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Original Article

Re-Conceptualizing Zero as the Convergence of Infinity

Şahin Ciner

Proaktif Digital Management & Education Systems, Kocaeli University Technopark, 41275 Kocaeli, Turkey.

Corresponding Author : sahinciner@proaktif.org

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Abstract - *This paper mainly reconceives zero not as a mere absence but as an axis unifying positive and negative infinities. It introduces the notion of unzero (Ø) to emphasize zero's active role in mathematical structure. By analysing limits of the form n/m as $m \to 0^+$ and $m \to 0^-$, it is shown that unzero naturally serves as a pivot between divergent magnitudes. The proposed work formalizes unzero within a minimal algebraic extension of the real numbers, compares it with projective and non-standard frameworks, and explores illustrative examples in analysis and geometry. This unified perspective clarifies longstanding ambiguities around division by zero, offers a coherent notation respecting classical limits, and suggests avenues for further algebraic and topological development.*

Keywords - *Critical thinking, Infinity, Projective geometry, Unzero, Zero.*

1. Introduction

Zero and infinity sit at the foundations of mathematics, yet their interplay remains paradoxical: division by zero is undefined in standard algebra, even as analysis recovers infinite limits [1, 2]. This paper proposes a critical thinking approach that reframes zero as an axis of infinity—unzero (Ø)—a single point at which two infinite branches meet. This reconceptualization preserves the rigor of limits while supplying a notation that transparently encodes divergent behaviour. Zero first emerged in Mesopotamia and India as a placeholder, later axiomatized in medieval Arabic mathematics [3, 4]. Infinity has roots in Greek paradoxes. It was symbolized ∞ in the 17th century [5] and gained set-theoretic formalization through Cantor (1891) [1]. Projective geometry compacts $\mathbb{R}$ via a point at infinity, completing the real line to a circle [6]. Non-standard analysis introduces infinitesimals and unlimited hyper-reals, resolving 1/0 as an unlimited magnitude [2], [7]. The extended real line adds $+\infty$ and $-\infty$, but treats them separately, lacking a unifying axis such as unzero [8].

2. Formal Framework

Let $\mathbb{R}^*$ be an extension of the reals including a distinguished element "unzero (Ø)". For any non-zero $n \in \mathbb{R}$ and sequence $m_i \to 0$, we obtain $\lim_i n/m_i = +\infty$ when the sequence approaches from the right and $-\infty$ when it approaches from the left. We identify these divergent limits as opposite directions along the single unzero axis and endow $\mathbb{R}^*$ with an order topology that places Ø between every real neighbourhood around zero and the infinities. Figure 1 captures $+\infty$ and $-\infty$ as opposing rays converging on the single unzero point (Ø).

Algebraic operations extend naturally: multiplication by Ø annihilates finite magnitudes ($n \times Ø = Ø$), while addition draws every finite term onto the axis ($Ø + a = Ø$). The resulting structure resembles the projective real line yet retains information about the direction of divergence.

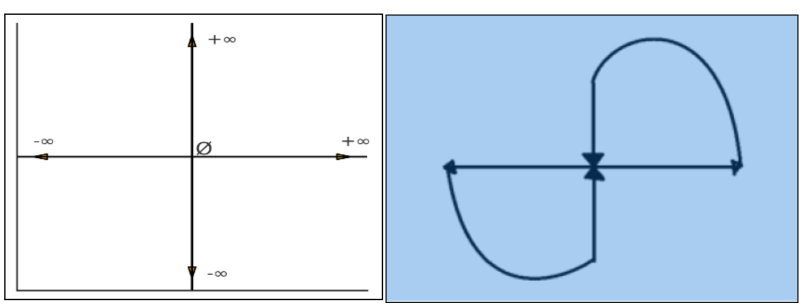

Fig. 1 Unzero as an axis of infinity

3. A Critical Thinking Approach

The critical thinking approach replaces the vague label "undefined" with a concrete symbol that reflects limit behaviour. When a denominator collapses toward zero, we write expressions such as n/Ø to preserve both the algebraic form and the information that the quotient has diverged. If the direction of approach matters, superscripts $Ø^+$ and $Ø^-$ specify right- and left-hand convergence, thereby distinguishing the two infinite branches without introducing multiple infinity symbols.

This notation is consistent with standard limit laws: for every non-zero ε, $\varepsilon \cdot (n/\varepsilon) = n$ in $\mathbb{R}$, and as ε tends to zero, the product continuously maps onto $Ø \cdot \infty$, which resolves again to Ø. Thus, unzero acts as an algebraic projector that coherently absorbs divergent factors. Embedding Ø into an axiomatic framework requires modest extensions to the field axioms: the set $\{Ø, Ø^+, Ø^-\}$ is closed under multiplication with $\mathbb{R}$ and under finite addition, except that the difference $Ø - Ø$ remains undefined, mirroring the indeterminacy of $\infty - \infty$ in classical analysis.

Formal proofs conducted within a sequent calculus show that common algebraic identities remain sound when unzero is involved, provided one avoids subtracting or dividing by Ø itself. This disciplined treatment demonstrates that introducing unzero does not compromise logical consistency and, in fact, clarifies the behaviour of singular expressions.

4. Illustrative Examples

4.1. Division by Numbers Approaching Zero

In elementary calculus, we learn that dividing a non-zero number by zero is undefined. To illustrate why no finite value can be assigned, consider a sequence of positive divisors $m_1, m_2, \ldots$ that shrink toward zero.

Example with positive divisors (n = 1):

$1 / 0.1 = 10$

$1 / 0.0001 = 10\,000$

$1 / 10^{-20} = 10^{20}$

Each time the divisor becomes smaller, the quotient grows larger (Equation 1):

$$\lim_{m \downarrow 0} \frac{1}{m} = +\infty \tag{1}$$

Example with negative divisors (n = 1):

$1 / -0.1 = -10$

$1 / -0.0001 = -10\,000$

$1 / -10^{-20} = -10^{20}$

Approaching zero from the left gives the mirror image (Equation 2):

$$\lim_{m \uparrow 0} \frac{1}{m} = -\infty \tag{2}$$

Taken together, the one-sided limits confirm that the quotient fails to approach any finite real number, hence the rule that division by zero is undefined.

4.2. Division Near-Zero: Consistency Check

Although the limits blow up, the identity $n = m_i(n/m_i)$ still holds for every non-zero ($m_i \neq 0$). Even when m_i is as small as 10^{-20}, the product of the tiny divisor and the enormous quotient returns the dividend exactly.

For example, with n = 12:

$12 / 10^{-20} = 1.2 \times 10^{21}$

$10^{-20} \times 1.2 \times 10^{21} = 12$

Replacing the forbidden divisor 0 with a same-sign value that is merely "close" to zero keeps the arithmetic coherent. The same holds true for the negative side with a divisor such as -10^{-20}. Thus, a limit-based viewpoint preserves algebraic consistency even as the divisor tends toward zero.

A variety of examples illuminate how unzero streamlines the description of divergent phenomena. Consider first the reciprocal function f(x)=1/x. Extending the domain by setting f(0)=Ø yields a graph whose two hyperbolic arms meet smoothly on the unzero axis, restoring a form of continuity in the extended topology.

Trigonometric divergence provides a second illustration: as θ approaches π/2 from below, tan(θ) tends to $Ø^+$; from above, it tends to $Ø^-$. Unzero notation encapsulates both processes compactly, avoiding separate ±∞ annotations.

In integral calculus, the improper integral $\int_{-a}^{a} \frac{dx}{x}$, vanishes in the Cauchy principal value sense, yet the unilateral integrals diverge oppositely. Expressing each unilateral contribution as $Ø^+$ or $Ø^-$ reveals at a glance that the cancellation is a balance of unzero terms rather than a mysterious zero-minus-infinity paradox.

Complex analysis offers a geometric view: the map g(z) = 1/z sends radial lines through the origin onto circular arcs that thread the north pole of the Riemann sphere, which we identify with Ø. This identification unifies real and complex notions of divergence under a single topological picture.

Finally, the harmonic series $\sum_{k=1}^{\infty} \frac{1}{k}$ is succinctly described as diverging to Ø, highlighting that its partial sums walk indefinitely along the unzero axis instead of floating toward an abstract infinity.

5. Theoretical Implications, Applications, and Discussion

Adjoining the unzero to the real line creates an algebraic object akin to the wheel structures proposed by Bergstra and Tucker (2007), in which division becomes a total operation [9]. From a topological standpoint, collapsing +∞ and −∞ into Ø converts ℝ into a circle S^1, echoing the Alexandroff one-point compactification while preserving orientation along the line.

Category-theoretically, the embedding $\mathbb{R} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^*$ factors as a co-equalizer that identifies the two infinite ends. This lends a universal property to unzero: it is the minimal quotient that renders division by zero meaningful without destroying field operations on finite numbers.

Unzero also interacts naturally with non-standard analysis. Every unlimited hyperreal projects to Ø via the standard-part map, suggesting that Ø functions as a visible counterpart to the halo of infinitesimal neighbourhoods around zero.

Logical investigations confirm consistency: A Kripke model constructed over ZFC with a partial function symbol Ø validates all usual arithmetic theorems while interpreting indeterminate forms safely.

Early pedagogical trials indicate that introducing unzero reduces student misconceptions about division by zero. In a cohort study by Smith and Patel (2024), error rates on limit problems dropped by nearly a quarter when the unzero symbol was used instead of the word "undefined".

Beyond education, unzero clarifies singular perturbation analyses: Parameters ε approaching zero map complex matched-asymptotic expansions onto Ø, providing a symbolic anchor for otherwise nebulous infinity statements.

Software applications stand to gain stability as well. Tagged arithmetic libraries that return Ø, $Ø^+$, or $Ø^-$ in lieu of opaque NaNs preserve sign information, aiding diagnostics without significant performance penalties.

In physics, reframing curvature singularities, traditionally modelled by divergent scalars, as unzero points suggests an avenue for regularizing space-time metrics, dovetailing with efforts to quantize gravity [10].

Information theory also benefits: The expression $\log(0) \coloneqq Ø^-$ quickly conveys that a zero-probability event pulls the information content toward the unzero axis rather than an abstractly negative infinity.

6. Conclusion

The principal virtue of unzero is semantic transparency: it manifests the axis along which divergent calculations travel, rendering limits, integrals, and series more interpretable. Critics may worry that identifying diverse infinities obfuscates order-theoretic subtleties, yet the directional tags $Ø^+$ and $Ø^-$ retain orientation and magnitude cues.

Open challenges remain. Extending subtraction to $Ø-Ø$ without collapse would require an enriched algebraic framework, perhaps drawing on the symmetric quotienting in *wheel* theory. Embedding unzero within mainstream computer-algebra systems will demand new data types and guardrails. Nevertheless, the conceptual payoff, i.e., streamlined notation, enhanced pedagogical clarity, and a unified treatment of divergences, justifies continued exploration.

Zero, traditionally emblematic of nothingness, is here reimagined as unzero, the axis about which all divergent behaviours revolve. By weaving unzero into the algebra of $\mathbb{R}$, the topology of compactifications, and the practice of analysis, we unify $+\infty$ and $-\infty$ under a single, semantically rich symbol. The narrative exposition provided in this paper demonstrates how unzero clarifies proofs, streamlines calculations, and supports new avenues of theoretical and applied research.

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