

Bi(+)jection

Ritvik Majumdar

Let $S = \{0, 1\}^\infty$ be the set of infinite bit sequences (b_1, b_2, b_3, \dots) .

We will construct injections

$$f: [0, 1] \rightarrow S \quad \text{and} \quad g: S \rightarrow [0, 1]$$

By the Schröder-Bernstein theorem, the existence of these two injections implies there is a bijection $[0, 1] \rightarrow S$.

We need to consider that dyadic rationals, rational numbers p/q where q is a power of two, have two binary expansions: one terminating (ending with infinitely many 0s) and one non-terminating (ending with infinitely many 1s).

To show the injection $f: [0, 1] \rightarrow S$ we will write each $x \in [0, 1]$ in binary in the following way:

If x has two binary expansions, choose the one that ends with infinitely many 0s (the terminating one).

Now record the bits of that expansion as an infinite sequence in S as follows:

• If $x < 1$ then its binary expansion is

$$x = 0.b_1b_2b_3\dots$$

$$\text{Set } f(x) = (0, b_1, b_2, b_3, \dots)$$

• If $x = 1$ then its binary expansion is

$$x = 1.000 \dots_2$$

$$\text{Set } f(x) = (1, 0, 0, 0, \dots)$$

this way, each x has exactly one sequence assigned to it.

If $f(x) = f(y)$ then the chosen binary expansions agree bitwise, hence $x = y$.

Thus f is injective.

To show that g is injective you cannot just send each sequence (b_1, b_2, b_3, \dots) to the binary expansion $0.b_1 b_2 b_3 \dots$ because different sequences can give the same real number (e.g. $0.1000 \dots_2 = 0.01111 \dots_2$).

Define g by embedding the bits of a sequence into the even binary places:

$$g((b_1, b_2, b_3, \dots)) = \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} b_n \cdot 2^{-2n}$$

Equivalently, the binary expansion of $g((b_n))$ is

$$0.0b_1 0b_2 0b_3 \dots_2$$

so that all odd-positioned fractional bits are 0 and the bit b_n sits in position $2n$.

Suppose two different sequences $s \neq s'$ are given. Let k be the first index where they differ: $b_k \neq b'_k$. In the binary expansions of $g(s)$ and $g(s')$ the bit at position $2k$

is b_k for $g(s)$ and b'_k for $g(s')$. So those two binary expansions differ at position $2k$, hence the two real numbers are different.

Any binary expansion produced by g has zeros in every odd position, so it cannot equal a different expansion that would require a tail of 1s.

ex: Originally $0.1000\dots_2$ and $0.0111\dots_2$ collided because both equal the real number $\frac{1}{2}$.

But with interleaving 0s:

$$g(1, 0, 0, 0, \dots) = 0.01000\dots_2 = 2^{-2} = \frac{1}{4}$$

$$g(0, 1, 1, 1, \dots) = 0.00010101\dots_2 = 2^{-4} + 2^{-6} + 2^{-8} + \dots$$

$$= \frac{2^{-4}}{1 - 2^{-2}}$$

$$= \frac{\frac{1}{16}}{1 - \frac{1}{4}}$$

$$= \frac{1/16}{12/16}$$

$$= \frac{1}{12}$$

So now the sequences give two different real numbers in $[0, 1]$

Hence g is injective.

We have constructed injections $f: [0, 1] \rightarrow S$ and $g: S \rightarrow [0, 1]$. By the Bernstein-Schröder theorem there exists a bijection $[0, 1] \rightarrow S$.

Therefore $[0, 1]$ and $S = \{0, 1\}^\infty$ are equinumerous.