CHAPTER

3

The z-Transform and Its Application to the Analysis of LTI Systems

Transform techniques are an important tool in the analysis of signals and linear time-invariant (LTI) systems. In this chapter we introduce the z-transform, develop its properties, and demonstrate its importance in the analysis and characterization of linear time-invariant systems.

The z-transform plays the same role in the analysis of discrete-time signals and LTI systems as the Laplace transform does in the analysis of continuous-time signals and LTI systems. For example, we shall see that in the z-domain (complex z-plane) the convolution of two time-domain signals is equivalent to multiplication of their corresponding z-transforms. This property greatly simplifies the analysis of the response of an LTI system to various signals. In addition, the z-transform provides us with a means of characterizing an LTI system, and its response to various signals, by its pole–zero locations.

We begin this chapter by defining the z-transform. Its important properties are presented in Section 3.2. In Section 3.3 the transform is used to characterize signals in terms of their pole–zero patterns. Section 3.4 describes methods for inverting the z-transform of a signal so as to obtain the time-domain representation of the signal. Section 3.5 is focused on the use of the z-transform in the analysis of LTI systems. Finally, in Section 3.6, we treat the one-sided z-transform and use it to solve linear difference equations with nonzero initial conditions.

3.1 The z-Transform

In this section we introduce the z-transform of a discrete-time signal, investigate its convergence properties, and briefly discuss the inverse z-transform.

3.1.1 The Direct z-Transform

The z-transform of a discrete-time signal $x(n)$ is defined as the power series

$$X(z) \equiv \sum_{n=-\infty}^{\infty} x(n) z^{-n} \tag{3.1.1}$$

where z is a complex variable. The relation (3.1.1) is sometimes called the *direct z-transform* because it transforms the time-domain signal $x(n)$ into its complex-plane representation $X(z)$. The inverse procedure [i.e., obtaining $x(n)$ from $X(z)$] is called the *inverse z-transform* and is examined briefly in Section 3.1.2 and in more detail in Section 3.4.

For convenience, the z-transform of a signal $x(n)$ is denoted by

$$X(z) \equiv Z\{x(n)\} \tag{3.1.2}$$

whereas the relationship between $x(n)$ and $X(z)$ is indicated by

$$x(n) \overset{z}{\longleftrightarrow} X(z) \tag{3.1.3}$$

Since the z-transform is an infinite power series, it exists only for those values of z for which this series converges. The *region of convergence* (ROC) of $X(z)$ is the set of all values of z for which $X(z)$ attains a finite value. Thus any time we cite a z-transform we should also indicate its ROC.

We illustrate these concepts by some simple examples.

EXAMPLE 3.1.1

Determine the z-transforms of the following *finite-duration* signals.

(a) $x_1(n) = \{\underset{\uparrow}{1}, 2, 5, 7, 0, 1\}$

(b) $x_2(n) = \{1, 2, \underset{\uparrow}{5}, 7, 0, 1\}$

(c) $x_3(n) = \{\underset{\uparrow}{0}, 0, 1, 2, 5, 7, 0, 1\}$

(d) $x_4(n) = \{2, 4, \underset{\uparrow}{5}, 7, 0, 1\}$

(e) $x_5(n) = \delta(n)$

(f) $x_6(n) = \delta(n-k), k > 0$

(g) $x_7(n) = \delta(n+k), k > 0$

Solution. From definition (3.1.1), we have

(a) $X_1(z) = 1 + 2z^{-1} + 5z^{-2} + 7z^{-3} + z^{-5}$, ROC: entire z-plane except $z = 0$

(b) $X_2(z) = z^2 + 2z + 5 + 7z^{-1} + z^{-3}$, ROC: entire z-plane except $z = 0$ and $z = \infty$

(c) $X_3(z) = z^{-2} + 2z^{-3} + 5z^{-4} + 7z^{-5} + z^{-7}$, ROC: entire z-plane except $z = 0$

(d) $X_4(z) = 2z^2 + 4z + 5 + 7z^{-1} + z^{-3}$, ROC: entire z-plane except $z = 0$ and $z = \infty$

(e) $X_5(z) = 1$ [i.e., $\delta(n) \overset{z}{\longleftrightarrow} 1$], ROC: entire z-plane

(f) $X_6(z) = z^{-k}$ [i.e., $\delta(n-k) \overset{z}{\longleftrightarrow} z^{-k}$], $k > 0$, ROC: entire z-plane except $z = 0$

(g) $X_7(z) = z^k$ [i.e., $\delta(n+k) \overset{z}{\longleftrightarrow} z^k$], $k > 0$, ROC: entire z-plane except $z = \infty$

From this example it is easily seen that the ROC of a *finite-duration signal* is the entire z-plane, except possibly the points $z = 0$ and/or $z = \infty$. These points are excluded, because z^k $(k > 0)$ becomes unbounded for $z = \infty$ and z^{-k} $(k > 0)$ becomes unbounded for $z = 0$.

From a mathematical point of view the z-transform is simply an alternative representation of a signal. This is nicely illustrated in Example 3.1.1, where we see that the coefficient of z^{-n}, in a given transform, is the value of the signal at time n. In other words, the exponent of z contains the time information we need to identify the samples of the signal.

In many cases we can express the sum of the finite or infinite series for the z-transform in a closed-form expression. In such cases the z-transform offers a compact alternative representation of the signal.

EXAMPLE 3.1.2

Determine the z-transform of the signal

$$x(n) = \left(\frac{1}{2}\right)^n u(n)$$

Solution. The signal $x(n)$ consists of an infinite number of nonzero values

$$x(n) = \left\{1, \left(\frac{1}{2}\right), \left(\frac{1}{2}\right)^2, \left(\frac{1}{2}\right)^3, \ldots, \left(\frac{1}{2}\right)^n, \ldots\right\}$$

The z-transform of $x(n)$ is the infinite power series

$$\begin{aligned} X(z) &= 1 + \frac{1}{2}z^{-1} + \left(\frac{1}{2}\right)^2 z^{-2} + \left(\frac{1}{2}\right)^n z^{-n} + \cdots \\ &= \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \left(\frac{1}{2}\right)^n z^{-n} = \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \left(\frac{1}{2}z^{-1}\right)^n \end{aligned}$$

This is an infinite geometric series. We recall that

$$1 + A + A^2 + A^3 + \cdots = \frac{1}{1 - A} \qquad \text{if } |A| < 1$$

Consequently, for $\left|\frac{1}{2}z^{-1}\right| < 1$, or equivalently, for $|z| > \frac{1}{2}$, $X(z)$ converges to

$$X(z) = \frac{1}{1 - \frac{1}{2}z^{-1}}, \qquad \text{ROC: } |z| > \frac{1}{2}$$

We see that in this case, the z-transform provides a compact alternative representation of the signal $x(n)$.

Let us express the complex variable z in polar form as

$$z = re^{j\theta} \tag{3.1.4}$$

where $r = |z|$ and $\theta = \measuredangle z$. Then $X(z)$ can be expressed as

$$X(z)|_{z=re^{j\theta}} = \sum_{n=-\infty}^{\infty} x(n)r^{-n}e^{-j\theta n}$$

In the ROC of $X(z)$, $|X(z)| < \infty$. But

$$\begin{aligned} |X(z)| &= \left| \sum_{n=-\infty}^{\infty} x(n)r^{-n}e^{-j\theta n} \right| \\ &\le \sum_{n=-\infty}^{\infty} |x(n)r^{-n}e^{-j\theta n}| = \sum_{n=-\infty}^{\infty} |x(n)r^{-n}| \end{aligned} \tag{3.1.5}$$

Hence $|X(z)|$ is finite if the sequence $x(n)r^{-n}$ is absolutely summable.

The problem of finding the ROC for $X(z)$ is equivalent to determining the range of values of r for which the sequence $x(n)r^{-n}$ is absolutely summable. To elaborate, let us express (3.1.5) as

$$\begin{aligned} |X(z)| &\le \sum_{n=-\infty}^{-1} |x(n)r^{-n}| + \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \left| \frac{x(n)}{r^n} \right| \\ &\le \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} |x(-n)r^{n}| + \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \left| \frac{x(n)}{r^n} \right| \end{aligned} \tag{3.1.6}$$

If $X(z)$ converges in some region of the complex plane, both summations in (3.1.6) must be finite in that region. If the first sum in (3.1.6) converges, there must exist values of r small enough such that the product sequence $x(-n)r^n, 1 \le n < \infty$, is absolutely summable. Therefore, the ROC for the first sum consists of all points in a circle of some radius r_1, where $r_1 < \infty$, as illustrated in Fig. 3.1.1(a). On the other hand, if the second sum in (3.1.6) converges, there must exist values of r large enough such that the product sequence $x(n)/r^n, 0 \le n < \infty$, is absolutely summable. Hence the ROC for the second sum in (3.1.6) consists of all points outside a circle of radius $r > r_2$, as illustrated in Fig. 3.1.1(b).

Since the convergence of $X(z)$ requires that both sums in (3.1.6) be finite, it follows that the ROC of $X(z)$ is generally specified as the annular region in the z-plane, $r_2 < r < r_1$, which is the common region where both sums are finite. This region is illustrated in Fig. 3.1.1(c). On the other hand, if $r_2 > r_1$, there is no common region of convergence for the two sums and hence $X(z)$ does not exist.

The following examples illustrate these important concepts.

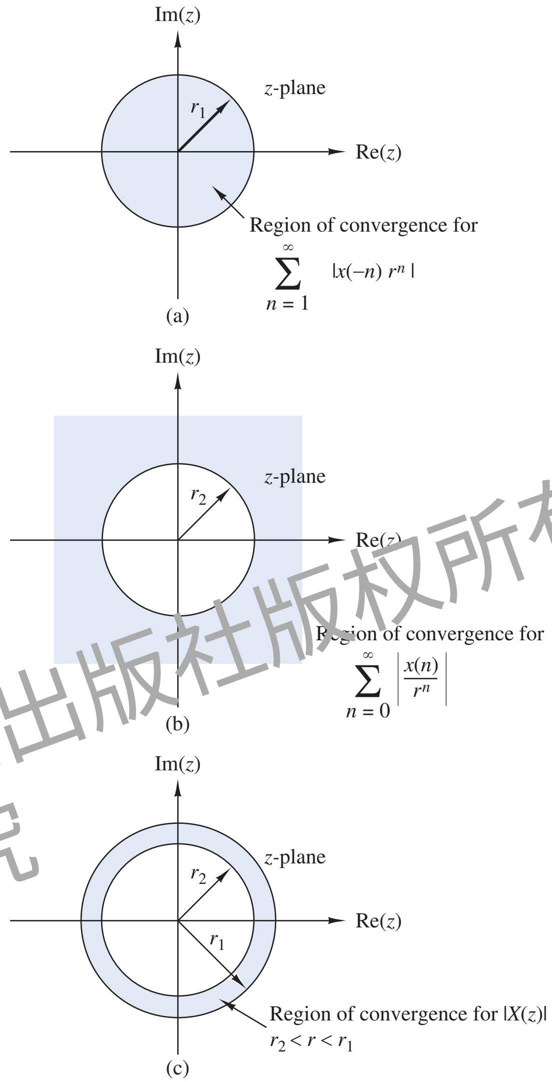

Figure 3.1.1
Region of convergence for $X(z)$ and its corresponding causal and anticausal components.

EXAMPLE 3.1.3

Determine the z-transform of the signal

$$x(n) = \alpha^n u(n) = \begin{cases} \alpha^n, & n \geq 0 \\ 0, & n < 0 \end{cases}$$

Solution. From the definition (3.1.1) we have

$$X(z) = \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \alpha^n z^{-n} = \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} (\alpha z^{-1})^n$$

If $|\alpha z^{-1}| < 1$ or equivalently, $|z| > |\alpha|$, this power series converges to $1/(1 - \alpha z^{-1})$. Thus we have the z-transform pair

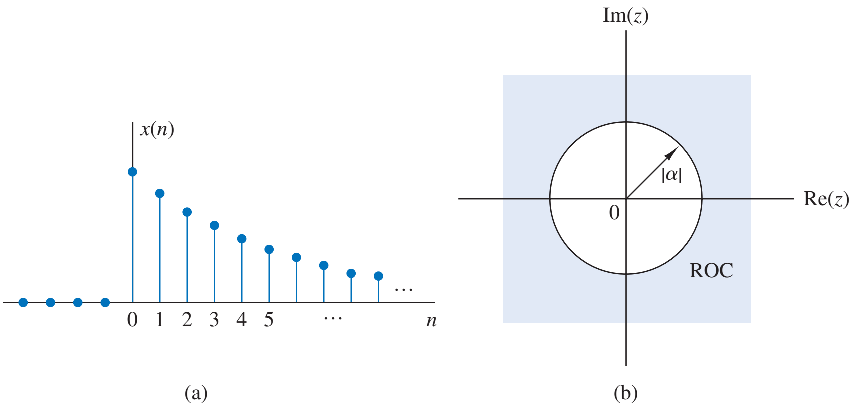

Figure 3.1.2 The exponential signal $x(n) = \alpha^n u(n)$ (a), and the ROC of its z-transform (b).

$$x(n) = \alpha^n u(n) \stackrel{z}{\longleftrightarrow} X(z) = \frac{1}{1 - \alpha z^{-1}}, \qquad \text{ROC: } |z| > |\alpha| \tag{3.1.7}$$

The ROC is the exterior of a circle having radius $|\alpha|$. Figure 3.1.2 shows a graph of the signal $x(n)$ and its corresponding ROC. Note that, in general, α need not be real.

If we set $\alpha = 1$ in (3.1.7), we obtain the z-transform of the unit step signal

$$x(n) = u(n) \stackrel{z}{\longleftrightarrow} X(z) = \frac{1}{1 - z^{-1}}, \qquad \text{ROC: } |z| > 1 \tag{3.1.8}$$

EXAMPLE 3.1.4

Determine the z-transform of the signal

$$x(n) = -\alpha^n u(-n-1) = \begin{cases} 0, & n \geq 0 \\ -\alpha^n, & n \leq -1 \end{cases}$$

Solution. From the definition (3.1.1) we have

$$X(z) = \sum_{n=-\infty}^{-1} (-\alpha^n) z^{-n} = -\sum_{l=1}^{\infty} (\alpha^{-1} z)^l$$

where $l = -n$. Using the formula

$$A + A^2 + A^3 + \cdots = A(1 + A + A^2 + \cdots) = \frac{A}{1 - A}$$

when $|A| < 1$ gives

$$X(z) = -\frac{\alpha^{-1} z}{1 - \alpha^{-1} z} = \frac{1}{1 - \alpha z^{-1}}$$

provided that $|\alpha^{-1} z| < 1$ or, equivalently, $|z| < |\alpha|$. Thus

$$x(n) = -\alpha^n u(-n-1) \stackrel{z}{\longleftrightarrow} X(z) = -\frac{1}{1 - \alpha z^{-1}}, \qquad \text{ROC: } |z| < |\alpha| \tag{3.1.9}$$

The ROC is now the interior of a circle having radius $|\alpha|$. This is shown in Fig. 3.1.3.

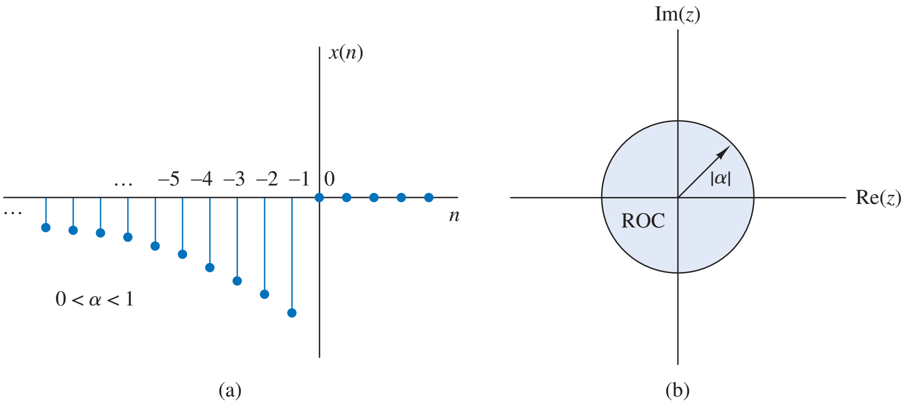

Figure 3.1.3 Anticausal signal $x(n) = -\alpha^n u(-n-1)$ (a), and the ROC of its z-transform (b).

Examples 3.1.3 and 3.1.4 illustrate two very important issues. The first concerns the uniqueness of the z-transform. From (3.1.7) and (3.1.9) we see that the causal signal $\alpha^n u(n)$ and the anticausal signal $-\alpha^n u(-n-1)$ have identical closed-form expressions for the z-transform, that is,

$$Z\{\alpha^n u(n)\} = Z\{-\alpha^n u(-n-1)\} = \frac{1}{1-\alpha z^{-1}}$$

This implies that a closed-form expression for the z-transform does not uniquely specify the signal in the time domain. The ambiguity can be resolved only if in addition to the closed-form expression, the ROC is specified. In summary, *a discrete-time signal $x(n)$ is uniquely determined by its z-transform $X(z)$ and the region of convergence of $X(z)$*. In this text the term "z-transform" is used to refer to both the closed-form expression and the corresponding ROC. Example 3.1.3 also illustrates the point that *the ROC of a causal signal is the exterior of a circle of some radius r_2 while the ROC of an anticausal signal is the interior of a circle of some radius r_1*. The following example considers a sequence that is nonzero for $-\infty < n < \infty$.

EXAMPLE 3.1.5

Determine the z-transform of the signal

$$x(n) = \alpha^n u(n) + b^n u(-n-1)$$

Solution. From definition (3.1.1) we have

$$X(z) = \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \alpha^n z^{-n} + \sum_{n=-\infty}^{-1} b^n z^{-n} = \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} (\alpha z^{-1})^n + \sum_{l=1}^{\infty} (b^{-1}z)^l$$

The first power series converges if $|\alpha z^{-1}| < 1$ or $|z| > |\alpha|$. The second power series converges if $|b^{-1}z| < 1$ or $|z| < |b|$.

In determining the convergence of $X(z)$, we consider two different cases.

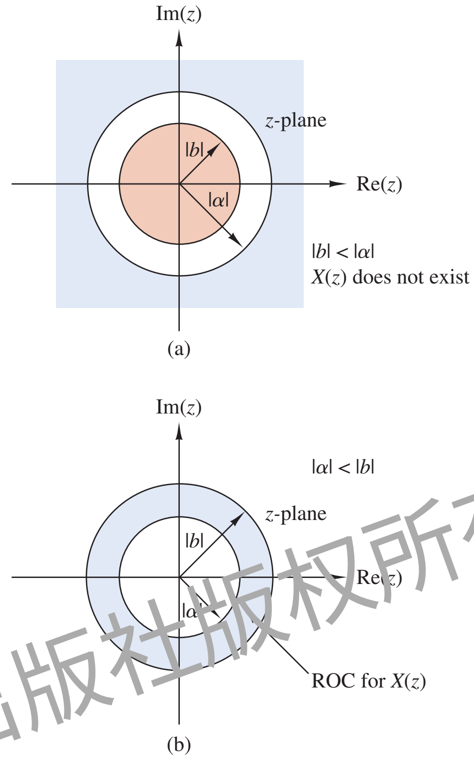

Figure 3.1.4
ROC for z-transform in Example 3.1.5.

Case 1 $|b| < |\alpha|$: In this case the two ROC above do not overlap, as shown in Fig. 3.1.4(a). Consequently, we cannot find values of z for which both power series converge simultaneously. Clearly, in this case, $X(z)$ does not exist.

Case 2 $|b| > |\alpha|$: In this case there is a ring in the z-plane where both power series converge simultaneously, as shown in Fig. 3.1.4(b). Then we obtain

$$\begin{aligned} X(z) &= \frac{1}{1-\alpha z^{-1}} - \frac{1}{1-bz^{-1}} \\ &= \frac{b-\alpha}{\alpha + b - z - \alpha b z^{-1}} \end{aligned} \tag{3.1.10}$$

The ROC of $X(z)$ is $|\alpha| < |z| < |b|$.

This example shows that *if there is a ROC for an infinite-duration two-sided signal, it is a ring (annular region) in the z-plane.* From Examples 3.1.1, 3.1.3, 3.1.4, and 3.1.5, we see that the ROC of a signal depends both on its duration (finite or infinite) and on whether it is causal, anticausal, or two-sided. These facts are summarized in Table 3.1.

One special case of a two-sided signal is a signal that has infinite duration on the right side but not on the left [i.e., $x(n) = 0$ for $n < n_0 < 0$]. A second case is a