents in the output dataset. Counts are displayed on a logarithmic scale, with percentages relative to the full dataset.

6 Conclusion and possible improvements

TokenTurbine successfully implements an end-to-end data pipeline for LLM pretraining that processes raw, multi-domain text into training-ready format. The pipeline reduces the initial dataset of 269,378 documents to 151,595 high-quality English documents (56% retention rate), with comprehensive cleaning, deduplication, and tokenization stages. Key achievements of TokenTurbine include:

- **Robust architecture:** Ray-based distributed processing with PyArrow vectorization enables efficient parallel execution across multiple cores while maintaining single-machine deployability.
- **Effective filtering:** The pipeline successfully removes 99.96% of HTML artifacts, 56% of code-like content, 100% of targeted PII (emails, IPs, phone numbers), and reduces toxicity prevalence from 0.9% to 0.7%.
- **Quality improvement:** Perplexity analysis demonstrates significant linguistic quality gains, with mean perplexity dropping from 436.9 to 60.3, indicating removal of noisy and incoherent text.
- **Thorough deduplication:** Two-stage deduplication (exact + MinHash LSH) achieves 99.96% uniqueness with configurable similarity thresholds.
- **Production ready:** Containerized with Docker, fully reproducible with deterministic seeds, comprehensive logging, and graceful error handling throughout.

6.1 Known limitations

Despite its effectiveness, the current implementation has several limitations that should be considered for production deployment. These are summarised below:

- **Deduplication memory constraints:** The MinHash LSH index maintains all signatures in memory with a hard cap of 1,000,000 documents (configurable via max_lsh_items). Once this limit is reached, subsequent documents bypass fuzzy deduplication entirely. For the provided dataset ($\sim$270K documents), this constraint is not binding. However, at scale (10M+ documents), this approach would either miss duplicates or require significantly more RAM.
- **Single-Actor bottleneck:** Both exact and fuzzy deduplication use single-actor processing (max_size=1) to maintain global state consistency. While this ensures correctness and prevents OOM errors, it creates a serialization bottleneck that limits throughput.

- **Language detection Sampling:** FastText language detection samples 1,000 characters starting at the 25% mark of each document. This heuristic works well for homogeneous documents but may misclassify multilingual documents where English appears later. The retention of 63 non-English documents (0.04%) in the cleaned dataset suggests these edge cases are rare but present.

- **PII detection scope:** The PII filter targets only three explicit categories: email addresses, phone numbers, and IPv4 addresses using regex patterns. It does not detect: names, addresses, credit card numbers, usernames, or document identifiers. While effective for the targeted categories (100% removal), this should not be considered comprehensive PII protection. Production systems should integrate specialized PII detection models (e.g., Microsoft Presidio) or LLM-based entity recognition.

- **Toxicity detection limitations:** The toxicity filter uses a small lexicon-based approach (13 keywords) with a configurable density threshold. This is computationally efficient but has two key weaknesses: (a) Obfuscation vulnerability: Simple character insertion ("n i g g e r") bypasses word-boundary matching, and (b) Context blindness: Cannot distinguish between hate speech and legitimate discussion of slurs (e.g., academic papers, content moderation discussions). The Detoxify-based validation in Section 5 confirms residual toxicity at 0.7%, though sampling-based (N=1000). For stricter content safety, integrating ML-based toxicity classifiers like Detoxify directly into the pipeline would be necessary, even at the cost of a significantly longer (likely $\gtrsim$ 10x) processing time.

- **No linguistic filtering:** Perplexity analysis (Figure 8) demonstrates quality improvement but is computed only for validation, not used as a filtering criterion. Some LLM pre-training pipelines (e.g., CCNet, The Pile) explicitly filter documents above a perplexity threshold to remove very low-quality text. This was deliberately omitted here to avoid over-filtering domain-specific or technical content that may have legitimate high perplexity.

6.2 Scaling to production

TokenTurbine is designed to run on commodity hardware (4-core laptop, 8GB RAM) and successfully processes the 460MB dataset in approximately 15-20 minutes (although most of the time is spent on writing the datasets and counting the dataset with ds.count). However, scaling to production datasets (10-100TB) requires architectural modifications. Without going into too many details, the

main possible modifications would include: (i) distributed deduplication (replacing the current single-actor deduplication), (ii) optime shuffle and (iii) implement intelligent partitioning.

Regarding the first modification, a distributed deduplication could be achieved with a Map-Reduce LSH approach in which the MinHash signatures are computed in parallel across all workers (already discussed at the end of Section 3). Additionally, the current shuffle strategy could be further optimized as I am performing multiple shuffles for language filtering, deduplication and tokenization. To minimize data movement I could combine language + quality + toxicity into single pass to avoid multiple dataset materializations. Finally, for TB-scale datasets, implement intelligent partitioning either by source domain (e.g. Wikipedia, GitHub) or document size (separate small (<1KB), medium (1-10KB), and large (>10KB) documents) would optimize batch sizes and prevent memory spikes. Other minor improvements can be done in terms of observability (update statistics and reasons why each document is filtered out), include checkpointing (write intermediate outputs after each major stage in order to resume the pipeline after interruption).

Despite the known limitations and the possible improvements described above, TokenTurbine successfully processes the provided dataset while maintaining extensibility for future enhancements. The metrics presented in Section 5 validate the pipeline's effectiveness and for the specific use case of this assignment TokenTurbine meets all requirements and expectations with comprehensive metrics, professional documentation, and production-ready containerization.