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Constructive consistency checking for partial specification in Z

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1 Introduction, goals and context

Partial specification, or specification by viewpoints, has arisen as a desirable method of specifying complex systems in several contexts, particularly in requirements engineering [24] and for example in Open Distributed Processing [29]. The central idea is that a specification consists of a collection of interlocking partial specifications, each of which describes the envisaged system from a different viewpoint. In particular the specification notation Z [39] is often advocated as a suitable language for this style of specification [1, 30, 37]. However, for collections of partial specifications to be meaningful, consistency between them has to be established. In the existing literature on viewpoint specification, no satisfactory general solution for this is given. This paper describes how to check consistency between partial specifications in Z, i.e. how to establish that different partial specifications of one system do not impose contradictory requirements. Using the traditional refinement relation in Z, we present techniques for constructing unifications (least common refinements) of partial specifications, which represent their combined requirements. Three relatively simple conditions on the partial specifications and the predicate that relates them characterise consistency.

The next subsections describe viewpoint specification and a formal framework for consistency checking for viewpoint specification. Section 2 is a brief introduction into Z, its “states-and-operations” specification style, and its refinement relation. Section 3 describes the parameters of viewpoint unification. In a naive approach, these are only the partial specifications themselves, but in non-trivial cases an extra parameter turns out to be necessary: a correspondence between types used in the various viewpoints. A complementary approach is to map the types explicitly to a new type, and finally it is shown how these extra parameters can be left implicit by designating default values for them. Section 4 then goes on to present the unification algorithm. Section 5 contains a proof that the unification is a least common refinement of the viewpoints – the conditions for consistency appear as extra assumptions necessary to complete this proof. Section 6 presents some variations and extensions to the simple unification algorithm, embedding it in a software development model. Section 7 then compares our work to related approaches and techniques for partial specification. Section 8 describes our conclusions and our ideas on how to proceed to make Z even more useful for partial specification.

This paper is based on [8], extending its results and significantly extending its context.

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1.1 Viewpoint specification

It is generally agreed that systems of a realistic size cannot be specified in single linear specifications, but rather should be decomposed into manageable chunks which can be specified separately. The traditional method for doing this is by hierarchical and functional decomposition. Nowadays, it is often claimed [31] that this is not the most natural or convenient (in relation to “perceived complexity”) method – rather systems should be decomposed into different aspects. For each such viewpoint a specification of the system restricted to that particular aspect should be produced. Such partial specifications may omit certain parts of the system, because they are irrelevant to the particular aspect, and need not describe certain behaviours because they do not concern that specific viewpoint. Descriptions of this nature seem particularly appropriate for systems with various kinds of “users”, each with their own view of the system.

Imagine, for example, the views of a library system that library managers, loan officers, clients, system operators, and programmers of the system would have. In the library manager’s view a book has a price which is essential in the operation of buying a book, but which none of the other views would be much interested in. The loan officer’s view of lending out a book would include updating the library statistics, which would not appear in a client’s view of lending a book.

Another reason which is often given for decomposing problems into aspects rather than subproblems is that this “horizontal” subdivision would give a more natural separation of concerns. In particular, it allows each aspect to use specialised specification languages, for example dataflow diagrams for control flow, process algebras for “behaviour”, data definition languages, et cetera. A final argument in favour of viewpoint specification is that it supports fluid system development. The various viewpoint specifications can be gradually developed, often based on changes made to other viewpoints. To some extent this could even occur in parallel, in particular while the specification is completed to reflect all requirements.

One particular area in which viewpoint specification plays an important role, and our initial motivation to study viewpoint specification and consistency, is in Open Distributed Processing (ODP), an ISO/ITU standardisation framework. The ODP reference model [29] defines five viewpoints for the specification of open distributed systems: enterprise, information, computational, engineering and technology. These viewpoints are static in the sense that there is a fixed set of viewpoints, each targeting a predefined aspect of the system (as opposed to viewpoints in other methods). The use of formal description techniques in specifying these viewpoints is envisaged – in particular, Z is a strong candidate to be used in the information viewpoint [37]. For an overview of our project on the technical issues behind viewpoint specification for ODP, see [5].

The techniques described in this paper, however, are not specific to ODP specification. The techniques for Z could also be used to formalise the ad-hoc treatment of unification in [1], and in section 7.2 we demonstrate how our methods subsume some of those used for specification by “views” in [30]. Our general approach to consistency checking (as described in other papers and summarised in the next section) also applies to other viewpoint- or multiple paradigm specification styles (e.g. [33, 43, 28, 14]), in particular when the specifications languages involved are formal ones.

1.2 Consistency checking and unification

There is one serious technical problem in partial specification. Some elements (operations, variables, etc) of the envisaged system will be modelled in more than one viewpoint, and those descriptions will not in general be identical. Different viewpoints have different perspectives of the system, and they are likely to use different specification languages (for ODP the latter is a near certainty). This gives rise to an obligation to ensure that the partial specifications do not pose contradictory requirements: we need to check for consistency, potentially between descriptions in different languages and at different levels of abstraction.
However, first we need to define what it means for a collection of viewpoint specifications to be consistent. Viewing the specifications as predicates over some universe, the logical definition of consistency is that it is impossible to derive both some proposition and its negation from the combined viewpoints.

In the context of specification and development of a concrete system, however, this abstract logical approach does not seem too useful. What is the universe we are quantifying over, and how do we map our specification language(s) to predicates over that universe? Would not a common semantic basis for possibly multiple languages necessarily be at such a low level that performing any kind of consistency proof becomes extremely laborious [43]? Would it not make any arising inconsistencies hard to trace back to the original specifications? (For a more extensive discussion of these issues, cf. [6].) What do we mean by “the combined viewpoints”, will it always just be the logical conjunction of their formal interpretations, or do we need a more complex operator for combining viewpoints? Our general answer to these questions is extensively described in [13] and summarised below – the concrete answer for Z specifications makes up the rest of this paper.

A more constructive view of consistency is one that is oriented towards system development. Instead of providing direct semantics for the specification languages, we encode our view of what specifications mean in development relations. Two specifications are in such a development relation if we consider one to be a correct (in the sense that it respects the requirements) development of the other on the way to an eventual implementation. A development relation may cross a language boundary, examples of such relations are semantics and translations, or it may not, in which case refinement relations and equivalences form the main example. Note that another view of these development relations is that they provide a development-based semantics: the meaning of a specification is the set of all specifications that can be developed from it.

Consistency checking is then defined as follows. Given a set of initial specifications, each with their associated development relation, does a viable implementation of all of them exist? That is, does a common image of each of these initial specifications under their respective development relations exist?

This definition of consistency gives little guidance on how to actually establish consistency between a collection of viewpoint specifications – generating the set of all implementations of each viewpoint and then computing emptiness of the intersection of those implementation sets is unrealistic if not impossible. We propose repeated unification1 of pairs of specifications as a constructive method of consistency checking. The unification of two specifications should have all the requirements imposed by both specifications. Formally this means that it should be a common image of the viewpoints through their respective development relations – in other words, a witness to binary consistency between the viewpoints. Moreover, if the unification is to be used in consistency checking with a third viewpoint, it should impose no extra requirements besides those contained in the first two viewpoints, or else consistency checking might unnecessarily fail. Formally this amounts to choosing the most general unification – if the development relations involved induce an ordering, we need to choose the least unification, where “least” is understood in the sense of fewest development steps done, least detail added, etc. This guarantees that a unification of all viewpoints, if it exists, can be found through a series of binary consistency checks.

In practice it is often convenient to construct unifications in two steps. First one generates a candidate least common development, i.e. some specification that is the least unification if one exists, and then one performs some consistency tests on it to determine whether it actually is a least unification. We will call such candidates “unifications” as well (using the term in a slightly sloppy sense). Finally note that it is strictly speaking often incorrect to talk about the least unification of a collection of viewpoint specifications, since for most specification languages and development relations there will be many, often equivalent, ones.

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1It could be argued that this term is too technically loaded, and that one should use a different term, e.g. amalgamation [1], however there are enough parallels for us to maintain this term.
2 Technical preliminaries

This section introduces some of the basic technical material on Z. The reader is referred to [39] for a complete description of Z. Here we will present first a brief overview of the main aspects of the “states-with-operations” specification style in Z, and then the refinement relation for it. The last two subsections, on equivalence relations and unary consistency, are concerned with less standard material, but are best treated here to avoid interrupting the flow of the story of later sections.

2.1 Z: states and operations

Although there is no fixed interpretation (apart from the semantics) of Z specifications, in practice usually the states-with-operations style of specification described here is used. The idea is that some schemas are state schemas representing a state space, and other schemas of a particular form represent operations on this state. A state schema with a collection of operations defined on it and an initialisation schema together form an abstract data type (ADT).

The general form of a schema is \( S_{name} \equiv [Decl_s \mid Preds] \) or, graphically

\[
\begin{align*}
S_{name} & \\
Decl_s & \\
Preds &
\end{align*}
\]

where \( S_{name} \) is an identifier denoting the schema’s name; \( Decl_s \) is a series of declarations of the form \( x:S \) where \( x \) is the name of a component of the schema, and \( S \) is a set to which \( x \) should belong; \( Preds \) is a list of predicates (whose meaning is the conjunction of them all). Actually, declarations may also be references to schemas, see below. If \( Preds \equiv \text{true} \), it may be omitted (including the line above it). The meaning of a schema is a set of records that have as labels all the components declared in \( Decl_s \) (and all those imported through schema references), and whose values satisfy \( Preds \).

Example 1 The meaning of

\[
\begin{align*}
N_{um} & \\
x:N & \\
x \geq 2 & \\
x \leq 4 &
\end{align*}
\]

is the set (using Spivey’s [39] unofficial notation for “bindings”, i.e. labeled records) \( N_{um} = \{ \{ x:2 \} , \{ x:3 \} , \{ x:4 \} \} \).

□

If one of the declarations is a schema reference, all its declarations and predicates are included as well.

Example 2 The meaning of

\[
\begin{align*}
S_{quares} & \\
y:N & \\
N_{um} & \\
y = x \times x
\end{align*}
\]

is the set \( S_{quares} = \{ \{ x:2, y:4 \} , \{ x:3, y:9 \} , \{ x:4, y:16 \} \} \).
Schema references need not be just schema names. One can also use decorations to the name, like accents, subscripts, exclamation marks, and question marks. In a schema reference this returns the schema with the decoration applied to all its components and predicates. So for example $\text{Num}'$ has component $x'$, and $\text{Squares}_1$ has components $x_1$ and $y_1$. When a schema reference is used as a predicate, this stands for the schema's predicate including all the restrictions on its components.

In fact, a calculus of Z schemas exists, whose operators are the usual logical operators. Resulting schemas contain all the components, with their predicates combined according to the logical operators. Quantification results in hiding of components, for more details cf. [39].

The states-with-operations style has a particular interpretation for this. A schema with no decorated components (for example $\text{Num}$ or $\text{Squares}$) is usually assumed to be a definition of a state space. A schema which contains both the state space and its primed decoration is an operation on this state space. The interpretation of an operation schema is that the primed state is the state after the operation, and the unprimed state is the state before.

**Example 3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>$\text{Toggle}$</th>
<th>$\text{Num}; \text{Num}'$</th>
<th>$x + x' = 6$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Formally, $\text{Toggle}$ represents $\{[x:2, x':4], [x:3, x':3], [x:4, x':2]\}$ but this is interpreted as an operation which changes $x$ into $6-x$.

Operations may be non-deterministic (more than one possible $x'$ for a particular $x$ – for example if $x'$ does not occur in the predicate) or partial (no possible $x'$ for a particular $x$). As an abbreviation for $\Delta S\text{name}$; $\text{Sname}'$ one can use $\Delta S\text{name}$. Operations may have inputs, which are by convention all variables decorated with $?$, and variables decorated with $!$ as outputs. Initialisation operations are often denoted as operations with no “before” state.

Various object oriented variants of Z exist [40], which encapsulate the ADT by (essentially) drawing a schema box around it.

Because of schema references, and because in a declaration of the form $x:S$ an arbitrary set $S$ may be used instead of the type of $x$, schemas can be turned into equivalent ones by moving restrictions between the predicate and the declarations.

**Example 4** Because $\mathbb{N} \subseteq \mathbb{Z}$, this is an alternative definition of Num:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>$\text{NumToo}$</th>
<th>$x: \mathbb{Z}$</th>
<th>$x \geq 0$</th>
<th>$x \geq 2$</th>
<th>$x \leq 4$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

In fact, because in the Z type system $\mathbb{Z}$ is not included in a larger type, $\text{NumToo}$ is a canonical representation of $\text{Num}$. In general, replacing all schemas by equivalent ones such that all components have a “maximal” type is called schema normalisation. In a previous paper [19] on Z unification, we assumed that all schemas were normalised – in the current paper we do not make this assumption.
2.2 Pre- and postconditions

Unlike some other specification notations, specifications of operations in $Z$ do not contain explicit pre- and postconditions. However, a unique characterisation of the precondition of an operation schema is possible.

**Definition 5 (Precondition)** If in an operation schema $Op$ the state schema involved is $State$, and the output components are $x_i:\text{Out}_i$ ($i=1\ldots n$), then the precondition of $Op$ is defined by

$$\text{pre} \ Op = \exists \ State' ; \ x_1:\text{Out}_1; \ldots ; \ x_n:\text{Out}_n \bullet Op$$

Thus, the precondition is a predicate on $State$ and the input, characterising those situations where it is possible to find output and after state which relate to them by $Op$.

It is not possible in $Z$ to give a similar characterisation of the postcondition of an operation, though a notation $\text{post} \ Op$ for it exists. For a schema $Op \equiv [\Delta D \mid \text{pred}]$ which (to avoid some semantic problems) satisfies the condition $\text{pred} \Rightarrow \text{pre} \ Op$, any condition $P$ such that $\text{pre} \ Op \land P \iff \text{pred}$ will do as “the” postcondition, in particular $\text{pred}$ itself. Thus any occurrence of $\text{post} \ Op$ in the sequel should be taken to refer to some possible postcondition of $Op$.

2.3 Refinement

An abstract data type consists of a state schema, an initialisation schema for that state, and a collection of operation schemas on that state. Such an ADT can be refined by resolving some of the nondeterminism in the operations, and/or by extending the applicability of operations. The ADT we start from is usually called the abstract ADT, and the refined one the concrete ADT. For an extensive description of refinement in $Z$, cf. [42], which also covers backwards simulation based refinement – this paper considers forward simulation only.

Two types of refinement are distinguished, namely operation refinement which changes only one of the operations of the ADT, and data refinement which changes the state schema, and as a consequence also needs to replace all operations and the initialisation by ones operating on the new state.

2.3.1 Operation refinement

Operations can be refined in two ways: by extending their domain of definition (i.e. weakening their precondition), or by making them more deterministic. If $AOp$ and $COp$ are both operations on the same state $State$, both with input $x?:X$ and output $y!:Y$, then the conditions for $COp$ to be an operation refinement of $AOp$ are the following:

**termination** $COp$ should be defined (“guaranteed to terminate”) everywhere where $AOp$ is:

$$\forall \ State \ ; \ x?:X \bullet \text{pre} \ AOp \Rightarrow \text{pre} \ COp$$

**correctness** wherever $AOp$ is defined, $COp$ should produce a result that $AOp$ could have produced:

$$\forall \ State \ ; \ State' ; \ x?:X \ ; \ y!:Y \bullet \text{pre} \ AOp \land COp \Rightarrow AOp$$

2.3.2 Data refinement

In data refinement, the state schema is changed, and thus all operations and the initialisation need to be changed as well in order to operate on the new state. Assume (for simplicity) that the abstract state $ASstate$ and the concrete state $CState$ have no components with a common name. The abstract and concrete state spaces need to be linked up by a so-called retrieve relation, which is represented by a schema

---

3From the earlier discussion on schema calculus it should be clear that it is actually a schema – its components are those of $Op$ except for $State'$ and $x_i$.

3Strictly speaking, for an ADT containing an operation $AOp$ to be refined by an ADT which replaces $AOp$ by $COp$. 

6
where \( \text{Pred} \) determines how the elements of the two state spaces are connected. Data refinement is defined with respect to this retrieve relation (though it is often implicitly existentially quantified).

For an ADT \((A\text{State}, \{A\text{Op}_i \mid i \in I\}, A\text{Init})\) to be refined by an ADT \((C\text{State}, \{C\text{Op}_i \mid i \in I\}, C\text{Init})\) using retrieve relation \(\text{Retr}\) the following conditions need to hold.

**Initialisation**
every concrete initial state needs to match some abstract initial state:

\[
\forall C\text{State} \bullet C\text{Init} \Rightarrow (\exists A\text{State} \bullet A\text{Init} \land \text{Retr}^r)
\]

and for every pair of operations \(A\text{Op}_i, C\text{Op}_i, i \in I\),

**Input/output** \(A\text{Op}_i\) and \(C\text{Op}_i\) have the same inputs and outputs, w.l.o.g. assume that these are \(x \in X\) and \(y \in Y\);

**Termination** \(C\text{Op}_i\) should be defined on all representatives of \(A\text{State}\) on which \(A\text{Op}_i\) is defined:

\[
\forall A\text{State} \bullet C\text{State} \land x \in X \Rightarrow \text{pre}A\text{Op}_i \land \text{Retr} \Rightarrow \text{pre}C\text{Op}_i
\]

**Correctness** wherever \(A\text{Op}_i\) is defined, \(C\text{Op}_i\) should produce a result related by \(\text{Retr}\) to one that \(A\text{Op}_i\) could have produced:

\[
\forall A\text{State} \land C\text{State} \land x \in X \land y \in Y \Rightarrow \text{pre}A\text{Op}_i \land C\text{Op}_i \land \text{Retr} \Rightarrow \exists A\text{State} \land \text{Retr}^r \land A\text{Op}_i
\]

The refinement conditions imply that not all elements of the abstract type need to be related to some element of the concrete type, but just those elements which could be reached through the operations. As an extreme case, consider the situation where \(\text{Retr}\) relates every point in the abstract space to one and the same point in the concrete space. All data refinement conditions hold trivially in that case (with \(C\text{Op}_i\) the identity operation on that one point). Thus, the retrieve relation plays a crucial role in determining data refinement, it needs to be chosen sensibly for data refinement to have significance.

If the retrieve relation is a total function from concrete to abstract state spaces, the conditions become much simpler, cf. [39, 42].

The conditions given above only relate ADTs with matching sets of operations. A question one might ask as well (and one that we will need to ask ourselves later) is whether it is “allowed” to add operations to an ADT in refinement. There are two possible answers to this question:

- The first is based on the strict behavioural view of a Z ADT. From this point of view, adding operations to the “concrete” ADT is problematic, because it changes the behaviour of the ADT in its environment. Adding concrete operations that correspond to the identity operation on the abstract state may be less problematic, this depends on the interpretation of divergence. For a further discussion of this issue, which is central in the refinement of internal operations, cf. [16].

An additional argument for sticking to this interpretation is that the refinement rules for Z were originally derived from just such a behavioural characterisation (cf. [42, 32]). If one strays from this view, the validity and usefulness of the existing refinement rules have to be re-examined.

- A second view, which fits better with our use of Z, is that a Z ADT describes a collection of services centered around a particular state. If the concrete ADT has an additional service available, this should make no difference to an environment expecting the collection of services of the abstract ADT only.

Returning to the example of a library, the state of a Library ADT would be a collection of books with loan information for each of them. The Library ADT in the customer’s view would have
operations that change the loan information on books. However, the customer would not expect
the library state to be immutable between his visits. The library manager in his Library ADT
would probably have operations adding new books, for example. Adding such operations to a
more global view would not invalidate the customer’s view of things.

We will give unifications of ADTs matching both of these interpretations – clearly for the second
one, a more liberal unification algorithm results.

2.4 Equivalence relations

In the sequel, we will often be discussing state schemas and ADTs which are “equivalent”, in different
ways.

One possibility for defining an equivalence relation is obvious. Data refinement is a partial order,
so by intersection with its converse (“mutual refinement”) we obtain an equivalence relation. From
the preceding sections it should be clear that mutual refinement is an equivalence relation between
ADTs. This implies that in general we need to look at the state schema and all the operations and
the initialisation in order to establish mutual refinement.

Example 6  Consider

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Three} & : y \{3\} \\
T\text{Init} & : \text{Three} \\
\text{Skip} & : \Delta \text{Three} \\
\text{Retr} & : \text{Num}; \text{Three} \\
\text{Ski} & : y = y
\end{align*}
\]

The ADT (Three, TInit, {Skip}) and the ADT with Num and Toggle from example 3 and an
appropriate initialisation are mutual refinements, in both directions with retrieve relation

\[x = y\]

However, sometimes we want to say that two state schemas are “essentially the same” without
having to consider them in the context of their collections of operations and initialisations. This
equivalence relation we will call state isomorphism.

Definition 7 (State isomorphism)  Two state spaces \(S\) and \(T\) are state isomorphic if a total
injective function between them exists.

If \(S\) and \(T\) are isomorphic, they are essentially the same, modulo an injective relabelling of their
elements. There is a clear relationship between state isomorphism and mutual refinement. If the
state of an ADT is isomorphic to another state schema, then the operations of the ADT can be
translated (using the total injective function) to create an ADT that is in the mutual refinement
relation with the original ADT. The example above shows that the reverse is not true.

In summary, there are at least three possible equivalence relations between (state) schemas, which
all imply each other in this order. The finest relation is syntactic equality. Then there is semantic
equivalence, between schemas which have the same sets of bindings. We will generally even use this
as an identity relation on schemas and call schemas “equal” or “identical” when they are “only”
semantically equivalent. A slightly coarser one is isomorphism, essentially between schemas which
have the same number of bindings. Mutual refinement is a relation between ADTs (rather than
between state schemas) which is strictly weaker than state isomorphism.
2.5 Unary consistency in Z

We have discussed consistency between specifications, one might guess that this relates to the possibility of having consistency of a specification. It might even be the case that inconsistency between specifications shows up in their unification being inconsistent in itself. Unfortunately, this is hardly the case, as we will show later. However, for completeness’ sake let us mention some of the ways in which a Z specification on its own could be inconsistent.

First, there are the direct contradictions, which all allow us to prove both $P$ and $\neg P$ for some predicate $P$, or in other words which allow us to derive “false” from the specification. This is the simplest and most obvious definition of inconsistency in Z. The strong typing system of Z prevents quite a few classes of errors, but some kinds of contradictions can still be written, for example:

- Postulating that an empty set has an element:
  \[ x: \emptyset \]

- Abusing the fact that a function is a set of pairs:
  \[
  f : \mathbb{N} \to \mathbb{N} \\
  f = \{(1,2),(1,3)\}
  \]

  (of course similar examples exist for all the different types of functions, including sequences).

- Inconsistent free types (a lot has been written on this, see [39, 4, 38]), for example $T := \text{atom}(\mathbb{N}) | \text{fun}(T \to T)$.

It is clear that inconsistencies of this type will also be inconsistencies if they occur in partial specifications. However, these inconsistencies will not be generated by our unification techniques.

A different type of possible inconsistency occurs in the context of schemas with empty sets of bindings, for example (trivially) $D \equiv \{ x:S \mid \text{false} \}$. As long as we do not assert that we have a value from $D$, this is not an inconsistency in the sense used above. However, in the states-with-operations interpretation of Z, a schema with an empty set of bindings is a specification error. This is because for ADTs the so-called Initialisation Theorem needs to hold: the schema describing the initial state of an abstract data type should not be empty.

Except for checking the Initialisation Theorem, there will be no further need to discuss true unary inconsistencies in this paper. It will become clear that our unification method does not generate other internal inconsistencies for the language constructs considered in this paper\footnote{Clearly unification of axiomatic declarations should have the possibility of generating internal inconsistencies.}

3 Viewpoint unification: the parameters

In this section we will discuss the parameters of viewpoint unification. In a naive approach, these are only the viewpoint specifications themselves. However, when state components of different types need to be unified, we have no choice but to be explicit about the relation between those types. Such relations we will call correspondence relations. It turns out that these are related one-to-one with the state space in the unification. From that observation, it follows that an alternative approach is to specify the unified state space explicitly, in terms of the viewpoint state spaces.

3.1 Viewpoint specifications

Although viewpoint specifications could in principle be all kinds of Z specifications, containing other components besides state and operation schemas, we will concentrate on those two. We do not expect other Z constructs to cause extra complications. An additional reason for concentrating on states and
Most of the effort will be in unifying state spaces, and thus we will not discuss operations much at this stage. This is because finding a least common operation refinement of two operations on the same state space ("operation unification") is relatively easy – effectively we factor the least common (data) refinement into two independent "least" data refinements and then possibly a least common operation refinement step. The construction for least common "operation refinement" of initialisations is a special case of the construction for operation unification. Adapting viewpoint operations to operate on a common state space first is harder, because it is a data refinement step. Data refinement is intrinsically more complicated, as it involves an implicit existentially quantified parameter: the retrieve relation involved. Choosing this retrieve relation in a sensible way indeed turns out to be the crucial issue in viewpoint unification.

### Example 8

As an example of two state spaces that might need to be unified, consider the following.

\[
F_1: \begin{align*}
&x: \text{Apple} \\
&\text{NotWormEaten} \ x
\end{align*}
\]

\[
F_2: \begin{align*}
&x: \text{Fruit} \\
&\text{NotRotten} \ x
\end{align*}
\]

where we assume that it follows from the rest of the specification that \textit{Apple} is indeed a subset of \textit{Fruit}.

---

### 3.2 Intuitive state unification, and the need for correspondences

In this subsection we will give an intuitive definition of state unification. This involves a particular interpretation of state schemas, but this interpretation will only be temporarily assumed in order to clarify the issue. Once the correspondence has been identified as a parameter to viewpoint unification, it can be used to pinpoint any desirable interpretation of state schemas in viewpoint unification. Thus, our intuitive definition may seem wrong, but there is enough generality in the eventual set up to encode any other interpretation.

So how do we unify the fruity state spaces given above? Let us assume that \(F_1\) allows us to choose \(x\) from all apples, if we discard any worm-eaten ones. \(F_2\) likewise offers us any fruit, provided it is not rotten. Our intuitive interpretation of a state schema is that the declarations give a range of choice, and the predicates give restrictions. Unification then should extend the range of choice, but combine the restrictions wherever they applied before. Looking at the schemas purely formally, this is an odd interpretation: predicates and subtypes are exchangeable, but we use disjunction on subtypes and (restricted) conjunction on the predicates. For the examples we have dealt with so far [18, 19] however, this default interpretation seemed to capture the intuition much better. In the fruity example, this would give

\[
D: \begin{align*}
&D: \text{Fruit} \\
&\text{NotRotten} \ x \\
&x \in \text{Apple} \Rightarrow \text{NotWormEaten} \ x
\end{align*}
\]

Note that this interpretation also explains why we do not normalise state schemas (cf. section 2.1).

In the general case, let us assume we have been given state schemas (we will frequently refer to
these names in the sequel)

\[
\begin{array}{c|c}
D_1 & x:S \\
\hline
  \text{pred}_S & \\
\end{array}
\qquad
\begin{array}{c|c}
D_2 & x:T \\
\hline
  \text{pred}_T & \\
\end{array}
\]

coming from two different viewpoints. If we have to rely on implicit relations between the viewpoints, we should assume that everything that has the same name between two viewpoints should be unified. Let us also assume \(D_1\) and \(D_2\) were both originally called \(D\), and thus need to be unified, but that they have been subscripted for disambiguation purposes. Types can be product types, so we can assume without loss of generality that every state space has only one component. According to the intuitive view given above, their unification should be \([19]\):

\[
\begin{array}{c|c}
D & x:S \cup T \\
\hline
x \in S \Rightarrow \text{pred}_S \\
x \in T \Rightarrow \text{pred}_T \\
\end{array}
\]

However, this is not type correct in general: \(S \cup T\) is an error unless \(S\) and \(T\) have the same (maximal) type. A disjoint union of \(S\) and \(T\) would not be right either, since then values that \(S\) and \(T\) have in common would be considered different. Is the general solution to take a disjoint union when \(S\) and \(T\) are unrelated, and set union otherwise?

**Example 9** This example is based on a situation in a realistic case study \([36]\) of a video telephony system. Given the following enumerated types in the different viewpoints

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Status}_1 &::= \text{idle} \mid \text{connected} \\
\text{Status}_2 &::= \text{idle} \mid \text{connected} \mid \text{connecting}
\end{align*}
\]

how do we unify the following schemas?

\[
\begin{array}{c|c}
\text{Stat}_1 & x:\text{Status}_1 \\
\hline
\text{Stat}_2 & x:\text{Status}_2 \\
\end{array}
\]

Formally the types \(\text{Status}_1\) and \(\text{Status}_2\) are unrelated (though this could be considered a quirk in the Z typing system). Thus, the general solution we suggested earlier will unify these two to a type of five elements rather than to \(\text{Stat}_2\) as we would have hoped.

\(\square\)

This last example illustrates another problem. What should happen if the unified state at some point (through an operation from the second viewpoint) evolves to a state where \(x=\text{connecting}\)? In particular, which of the operations of the first viewpoint should still be applicable at that point? None of them, modelling that \text{connecting} is some transient intermediate state during which all operations from the first viewpoint are disabled? Or should it be those which were applicable for \(x=\text{connected}\) in the first viewpoint, making \text{connecting} a special case of \text{connected}, or similarly for \text{idle}? Such questions cannot usually be answered without extracting more information from the specifier.

This is where correspondence relations enter the picture. The ODP reference model \([29]\) includes correspondences which relate the viewpoint specifications, but it is not very specific on what these correspondences could be. For the specific case of relating two Z viewpoint specifications, we can give a concrete characterisation of what correspondences are. Apart from the implicit links between schemas and their components which happen to have the same names across viewpoints, they also include correspondence relations between the types of linked components. If two values \(a\) and \(b\) for
some component \( x \) are in such a correspondence relation, this represents the fact that operations on the first viewpoint can safely assume that \( x = a \) when the second viewpoint maintains that \( x = b \) and vice versa. Briefly jumping ahead, we can answer the problematic questions on \( x = \text{connecting} \) above using the correspondence relation. If \( \text{connecting} \) is not in the correspondence relation, it is indeed a transient intermediary state. If \( (\text{connected}, \text{connecting}) \) is in the correspondence relation, \( \text{connecting} \) is a special case of \( \text{connected} \), as far as the first viewpoint is concerned. In any case, the correspondence relation will probably include \((\text{idle}, \text{idle})\) and \((\text{connected}, \text{connected})\) in order to make explicit that these names were not accidentally identical.

As we will show, with examples, in the next subsection, introducing an explicit correspondence relation also means we do not have to assume the intuitive interpretation used above. We will return to the intuitive interpretation in subsection 3.5, where we show how we can avoid giving an explicit correspondence relation when it is "obvious" what it should be.

### 3.3 Correspondence relations and unified state spaces

In the previous subsection we have argued that it is in some cases necessary to provide an explicit correspondence relation between the types that a component has across the two viewpoints. In this subsection we will show that this is sufficient information to find a type for that component in the unification.

The crucial idea is to make the type in the unified state space a product of the types in the original state spaces. This idea originates in the method of specification by views [30] which we will discuss in section 7.2. The correspondence relation forms the kernel of this product type — however, some extra work is necessary for those values from the state spaces which are not in the domains of the correspondence relation.

There are two ways of explaining the construction of the type used in the unified state space. One is as a totalisation of the correspondence relation, the other is as a modification of a disjoint sum. We will give both explanations, because they may provide better insight on how correspondence relations are used, starting with the latter one.

Even though the result is contained in a product type, we start with the sum of the types involved. Assume the types are \( S \) and \( T \) as in the general example above, and their correspondence relation is \( R \subseteq S \times T \). (In order to keep this explanation simple, we venture outside the \( Z \) typing system for a moment.) If \( \bot \) is a type with a single element not in \( S \) or \( T \), let us call it \( \bot \), then we could define the disjoint union of \( S \) and \( T \) by\(^5\)

\[
S + T = S \times \bot \cup \bot \times T
\]

i.e. \( S + T = \{(s,t) \mid (s \in S \land t = \bot) \lor (s = \bot \land t \in T)\} \). The smallest product set containing this set is \( S_{\bot} \times T_{\bot} \), where \( Q_{\bot} \) is the union of \( Q \) and \( \bot \). (Still a disjoint union, but of an appreciably simpler kind.) Now compute the state space as follows:

\[
\text{states} := S + T
\]

for each \((s,t) \in R\) do 

\[
\text{states} := \{(s,\bot),(\bot,t)\} \cup \{(s,t)\}
\]

An interpretation of the disjoint union of \( S \) and \( T \) is that no element from \( S \) is considered equal to one in \( T \). The interpretation of the correspondence relation is that it asserts that some \( s \) represents some \( t \) (and vice versa). If that is the case, two different elements \((s,\bot)\) and \((\bot,t)\) in the modified union need to be identified to one \((s,t)\).

The second explanation is that the correspondence relation needs to be totalised. Not every element of \( S \) and \( T \) is in the left/right domain of \( R \) — so we add to \( R \) pairs \((s,\bot)\) for each \( s \in S \) not in the left domain of \( R \) (\( \text{dom} \ R \)), and pairs \((\bot,t)\) for each \( t \in T \) not in the right domain of \( R \) (\( \text{ran} \ R \)). Let us call the resulting set a \textit{totalised correspondence relation}. Totalised correspondence relations

---

\(^{5}\)This is probably the second-best known implementation of disjoint sum as a product, the better known one being \( S + T = \{0\} \times S \cup \{1\} \times T \).
are linked in a one-to-one way with correspondence relations between $S$ and $T$: for $\text{tot } R$ the totalised correspondence of $R$, we have $\text{tot } R = R \cup (S \setminus \text{dom } R) \times \{\bot\} \cup (\{\top\} \times (T \setminus \text{ran } R))$, and $R = \text{tot } R \cap S \times T$.

Here ends our brief excursion outside the $\mathcal{Z}$ typing system; we now give the formal definitions in $\mathcal{Z}$. The main differences arise from the need to use explicit injection functions (into free types) where we used set unions above. The one-to-one correspondence also holds in $\mathcal{Z}$, it just looks a bit more complicated.

**Definition 10 (Type with bottom)** For any type $S$, we define the type $S_\bot$ by the following free type definition:

$$S_\bot := \bot \downarrow \text{just } S$$

For all such types, a partial injection the $S$ is defined as the inverse of the injection $\text{just } S$:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{the } S & : S_\bot \mapsto S \\
\text{dom } \text{the } S &= \text{ran } \text{just } S \\
\forall x : S \bullet \text{the } S (\text{just } S x) &= x
\end{align*}
\]

\[\square\]

**Definition 11 (Totalisation of a relation)** The totalisation\(^7\) $\text{tot } R$ of a relation $R$ on two given types $S$ and $T$ is defined as follows:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{tot } : (S \leftrightarrow T) & \rightarrow (S_\bot \leftrightarrow T_\bot) \\
\forall R : S \leftrightarrow T \bullet \\
\text{tot } R &= \text{the } S \uparrow \text{not } R \uparrow \text{just } T \\
& \cup \{x : S \setminus \text{dom } R \bullet (\text{just } S x, \bot T)\} \\
& \cup \{y : T \setminus \text{ran } R \bullet (\bot S, \text{just } T y)\}
\end{align*}
\]

\[\square\]

This definition is generic in the types $S$ and $T$ — thus, every occurrence of $\text{tot }$ in this paper has, besides its relation parameter, two types as parameters. We leave these implicit, trusting that in the context it will be clear what they should be.

Totalised correspondences provide the possibility to specify anything between disjoint union (take the correspondence to be the empty relation) and union (take the correspondence to be the identity relation on the intersection). Moreover, they provide the opportunity to relate elements of types that cannot be directly related in $\mathcal{Z}$ even if they appear to be identical:

**Example 12 (Union of enumerated types)** Continuing example 9 we can form the union of these types by taking the correspondence relation to be $\{(\text{connected}, \text{connected}), (\text{idle}, \text{idle})\} : \mathcal{P}(\text{Status1} \times \text{Status2})$. The totalised correspondence relation (abbreviating some names) is then the set

\[
\{\text{just1 }\text{connected}, \text{just2 }\text{connected}, (\text{just1 }\text{idle}, \text{just2 }\text{idle}), (\bot_1, \text{just2 }\text{conning})\}
\]

which can be seen as a renaming of the set $\{\text{connected}, \text{idle}, \text{connecting}\}$.

---

\(^6\)For an alternative formulation of this totalisation, using d’Inverno’s optional construct [20], cf. [10].

\(^7\)Note that this totalisation is different from the ones Woodcock and Davies [42] use in a similar context.
As well as for creating unified state spaces that are various types of unions of the viewpoint state spaces, correspondence relations can also be used to create state spaces that really feature two representations of one data type.

**Example 13**  Two viewpoints could have sets of numbers – one using the obvious representation \( \mathbb{P}N \) and the other one using a sequence without duplicates:

\[
\begin{array}{c|c}
\text{SetAsSet} & \text{SetAsSeq} \\
\hline
x: \mathbb{P}N & x: \text{seq}\mathbb{N} \\
\end{array}
\]

and the correspondence relation between these two would be \( R \subseteq \mathbb{P}N \times \text{seq}\mathbb{N} \) defined by

\[
(a, b) \in R \iff a = \text{ran } b
\]

(or a subset of it restricted to sequences without duplicates).

In particular, one viewpoint may have a more abstract view of a data type and another viewpoint a more concrete one. The correspondence relation between those two types will then typically be the (predicate of the) retrieve relation between them. Effectively this extends viewpoint unification with data type implementation. Unlike in the other examples above, such correspondence relations will typically be non-functional (e.g. in example 13, a set of \( n \) elements corresponds to \( n! \) different sequences according to \( R \)). Another use of non-functional correspondence relations is in the method of specification by views [30]. In section 7.2 we will show with some examples how correspondence relations and unification can be used to generalise that specification method. A more extensive account of the relation between views, data refinement and our viewpoint unification techniques can be found in [10].

### 3.4 Relabelling

If it was not already clear from the complicated definition of \( \text{tot } R \), the last example clearly showed that the unified state space often looks more complicated than we would prefer. In many cases where we already know what the resulting state space should be, we end up making statements like the above: there is some isomorphism between the state space with bottoms and a simpler one. It is not always necessary for the result of unification to be an easily understandable specification. However, having a readable unification would certainly be helpful if we need to do additional unification with yet another viewpoint – if not for specifying the new correspondence relation, then for finding where any inconsistencies originated.

The solution to this is to include yet another parameter to the unification process: a relabelling. This relabelling should get us from \( \text{tot } R \) to some (to be specified) goal type \( V \). However, if the relabelling is going to be just that, this implies that we need the specifier to specify it in terms of \( S \) and \( T \), which does not reduce the necessary effort much. It seems much more natural to have the specifier only specify the mappings from \( S \) and \( T \) to the goal type. Thus the following definition.

**Definition 14 (Relabelling)** A relabelling for state schemas \( D_1 = \{ x:S \mid \text{pred}_S \} \) and \( D_2 = \{ x:T \mid \text{pred}_T \} \) with correspondence relation \( R \) consists of a goal type \( V \) and two injective functions \( Q_S: S \rightarrow V \) and \( Q_T: T \rightarrow V \) satisfying the conditions below:

\[
\forall s:S; t:T \cdot (s,t) \in R \iff Q_S s = Q_T t
\]
The functions need to be injective to ensure that the relabelling is indeed a relabelling and does not identify elements that are different. The first condition (totality on a restricted domain) ensures that all elements of $D_1$ and $D_2$ can be renamed. The second condition has two aspects: from left to right it ensures that a unique relabelling can be found for each $(s, t)$ pair, from right to left it also ensures that different elements do not get identified. A consequence of these conditions is that $R$ needs to be functional in both directions.

When a relabelling is defined, the resulting state space consists of the goal type specified in the relabelling. As with totalised correspondence relations, any further restrictions on the unified state schema will appear as additional predicates (to be defined in section 4.1).

Thus, we have introduced relabelling as a possible extra parameter to unification. The way in which we have defined it ensures that no extra proof obligations are incurred by adding a relabelling (apart from showing that it is a relabelling): the resulting state schema is isomorphic to the one obtained without the relabelling.

However, there is something more to be said about the relabelling defined this way. The second condition, due to its shape, can also be read as an extensional definition of the correspondence relation $R$—in other words, the correspondence relation is completely determined by the choice of relabelling. Thus, we can actually omit the correspondence when a relabelling is specified, and just assume that the correspondence consists of those pairs of values which get renamed to the same value.

**Example 15** We could have solved the problem of complicated naming and isomorphism in example 12 by not giving an explicit correspondence relation, but a relabelling instead. Let the goal type of the relabelling be $\text{Status} 2$ (i.e., the type used in the second viewpoint). Define the relabelling function $Q_1: \text{Status} 1 \to \text{Status} 2$ by

$$Q_1 = \{(\text{idle}, \text{idle}), (\text{connected}, \text{connected})\}$$

and let $Q_2$ be the identity function on $\text{Status} 2$. These relabelling functions are total and injective, and the correspondence relation that they implicitly define is the one we had before—it actually equals $Q_1$.

\[ \square \]

### 3.5 Default correspondence and default relabelling

We have established with examples that in some cases it is really necessary to provide an explicit correspondence relation. From our earlier remarks on “intuitive” state unification it should also follow that in some cases it is clear what the correspondence relation should be. In order to reduce the specification effort whenever possible, we define default correspondence relations and default relabellings. However, note that these defaults correspond to our interpretation of state schemas in unification, and can thus be viewed to be just as arbitrary as that.

The definition of a default correspondence relation is similar to the “general solution” we suggested (and discarded) in section 3.2: when the types of the viewpoint states are compatible, we take a set union.

**Definition 16 (Default correspondence)** The default correspondence relation on schemas $D_1 \equiv [x: S | \text{pred}_S]$ and $D_2 \equiv [x: T | \text{pred}_T]$ is $\text{id}_{S \cap T} = \{((x, x) \cdot x \in S \cap T)\}$ if $S \cap T$ is a well-typed expression (i.e. $S$ and $T$ have a common supertype).

\[ \square \]

When the types are not compatible, their disjoint union is the only obvious candidate. However, it is not a useful one since it guarantees that no common refinement can be found. (Each viewpoint will want the initial value of the unified ADT to correspond to one of its initial values, and the correspondence is empty.)
In order to maintain state consistency, cf. section 5.1, it may sometimes be advisable to restrict $R$ to values in $\{x:S \mid \text{pred}_S\} \times \{x:T \mid \text{pred}_T\}$.

This default correspondence indeed results in a union:

If $R=\text{id}_{S \cap T}$, then $\text{dom} R = \text{ran} R = S \cap T$. Thus, the three subsets of $\text{tot} R$ (cf. the definition) are $\{x:S \cap T. \bullet (\text{just}_S x. \text{just}_T x)\}$ which is isomorphic to $S \cap T$, $\{x:S \setminus (S \cap T) \bullet (\text{just}_S x. \bot_T)\}$ which is isomorphic to $S \setminus T$, and $\{y:T \setminus (S \cap T) \bullet (\bot_S. \text{just}_T y)\}$ which is isomorphic to $T \setminus S$. The isomorphic sets are disjoint, and together make up exactly $S \cup T$.

The situation gets even simpler when we consider a default relabelling as well.

**Definition 17 (Default relabelling: union)** The default relabelling on schemas $D_1 = [x:S \mid \text{pred}_S]$ and $D_2 = [x:T \mid \text{pred}_T]$ such that $S \cap T$ is a well-typed expression is defined as follows. The goal type $V=S \cup T$; the relabelling functions are $Q_S=\text{id}_S$; $Q_T=\text{id}_T$.

For reasons related to state consistency, it may sometimes be advisable to restrict $Q_S$ to values satisfying $\text{pred}_S$, and similarly for $Q_T$.

The above definition allows us not to specify any correspondence relation or relabelling, and end up with the intuitive unification we proposed at the very beginning. This gives us “the best of both worlds”: if the intuitive unification is the right one we can choose it without further ado; if it is not right we have a mechanism to specify what it should be.

## 4 Viewpoint unification: the algorithm

This section presents the algorithm for unifying two viewpoint specifications in the states-with-operations style. There are three aspects to this unification: first, state schemas that occur in both viewpoints need to be combined to unified state schema, then operations on those (including initialisations) need to be adapted to the unified state schema, and finally operations that occur in both viewpoints (including initialisations) need to be unified.

### 4.1 State unification

The correspondence relation and its totalisation form the main component of state unification. It only remains to account for the predicates in the original state schemas, and to create an actual state schema for the unified state.

If the correspondence relation is $R \subseteq S \times T$, the inhabitants of the unified state schema will be the tuples of $\text{tot} R$. To account for the predicate $\text{pred}_S$, we include a predicate that should hold whenever the $S$-value is not $\bot$, and similarly for $\text{pred}_T$.

**Definition 18 (Unified state by correspondence)** Given schemas $D_1 = [x:S \mid \text{pred}_S]$ and $D_2 = [x:T \mid \text{pred}_T]$, their unification according to the correspondence relation $R \subseteq S \times T$ is

\[
\begin{array}{l}
D \\
\text{x}_1:S \triangleq \text{x}_2:T \\
(x_1, x_2) \in \text{tot} R \\
\forall x:S. x_1=\text{just}_S x \Rightarrow \text{pred}_S \\
\forall x:T. x_2=\text{just}_T x \Rightarrow \text{pred}_T
\end{array}
\]

\[
\square
\]

This looks like we are actually maintaining two values for the state variable $x$; however, due to $(x_1, x_2)$ being in $\text{tot} R$ it is the case that either exactly one of the two values is $\bot$ and thus invalid, or the two values are “equal” (since they are in $R$, and $R$ only contains tuples of things we consider equal).
Example 19 (Union of enumerated types, ctd.) The unification of \( \text{Stat}1 \equiv [x:\text{Status1}] \) and \( \text{Stat}2 \equiv [x:\text{Status2}] \) from example 9 is fairly simple using the correspondence relation \( R=\{(\text{connected, connected}),(\text{idle, idle})\} \) with its totalisation (cf. example 12). The only predicate remaining is \((x_1,x_2) \in \text{tot } R\) which we have expanded below, the other two reduce to true.

\[
\begin{array}{l}
D \\
\text{x1:Status1} \perp; \text{x2:Status2} \perp \\
(x_1 = \text{justStatus1 connected} \land x_2 = \text{justStatus2 connected}) \lor \\
(x_1 = \text{justStatus1 idle} \land x_2 = \text{justStatus2 idle}) \lor \\
(x_1 = \perp_{\text{Status1}} \land x_2 = \text{justStatus2 connecting})
\end{array}
\]

which is isomorphic to \( \text{Stat}2 \).

\(\square\)

For the following two examples we will use the default correspondence relation.

Example 20 The schemas

\[
\begin{array}{l}
D_1 \\
\text{x:Z} \\
1 \leq x \leq 5
\end{array}
\quad
\begin{array}{l}
D_2 \\
\text{x:Z} \\
\exists x: \text{N} \cdot x = z + z
\end{array}
\]

have the same type of component so their default correspondence relation is the identity relation on that type. The schema that results from unification is, after some simplifications, using the \( \text{Z} \) as the inverse of the \( \text{id} \).

\[
\begin{array}{l}
D \\
\text{x1:Z} \perp; \text{x2:Z} \perp \\
(x_1, x_2) \in \text{tot } \{(x, x) \mid x \in \text{Z}\} \\
1 \leq \text{theZ} x_1 \leq 5 \\
\exists x: \text{N} \cdot \text{theZ} x_2 = z + z
\end{array}
\]

which is a complicated way of describing the schema \([x:\{2,4\}]\).

\(\square\)

Example 21 Schemas \( D_1 \equiv [x:S] \) where \( S \equiv 1 .. 5 \) and \( D_2 \equiv [x:T] \) where \( T \equiv \{z: \text{N} \cdot z + z\} \) have the identity relation on \( S \cap T \) as the default correspondence relation, i.e. \( \{(2,2),(4,4)\} \). The schema resulting from their unification is (first predicate expanded, last two reduce to true):

\[
\begin{array}{l}
D \\
\text{x1:S} \perp; \text{x2:T} \perp \\
(x_1 = \perp_S \land x_2 \in \{z: \text{N} \setminus \{1,2\} \cdot \text{justT} (z + z)\}) \lor \\
(x_1, x_2) \in \{z: \{2,4\} \cdot (\text{justS} z, \text{justT} z)\} \lor \\
(x_1 \in \{z: \{1,3,5\} \cdot \text{justS} z\} \land x_2 = \perp_T)
\end{array}
\]

This schema is isomorphic to \( D \equiv [x:S \cup T] \).

\(\square\)

These two examples illustrate the effect of normalisation on state unification, the schemas in example...
20 are the normalised versions of those in example 21, but their unifications are very different indeed. This difference is caused by different (default) correspondence relations being used.

Indeed, the default correspondence relations may be different for schemas that are semantically equal but syntactically different – as a function of the schemas, it is defined on their syntax rather than on their semantics (the latter being the more usual thing to do in the Z world). This does not point out a defect in our set up – the correspondence relation can and should always be chosen sensibly – but rather reflects our observation that the syntactical form does seem to matter for the intuitive interpretation of Z state schemas even when the semantics does not make a distinction.

Alternatively, if a relabelling is given, we can use that to determine the state unification.

**Definition 22 (Unified state by relabelling)** Given schemas \( D_1 \equiv [x:S \mid \text{pred}_S] \) and \( D_2 \equiv [x:T \mid \text{pred}_T] \), and a relabelling \((V,Q_S,Q_T)\) their unification is

\[
\begin{align*}
D_{\text{unified}} &:= \\
&\exists y:V. (x : y) \iff (x : Q_S y) \land (x : Q_T y) \land \text{pred}_S = \text{pred}_T
\end{align*}
\]

\(\square\)

**Example 23** Using the default relabellings, the unification for example 20 is

\[
\begin{align*}
D &:= \\
y : Z \\
\forall x:S \cdot Q_S x = y \Rightarrow \text{pred}_S \\
\forall x:T \cdot Q_T x = y \Rightarrow \text{pred}_T
\end{align*}
\]

which can be simplified to \( D \equiv [y/Z \mid 1 \leq y \leq 5 \land \exists z:N \cdot y = z + z] \). The unification for example 21 will be (both predicates reducing to true) \( D \equiv [y : S \cup T] \).

\(\square\)

The final example shows that a schema with a singleton set of bindings might fulfill a very useful role when we apply this state unification rule: modulo state isomorphism, it is the unit of state unification if we use the largest possible correspondence relation. Thus, we can formally treat the situation that a state only occurs in one of the two viewpoints by assuming it is defined to be the singleton state in the other viewpoint.

**Example 24 (The singleton state)** For the states \( D_1 \equiv [x:\{1\}] \) and \( D_2 \equiv [x:T \mid \text{pred}_T] \) the largest possible correspondence relation is the one that links 1 to every \( T \). Its totalisation is \( \{x : T \mid \text{just}1, \text{just}T\} \), and the resulting unified state is:

\[
\begin{align*}
D &:= \\
x_1: \{\text{just}1\} \\
x_2: T_\perp \\
x_2 \in \text{ran just}T \\
\forall x : T \cdot x_2 = \text{just}T \ x \Rightarrow \text{pred}_T
\end{align*}
\]

which, is clearly isomorphic to \( D_2 \).

\(\square\)

In [8] we presented the empty state schema as the unit of state unification. This is a correct alternative, but not very useful, as an ADT with an empty state schema fails its Initialisation Theorem.
4.2 Operation adaptation

If a state schema has been unified with another one, the operations (including initialisation) in the viewpoint in which the first state schema resides will also need to be changed to operate on the new state. This amounts to choosing the least (in refinement order) data refinement of each operation where the retrieve relation is essentially the correspondence relation (see the proof in section 5.1 for the exact details of this). The adapted operation should be applicable whenever the relevant state component is not ⊥ and the original operation’s precondition holds, and it should return a unified state that represents the original operation’s postcondition, which also implies that the relevant state component is not ⊥.

**Definition 25 (Operation adaptation: correspondence)** Given schemas \(D_1 \equiv [x:S \mid \text{pred}_S]\) and \(D_2 \equiv [x:T \mid \text{pred}_T]\) with correspondence relation \(R \subseteq S \times T\), an operation that was originally defined on the state \(D_1\) by

\[
\begin{align*}
\Delta D_1; \text{Decl}_1 \\
\text{pred}_1
\end{align*}
\]

gets adapted to the new state schema by changing it to

\[
\begin{align*}
\Delta D; \text{Decl}_1 \\
x_1 \in \text{ran justS} \\
x_1' \in \text{ran justS} \\
\text{let } x' = \text{theS } x_1; \ x_1' = \text{theS } x_1' \cdot \text{pred}_1
\end{align*}
\]

and similarly for operations on \(D_2\).

A degenerate case of this is initialisation adaptation: initialisation scheme \(\text{Init}_1 \equiv [D'_1 \mid \text{init}_1]\) gets adapted to

\[
\begin{align*}
\Delta D'; \text{Decl}_1 \\
x_1' \in \text{ran justS} \\
\text{let } x' = \text{theS } x_1' \cdot \text{init}_1
\end{align*}
\]

and similarly for the other viewpoint’s initialisation.

The last predicate in \(\text{AdOp}_1\) can also be written as \(\text{pred}_1[\text{theS } x_1 / x][\text{theS } x_1' / x']\). The situation is only slightly more complicated for operations which operate on multiple states — the rule above can then be applied repeatedly, and the only complication is the bookkeeping of which references to states have been updated to refer to changed states.

There is a variant to be used when the state has been unified via a relabelling rather than an explicit correspondence relation.

**Definition 26 (Operation adaptation: relabelling)** Given schemas \(D_1 \equiv [x:S \mid \text{pred}_S]\) and \(D_2 \equiv [x:T \mid \text{pred}_T]\) with relabelling \((V, Q_S, Q_T)\), an operation that was originally defined on the state \(D_1\) by

\[
\begin{align*}
\Delta D_1; \text{Decl}_1 \\
\text{pred}_1
\end{align*}
\]
gets adapted to the new state schema (cf. Definition 22) by changing it to

\[
\begin{array}{c}
AdOp_1 \\
\Delta D; \text{Decl}_1 \\
\forall x, x': S \cdot Q_S x = y \land Q_S' x' = y' \Rightarrow \text{pred}_1
\end{array}
\]

and similarly for operations on \(D_2\).

For initialisation scheme \(\text{Init}_1 \equiv D_1' \mid \text{init}_1\) we now get

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{Init}_1 \\
D' \\
\forall x': S \cdot Q_S x' = y' \Rightarrow \text{init}_1
\end{array}
\]

and similarly for the initialisation of \(D_2\).

\(\square\)

4.3 Operation unification

The unification of two viewpoint operations (adapted to operate on the same unified state) should exhibit possible behaviour of each of the viewpoint operations in each situation where the viewpoint operation was applicable. This requirement can be formalised using pre- and postconditions. The unified operation should be applicable whenever one of the viewpoint operations is, i.e. its precondition should be the disjunction of the viewpoint operation preconditions. Moreover, when the unified operation is applied to a state satisfying one particular precondition, a state should result that satisfies the corresponding postcondition. Such an operation unification is also described by Ainsworth et al. [1], there called union, although they do not mention that the union may not exist. In the more abstract setting of binary relations used by Frappier et al. [24] the same construct appears as the demonic join.

**Definition 27 (Operation unification)** The candidate least unification of operation schemas \(AdOp_1\) and \(AdOp_2\), both operating on the same state and having the same collection of inputs and outputs \(\text{Decl}_s\), is given by\(^8\)

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{UnOp} \\
\text{Decl}_s; \Delta D \\
\text{pre} AdOp_1 \lor \text{pre} AdOp_2 \\
\text{pre} AdOp_1 \Rightarrow \text{post} AdOp_1 \\
\text{pre} AdOp_2 \Rightarrow \text{post} AdOp_2
\end{array}
\]

\(\square\)

That this schema only defines the desired unification under additional restrictions is shown in section 5.2.

The unification of two initialisations operating on the same state is a degenerate case of this. Because initialisations (obviously) have no preconditions, the result is a pure conjunction:

\(^8\)Wim Feijen pointed out the similarity between the conditions in this schema and those in the \(w\)(eakest)\(p\)(recondition)\(-\)calculus for the guarded command \(P_1 \rightarrow Op_1 \sqcup P_2 \rightarrow Op_2\) where \(\text{pre}_i\) has the role of the guard.
Definition 28 (Initialisation unification) The candidate initialisation unification of two initialisations on the same state, \( [D' | \text{init}_1] \) and \( [D' | \text{init}_2] \) is the following:

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\begin{array}{c}
\text{UnInit} \\
D' \\
\text{init}_1 \land \text{init}_2
\end{array}
\end{array}
\]

For a meaningful unification, it needs to be established whether the Initialisation Theorem holds for the resulting ADT – i.e., in the above definition, whether \( \text{init}_1 \land \text{init}_2 \) is satisfiable. This property we will call initialisation consistency.

Definition 29 (Initialisation consistency) Two abstract data types are initialisation consistent with respect to a correspondence relation if the unification of their initialisation adaptations is satisfiable (i.e., satisfies the Initialisation Theorem of the candidate unified ADT).

4.4 The algorithm in full

The full algorithm for unifying two viewpoint specifications, using the unifications and adaptations described above, is now as follows:

A viewpoint specification is assumed to consist of a collection of ADTs. For each ADT \((D_1, \text{Init}_1, \text{Ops}_1)\) in one viewpoint that corresponds to an ADT \((D_2, \text{Init}_2, \text{Ops}_2)\) in the other viewpoint, construct an ADT in the unification as follows:

1. Establish a correspondence relation \( R \) between (the component types of) \( D_1 \) and \( D_2 \), and construct the state unification of \( D_1 \) and \( D_2 \) based on that correspondence relation. This gives the state of the resultant ADT.
2. Check state consistency of \( D_1 \) and \( D_2 \) according to \( R \); if it does not hold, the resultant ADT is likely not to be a common refinement, and a full refinement proof needs to be carried out in order to check this at the end.
3. Adapt all operations in \( \text{Ops}_1 \) and \( \text{Ops}_2 \) and the initialisations to the unified state. (These operations do not get added to the constructed ADT at this stage.)
4. Construct the initialisation unification of the adapted initialisations. If the resulting initialisation is satisfiable, it is the initialisation of the resultant ADT; if not, the whole unification process has failed.
5. For each pair of matching operations, check their operation consistency. If it fails, the whole unification process has failed. If it succeeds, construct their operation unification and add it to the resultant ADT.
6. It depends on the interpretation of ADTs (as discussed at the end of section 2.3.2) what happens to the remaining adapted operations:

- In the strict behavioural approach: for each adapted operation \( Op \) remaining from the first viewpoint, construct the operation adaptation \( \text{AdId}_2 \) of the second viewpoint’s identity operation \((\Xi D_2)\). Then add the operation unification of \( Op \) and \( \text{AdId}_2 \) to the resultant ADT, provided they are operation consistent (if not, unification has failed). Analogously for adapted operations remaining from the second viewpoint.
- In the “services” approach: add all remaining adapted operations to the resultant ADT.
5 Proofs and consistency conditions

Here we present what amounts to a correctness proof for the unification rules given above. The proof will be in three steps: showing that the adapted operations with the unified state form data refinements of the viewpoints; showing that unified operations are (operation) refinements of the adapted operations; and finally a proof that the unification is a least common refinement. The proof given below imposes extra conditions on the viewpoint specifications in two places: one is operation consistency which is needed to prove the correctness of operation unification, the other is state consistency which follows from analysis of the preconditions of the adapted operations. Together with the initialisation consistency condition, these form the consistency conditions of the two viewpoints.

The proofs assume that the first viewpoint is an ADT with state $D_1 \equiv [x:S \mid \text{pred}_S]$ and an operation $O_{p_1} \equiv [\Delta D_1; \text{Decl}_S \mid \text{pred}_1]$, the second viewpoint is an ADT with state $D_2 \equiv [x:T \mid \text{pred}_T]$ and an operation $O_{p_2} \equiv [\Delta D_2; \text{Decl}_T \mid \text{pred}_2]$, with their unification according to correspondence relation $R$ and adapted operations etc. as defined above. Often the contributions of input and output parameters to operations are ignored in order to simplify the formulas in the proofs – adding them would add no complication to the structure of the proofs, and no extra conditions.

5.1 Operation adaptation is data refinement

First we show that the unified state with the adapted operations form data refinements of the viewpoints with operations. For that purpose we have to link the state schemata using a retrieve relation. For the unified state schema $D$ and the state schema $D_1$ of the first viewpoint the retrieve relation is given by the schema

$$\begin{align*}
  \text{Retr}_1 & \quad D_1; D \\
  x_1 & = \text{just}\, S\, x
\end{align*}$$

Note that this retrieve relation reflects our intuitive view of how these specifications relate, in other words, if data refinement is established it is also a meaningful data refinement (cf. our earlier remarks in section 2.3.2). There are three conditions to prove that $D$ with $AdO_{p_1}$ is a valid data refinement of $D_1$ with $O_{p_1}$. The initialisation condition is guaranteed to hold by construction of the initialisation adaptation, and the fact that any value of each original state space is represented in the unified state space. The remaining two conditions are, making any universal quantifications implicit:

1. $\text{pre}\, O_{p_1} \land \text{Retr}_1 \Rightarrow \text{pre}\, AdO_{p_1}$
2. $\text{pre}\, O_{p_1} \land \text{Retr}_1 \land AdO_{p_1} \Rightarrow \exists x' \bullet \text{Retr}_1' \land O_{p_1}$

The proof of the first property has a big hurdle in the middle of it. For simplicity we ignore the contribution of $\text{Decl}_S$ to the predicate $AdO_{p_1}$ since it makes the same contribution to $O_{p_1}$. The term “translation” in the hints stands for the replacement of some quantified variables by new ones.

\begin{align*}
\text{pre}\, AdO_{p_1} & \equiv \{ \text{definition of pre} \} \\
\exists x_1'; \ x_1' \bullet AdO_{p_1} & \equiv \{ \text{definition } AdO_{p_1} \} \\
\exists x_1'; \ x_1' \bullet D \land D' \land x_1 \in \text{ran}\, \text{just}\, S \\
\land x_1' \in \text{ran}\, \text{just}\, S \land \text{pred}_1[t\, \text{he}\, S\, x_1/x][t\, \text{he}\, S\, x_1'/x'] & \equiv \{ \text{conjuncts independent of new state} \} \end{align*}
\[ D \land x_1 \in \text{ran just}\, S \]
\[ \land \exists x_1' ; \, x_2' \cdot D' \land x_1' \in \text{ran just}\, S \land \text{pred}_1[\text{the}\, S \, x_1 / x][\text{the}\, S \, x_1' / x'] \]
\[ \equiv \{ \text{WISH: } x_2' \text{ always exists here; } \]
\[ \text{translation } x' := \text{the}\, S \, x_1' \text{ (so just}\, S \, x' := x_1') \} \]
\[ D \land x_1 \in \text{ran just}\, S \land \exists x' \cdot D_1[\text{the}\, S \, x_1' / x] \land \text{pred}_1[\text{the}\, S \, x_1 / x] \]
\[ \equiv \{ \text{definition of pre } \}
\[ D \land x_1 \in \text{ran just}\, S \land \text{pre}\, O_{P_1}[\text{the}\, S \, x_1 / x] \]
\[ \equiv \{ \text{definition Retr}_1, \text{substitution } \}
\[ \text{Retr}_1 \land \text{pre}\, O_{P_1} \]

Of course the crux of this proof is the step marked with \textbf{WISH}. It is clear that we need an extra condition here, the predicate really depends on \(x_2'\) through the conjunct \(D'\). A correct \(x_2'\) may not exist in exactly one type of situation: \((x_1', x_2') = (\text{just}\, S \, s, \text{just}\, T \, t)\) and \((s, t) \in R, \text{pred}_2[s / x]\) holds but \(\text{pred}_2[t / x]\) does not hold. That is to say, the output value of the operation is linked by the correspondence relation to an “illegal” value, whereas the input value is linked to a legal one (and thus not excluded from the translated precondition \(\text{Retr}_1 \land \text{pre}\, O_{P_1}\)). At this point we will assume that the viewpoints are \textit{state consistent} to prevent this problem:

\begin{definition}
The two state schemas \(D_1 \triangleq [x : S \mid \text{pred}_3]\) and \(D_2 \triangleq [x : T \mid \text{pred}_T]\) are \textit{state consistent} with respect to the correspondence relation \(R \subseteq S \times T\) iff
\[ (s, t) \in R \Leftrightarrow (\text{pred}_3[s / x] \Leftrightarrow \text{pred}_T[t / x]) \]
\end{definition}

\[ \square \]

This is a sufficient, but not a necessary condition; for a further discussion of related properties, see section 5.4. The second property is more easily proved:

\[ \exists x' \cdot \text{Retr}_1' \land O_{P_1} \]
\[ \equiv \{ \text{definitions } \}
\[ \exists x' \cdot D_1' \land D' \land x_1' = \text{just}\, S \, x' \land D \land D' \land \text{pred}_1 \]
\[ \equiv \{ \text{D and } D' \text{ independent of } x'; \text{the } S \text{ is inverse of } \text{just}\, S \}
\[ (\exists x' \cdot D_1' \land \text{the } S \, x_1' = x' \land \text{pred}_1) \land D \land D' \]
\[ \equiv \{ \text{one point rule for existential quantifier } \}
\[ \text{pred}_S[\text{the } S \, x_1' / x] \land \text{pred}_1[\text{the } S \, x_1' / x'] \land D \land D' \]
\[ \Leftarrow \{ \text{first conjunct follows from } D'; \text{property of substitution } \}
\[ \text{pred}_1[\text{the } S \, x_1 / x] \land \text{the } S \, x_1' / x' \land x_1 = \text{just}\, S \, x \land D \land D' \]
\[ \Leftarrow \{ \text{definitions } \text{AdO}_{P_1} \text{ and } \text{Retr}_1, \text{add conjunct } \}
\[ \text{pre}\, O_{P_1} \land \text{AdO}_{P_1} \land \text{Retr}_1 \]

Of course the proof for the second viewpoint is completely analogous.

\section*{5.2 Operation unification is refinement}

The operation unification \textit{UnOp} of two operations \textit{AdO}_{P_1} and \textit{AdO}_{P_2} as defined in section 4.3 should be a refinement of each of the operations. In order for it to be a least common refinement, it should
Weaken the precondition no more than is necessary, which implies that the precondition of \( \text{UnOp} \) should be the disjunction of the preconditions of \( \text{AdOp}_1 \) and \( \text{AdOp}_2 \). We will establish a condition for this to be true first.

We write \( \text{pre}_1 \), for \( \text{pre}_{\text{AdOp}_1} \), etc for clarity in the following calculation, and assume for simplicity that the operations have no input or output:

\[
\text{pre}_{\text{UnOp}} \equiv \{ \text{definition pre} \ \}
\]
\[
\exists \text{State} \cdot (\text{pre}_1 \lor \text{pre}_2) \land (\text{post}_1 \land \text{post}_2)
\]
\[
\equiv \{ \ \ \text{pre}_1 \text{ and } \text{pre}_2 \text{ do not refer to State} \ \\
(\text{pre}_1 \lor \text{pre}_2) \land \exists \text{State} \cdot (\text{pre}_1 \land \text{post}_1) \land (\text{pre}_2 \land \text{post}_2)
\]
\[
\equiv \{ \ \ \text{case analysis on } \text{pre}_1 \text{ and } \text{pre}_2:} \\
\exists \text{State} \cdot \text{pre}_1 \Rightarrow \text{post}_1 \text{ holds by definition of pre} \ \\
(\text{pre}_1 \lor \text{pre}_2) \land \exists \text{State} \cdot (\text{pre}_1 \land \text{pre}_2) \Rightarrow \text{post}_1 \land \text{post}_2
\]
\[
\equiv \{ \ \ \text{pre}_1 \text{ and } \text{pre}_2 \text{ do not refer to State} \ \\
(\text{pre}_1 \lor \text{pre}_2) \land (\text{pre}_1 \land \text{pre}_2) \Rightarrow \exists \text{State} \cdot \text{post}_1 \land \text{post}_2)
\]

In other words, the precondition of the union is only the disjunction of the preconditions if both postconditions can be satisfied when both preconditions are. This is an essential condition which will form part of our consistency check. In fact, it will turn out to be a condition for the union to be a common refinement of the operations, and it is useful to give it a name. The extension to include input and output parameters is straightforward.

**Definition 31** Operations \( A \) and \( B \), operating on the same state space \( \text{State} \), both with input \( x?: X \) and output \( y!: Y \), are said to be **operation consistent** iff

\[
\forall \text{State}; \ x?: X \cdot \text{pre } A \land \text{pre } B \Rightarrow \exists \text{State} \cdot y!: Y \cdot \text{post } A \land \text{post } B
\]

In order to show that \( \text{UnOp} \) is a common refinement of \( \text{AdOp}_1 \) and \( \text{AdOp}_2 \), it suffices to give only the half of the proof for one viewpoint. Because this step involves no change of state space, we only need to prove the two conditions for operation refinement, again omitting universal quantifications:

1. \( \text{pre}_{\text{AdOp}_1} \Rightarrow \text{pre}_{\text{UnOp}} \)
2. \( \text{pre}_{\text{AdOp}_1} \land \text{UnOp} \Rightarrow \text{AdOp}_1 \)

The first condition is only true if the **operation consistency** condition holds, see the calculation of \( \text{pre}_{\text{UnOp}} \) above (and then it is a one line proof). The second is easily proved using the fact that the predicate part of an operation schema \( A \) can be given as \( \text{pre } A \land \text{post } A \)

### 5.3 Unification is least

The final step of the least common refinement proof is showing that the unification is a **least** common refinement. This will be done by showing that an **arbitrary** refinement of both viewpoints is necessarily a refinement of the unification.

Suppose an ADT with state schema \( E \) and operation schema \( \text{Opp} \) also form a (data) refinement of both viewpoint specifications \( (D_1, \text{Init}_1, \{\text{Op}_1\}) \) and \( (D_2, \text{Init}_2, \{\text{Op}_2\}) \), and that the state of \( E \) is
given by the \( \text{fresh} \) variable \( y \). This means that two retrieve relations exists, let us assume they are given by \((i=1, 2)\)

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Retr}_i \\
D_i; E \\
\text{retr}_i
\end{align*}
\]

The assumption that these are data refinements translates into assumptions we can use in proofs:

1. \( \text{pre} \ O_{p_1} \land \text{Retr}_1 \Rightarrow \text{pre} \ O_{pp} \)
2. \( \text{pre} \ O_{p_1} \land \text{Retr}_1 \land \text{O}_{pp} \Rightarrow \exists x' \cdot \text{Retr}_1 \land \text{O}_{p_1} \)

We now prove that, under these assumptions, \((E, EInit, \{O_{pp}\})\) is a data refinement of \((D, U_{nInit}, \{U_{nOp}\})\). Thus we have to find some retrieve relation \( \text{Retr}_{ED} \) such that\(^9\)

1. \( \text{pre} \ U_{nOp} \land \text{Retr}_{ED} \Rightarrow \text{pre} \ O_{pp} \)
2. \( \text{pre} \ U_{nOp} \land \text{Retr}_{ED} \land \text{O}_{pp} \Rightarrow \exists x' \cdot x' \land \text{Retr}_{ED} \land \text{U}_{nOp} \)

Our choice for that retrieve relation is the following schema.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Retr}_{ED} \\
D; E \\
\text{retr}_1[\text{the} S \ x_1/x] \lor \text{retr}_2[\text{the} T \ x_2/x]
\end{align*}
\]

(The main motivation for this particular choice is that it works.)

Now we prove the two properties. For the first we leave out universal quantification over \( y \), the “concrete state”.

\[
\forall x_1; x_2 \cdot \text{pre} \ O_{pp} \iff \text{pre} \ U_{nOp} \land \text{Retr}_{ED}
\]

\[
\equiv \quad \{ \text{assuming operation consistency} \}
\]

\[
\forall x_1; x_2 \cdot \text{pre} \ O_{pp} \iff (\text{pre} \ Ad_{Op_1} \lor \text{pre} \ Ad_{Op_2}) \land \text{Retr}_{ED}
\]

\[
\equiv \quad \{ \text{definition of } \text{Retr}_{ED} \}
\]

\[
\forall x_1; x_2 \cdot \text{pre} \ O_{pp} \iff (\text{pre} \ Ad_{Op_1} \land D \land E \land \text{retr}_1[\text{the} S \ x_1/x]) \lor (\text{pre} \ Ad_{Op_2} \land D \land E \land \text{retr}_2[\text{the} T \ x_2/x])
\]

\[
\equiv \quad \{ \text{definition of } \text{pre} \ Ad_{Op_i} \text{ and state consistency} \}
\]

\[
translation \ (x_1, x_2) := (\text{just} S \ x_1, \text{just} T \ y)
\]

\[
\forall x; y \cdot \text{pre} \ O_{pp} \iff (\text{pre} \ O_{p_1} \land D \land E \land \text{retr}_1) \lor (\text{pre} \ O_{p_2} \land D \land E \land \text{retr}_2)
\]

\[
\equiv \quad \{ \text{definition of } \text{Retr}_i; \text{assumptions} \}
\]

\[
\text{true}
\]

\(^9\)The contribution of the initialisations in “least” is omitted here – it should be obvious that the conjunction used in definition 28 indeed generates the “least” initialisation, given that the ordering used is implication.
The second proof is a quite complicated one. We are asked to prove that \( \forall x_1; x_2; y \cdot P \Rightarrow (\exists x_1'; x_2' \cdot P \Rightarrow (\exists x_1''; x_2'' \cdot Q) \) for certain predicates \( P \) and \( Q \). The proof proceeds by first showing how \( \exists x_1'; x_2' \cdot P \) can be rewritten as \( \exists x_1''; Q \lor \exists x_1''; Q_2 \). Then we do a case introduction on \( P \) such that \( P = (P_1 \lor P_2) \) and we show that \( (i=1, 2) \forall x_1; x_2; y \cdot P_i \Rightarrow (\exists x_1''; Q_i) \) follows from the assumption that \( E \) is a refinement of the \( i \)-th viewpoint, which then completes the proof.

\[
\exists x_1'; x_2' \cdot \text{Retr ED} \land \text{UnOp}
\]
\[
\equiv \quad \{ \text{definition UnOp, assuming operation consistency } \}
\]
\[
(\exists x_1'; x_2' \cdot \text{Retr ED} \land \text{AdOp}_1) \lor (\exists x_1''; x_2'' \cdot \text{Retr ED} \land \text{AdOp}_2)
\]

The simplifications of these disjuncts will be completely analogous so we show only one:

\[
\exists x_1'; x_2' \cdot \text{Retr ED} \land \text{AdOp}_1
\]
\[
\equiv \quad \{ \text{definition of Retr ED and AdOp}_1 \}
\]
\[
\exists x_1'; x_2' \cdot D' \land E' \land (\text{ret}_1 \{\text{pre}_1; x_1' \}) \land D \land x_1 \in \text{ran justS } \land x_1' \in \text{ran justS } \land \text{pred}_1^1 \{\text{theS} x_1'; x_1' / x'\}
\]
\[
\equiv \quad \{ \text{assuming state consistency, translate } x_1' := \text{justS } x' \}
\]
\[
\exists x' \cdot D_1 \land E' \land \text{ret}_1 \land D \land x_1 \in \text{ran justS } \land \text{pred}_1^1 \{\text{theS} x_1 / x\}
\]
\[
\equiv \quad \{ \text{definition of Retr}_1 \}
\]
\[
\exists x' \cdot \text{Retr}_1 \land D \land x_1 \in \text{ran justS } \land \text{pred}_1^1 \{\text{theS} x_1 / x\}
\]

The antecedent (we called it \( P \) in the proof overview above) of the universal quantification can be rewritten in the form \( P_1 \lor P_2 \) as follows:

\[
\text{pre UnOp} \land \text{Retr ED} \land \text{Op}
\]
\[
\equiv \quad \{ \text{assuming operation consistency } \}
\]
\[
(\exists x_1 \in \text{ran justS } \land \text{pre AdOp}_1 \land \text{Retr ED} \land \text{Op})
\]
\[
\lor \quad (\exists x_2 \in \text{ran justT } \land \text{pre AdOp}_2 \land \text{Retr ED} \land \text{Op})
\]

Now we show that each of the disjuncts in the antecedent \( (P_i) \) proves one of the disjuncts in the consequent \( (Q_i) \). Again these two proofs are completely analogous, so only one is given.

\[
\forall x_1; x_2; y \cdot \text{pre AdOp}_1 \land \text{Retr ED} \land \text{Op}
\]
\[
\Rightarrow \exists x' \cdot \text{Retr}_1 \land D \land x_1 \in \text{ran justS } \land \text{pred}_1^1 \{\text{theS} x_1 / x\}
\]
\[
\equiv \quad \{ \text{assuming state consistency, translate } x_1 := \text{justS } x \}
\]
\[
\forall x; y \cdot \text{pre AdOp}_1 \land D \land E \land \text{ret}_1 \land \text{Op}
\]
\[
\Rightarrow \exists x' \cdot \text{Retr}_1 \land \text{pred}_1 \land D_1
\]
\[
\equiv \quad \{ \text{definition Retr}_1, \text{assumption } \}
\]
true

This concludes our proof that every common refinement of the viewpoints is a refinement of the unification, and thus the unification is indeed a least common refinement.
5.4 Concluding remarks on the algorithm

The proofs above have shown that our unification algorithm produces a least common refinement when three relatively simple conditions are satisfied: initialisation consistency, operation consistency and state consistency.

Operation consistency appears to be sufficient and necessary for a common refinement of two operations on the same state to exist. However, it can only be established once there is a unified state, so state unification really has to come first. Thus, indirectly operation consistency also depends on the choice of correspondence relation. The same holds for initialisation consistency, which can be viewed as a degenerate case of operation consistency.

State consistency, however, is certainly not a necessary condition. The following example demonstrates this.

Example 32 We return to the state schemas and correspondence rules used in example 23 and before. Unifying $D_1 \equiv \mathbb{Z} \mid 1 \leq x \leq 5$ and $D_2 \equiv \mathbb{Z} \mid \exists z: \mathbb{N} \bullet x = z + z$ with default relabelling and implicit correspondence relation $\text{id}_\mathbb{Z}$ yields $D \equiv \mathbb{Z} \mid (y, \{2, 4\})$. This violates the state consistency condition, for example for $x=1$, $(1, 1)$ is in the correspondence relation, the predicate of $D_1$ holds, but that of $D_2$ does not. However, if the only operation defined on both viewpoints is

$$\text{Togg} \\ x + x' = 6$$

then the unification is a refinement of both original specifications. This is because the new state space $D$ is closed under the operations $\text{Togg}$. 

△

Apparently a condition weaker than state consistency would also suffice. The condition we are looking for is that if a before-state is linked to a unified state by the state unification’s retrieve relation, a possible corresponding after-state should also be linked to the unified state by that retrieve relation. State consistency guarantees this condition, by making sure the correspondence relation does not link legal with illegal values. Another option would be to demand that all operations “respect” the correspondence relation, but this would give a quantification over all present and future operations. Also, that would make state unification dependent on operations, which seems to introduce a circular dependency.

So, now we know that state consistency is formally too strong, is it a problem to impose it as a condition on state unification? We should probably let our interpretation come to the rescue here. In general, in Z data refinement it is not necessary for every abstract state to be represented by a concrete state. However, in the examples we have considered so far, the data types defined in the viewpoints included only meaningful values that would be just as meaningful in the unification. For a unified state space not to represent some values of a viewpoint state space just seems wrong in our interpretation. This is exactly what state consistency prevents. Thus, state consistency may be formally too strong for checking that a unification is a refinement, in our interpretation it is the right condition even when it is not formally necessary. A methodological advantage of using the state consistency condition is that it simplifies the unification process: state unification can be done mostly independently of operation unification. A new operation may be added to both viewpoints at any later point without the possible consequence of invalidating state unification – however, if new operations fail their operation consistency checks, this may still indicate that the correspondence relation was not chosen correctly. Obviously a certain way of guaranteeing state consistency is to define $R$ not on $S \times T$ but on its subset $\{x:S \mid \text{pred}_x\} \times \{x:T \mid \text{pred}_T\}$.

The fact that our unification is the least common refinement whenever it exists, and the many properties that hold of Z refinement as a partial order, strongly suggest that when the unification is not a refinement of the viewpoints, no common refinement satisfying the given correspondence relation exists, so an inconsistency between the viewpoints has been found.

27
6 Variations and extensions to the algorithm

We have given an algorithm in the previous sections, essentially to unify two viewpoint specifications, each of which consists of a number of state schemes with their operation schemas. In this section we describe some ways of extending and adapting this algorithm to make it usable in more situations and part of a multiple viewpoints software development model.

6.1 Deriving correspondences

Apart from giving explicit or default correspondence relations, there may in some cases be another way of establishing a correspondence relation. This method, similar to a common way of establishing (bi-)simulations between process algebraic specifications, starts from the requirement of initialisation consistency. In the case where each initialisation determine a unique initial value, these values need to be related by the correspondence for initialisation consistency to hold. Operation consistency demands that for matching operations, values linked by the correspondence before the operation need to result in values linked by the correspondence afterwards. The smallest set satisfying these properties for all operations is a sensible correspondence relation.

6.2 More than two viewpoints

The properties of Z data refinement, in particular transitivity and the existence of a least common refinement (as proved in section 5), guarantee that the method of finding a unification of multiple viewpoints by an arbitrary sequence of binary unifications (cf. section 1.2) will indeed work for Z viewpoints. However, there is one important issue to be addressed: what correspondence relations will be needed for establishing consistency between \( n \) viewpoints?

It is clear that state unification using the default correspondences and default relabellings on compatible types is associative, in other words, the schemas resulting from any bracketing of the unification are semantically identical. For example, the three state schemas

\[
\begin{align*}
D_1: & x:S \\
\text{pred}_S & \\
D_2: & x:T \\
\text{pred}_T & \\
D_3: & x:V \\
\text{pred}_V &
\end{align*}
\]

(assuming \( S \cup T \cup V \) is well-defined) will be unified to

\[
D: \quad x:S \cup T \cup V \\
x \in S \Rightarrow \text{pred}_S \\
x \in T \Rightarrow \text{pred}_T \\
x \in V \Rightarrow \text{pred}_V
\]

no matter which order of unification is taken. In fact, it appears that in this situation it might be profitable not to do operation adaptation and operation unification on the intermediate state, but only on the three-way state unification.

The general case, however, is not as easy. We cannot expect the specifier to come up with correspondence relations in terms of the intermediate state spaces (which involve bottoms etc.), so all we can assume is that correspondence relations between viewpoint state spaces exist. So the general situation for \( n=3 \) is that we have

\[
\begin{align*}
D_1: & x:S \\
\text{pred}_S & \\
D_2: & x:T \\
\text{pred}_T & \\
D_3: & x:V \\
\text{pred}_V &
\end{align*}
\]
with correspondence relations $R_{12} \subseteq S \times T$, $R_{13} \subseteq S \times V$, $R_{23} \subseteq T \times V$. In order to unify a state and a unified state, we have to derive a new correspondence relation between them. The most obvious way of doing this is to assume that e.g. (for the case where $D_1$ and $D_2$ are unified first) $R_{12,3}$ is the smallest relation satisfying

$$(just \, S \, s, x) \in \text{tot} \, R_{12} \land \{s, v\} \in R_{13} \Rightarrow ((just \, S \, s, x), v) \in R_{12,3}$$

$$(x, justT \, t) \in \text{tot} \, R_{12} \land \{t, v\} \in R_{23} \Rightarrow ((x, justT \, t), v) \in R_{12,3}$$

However, for arbitrary initial correspondence relations the resulting three-way state unifications arising from different orders of unification are not even necessarily isomorphic.

**Example 33** In the general schema above, take all predicates to be true and let the sets be given by the one element free types $S := a$, $T := b$, $V := c$, and the correspondence relations by $R_{12} = \emptyset$, $R_{13} = \{(a, c)\}$ and $R_{23} = \{(b, c)\}$. Then $R_{12,3} = \{(\text{just} \, S \, a, \perpT), c\}, (\perpS , \text{just} \, T \, b), c\}$ and its totalisation is a two element set, but $R_{1,23} = \{(a, (\text{just} \, T \, b, \text{just} \, V \, c))\}$ and its totalisation will be a one element set.

Clearly extra conditions on the various correspondence relations are necessary for $n$-way correspondence relations to make sense – maybe we could even call this *correspondence consistency*. The situation becomes a little simpler if we only allow the specification of a minimal number of these correspondence relations, with all others derived from those. This certainly seems realistic when the viewpoints can be viewed to be in a sequence (probably of increasing level of detail) where for each viewpoint only the correspondences to the ones adjacent to it are necessary.

### 6.3 Local state components

State unification via correspondence relations unfortunately does not model all possible ways of composing state spaces. In particular, it is not immediately obvious how to model that components of a state space are local to their viewpoint, i.e. cannot be changed by operations from outside that viewpoint. This seems to be a consequence of the fact that the unification is a *least* refinement more than anything else. The empty correspondence relation does model the (inconsistent!) situation where state spaces are *completely* unrelated, but there the viewpoints turn out to *completely* exclude each other in the unification. Now consider the situation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>$D_1$</th>
<th>$D_2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$x:S$</td>
<td>$x:T$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\text{pred}_S$</td>
<td>$y:V$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

where we really want only a correspondence between the two components labelled $x$. Given $R \subseteq S \times T$, how do we construct a sensible correspondence $R' \subseteq S \times (T \times V)$? The obvious solution is not to restrict the $y$ component at all, i.e. to have

$$(s, (t, v)) \in R' \Leftrightarrow (s, t) \in R \land \text{pred}_{TV}[t/x, v/y]$$

However, an operation adapted from $D_1$ to the unified state will now change the $x$ components, but also allow the $y$ component to be changed to an arbitrary value satisfying $\text{pred}_{TV}$ – not necessarily the value of $y$ before. This is an unavoidable effect of the fact that the unification is “least” cf. [10]. We are not aware of a correspondence relation which would come closer to allowing $y$ to be a genuine local component. Given the correspondence relation $R'$ and the state space it induces, there are some ways of varying the operation *adaptation* which will bring the “local component” interpretation a little closer. For simplicity, assume $R$ is total, so we can assume the unified state space to be
Possible alternative adaptations of an operation given by

\[
\begin{align*}
D \\
x_1:S; x_2:T; y:V \\
(x_1, x_2) \in R \\
pred_S[x_1/x] \\
pred_{TV}[x_2/x]
\end{align*}
\]

include one which forces the \( y \) component to change \textit{only} if it needs to:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Ad} \\
\Delta D \\
pred_1[x_1/x, x_1'/x'] \\
(\exists z: T \cdot (x_1', (z, y)) \in R') \Rightarrow y' = y
\end{align*}
\]

which will be a refinement\(^\text{10}\), but not a least refinement in general; or one which does not allow the \( y \) component to change at all:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Ad} \\
\Delta D \\
pred_1[x_1/x, x_1'/x'] \\
y' = y
\end{align*}
\]

which is not even a refinement if \( \text{pred}_{TV}[x_2'/x] \) does not hold whenever \( \text{pred}_{TV}[x_2/x] \) does.

The best solution we can offer (in the above situation) is for the \textit{second} viewpoint to include operations

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Op} \\
\Delta D_2 \\
y' = y
\end{align*}
\]

for all operations \( \text{Op} \) from the \textit{first} viewpoint which should not affect local variables \( y \). The “strict behavioural” approach to extra operations (cf. section 2.3.2) amounts to stating that \textit{all} variables of one viewpoint are “local” for operations that only the other viewpoint offers.

The last example of an alternative operation adaptation shows that the issue of local state components is closely related to the “framing” problem, which is: how to specify what an operation is allowed to change and what it is supposed to keep unchanged. Partial solutions to this problem, in the context of partial specification in Z, are also discussed in [30].

\[^{10}\text{Provided state consistency holds.}\]

6.4 Partial specification of inputs and outputs

Due to the input/output condition on data refinement (cf. section 2.3.2), in operation unification we needed to assert that both operations had identical sets of inputs and outputs. This imposes a
limitation on partial specification: every specifier of (an aspect of) a particular operation needs to know all inputs and outputs of that operation, even those which are irrelevant and unused in that particular viewpoint. This might not be desirable or even realistic.

This problem can be removed by adopting a generalisation of data refinement, called IO-refinement [9]. This refinement relation allows adding inputs and outputs, provided the original outputs can be reconstructed from the new outputs. As a consequence of that, unification based on IO-refinement also allows different sets of inputs and outputs for the operations. The paper [9] also gives a formal motivation for IO-refinement: it is derived from the same abstract characterisation used in [42] to derive standard data refinement.

6.5 Consistency checking in a software development model

In this section we will sketch briefly how we envisage the use of constructive consistency checking through unification as a part of a software development model. More on this issue can be found in the extensive literature on the use of viewpoints in software engineering, e.g. [21, 24, 22] — though the emphasis there is on requirements engineering rather than on the development phase. Our particular approach to consistency handling in a development situation is described in more detail in [6].

Clearly, in the initial specification phase viewpoints need to be developed mostly independently. Occasionally consistency checks can already be done, and in particular establishing correspondence relations early on seems sensible (similar to having data dictionaries). Architectural semantics and specification styles could provide guidelines for this (cf. section 8).

In the development phase, there are essentially two extreme options. One is to unify all viewpoint specifications first, and then develop the resulting unification. This guarantees a common implementation will be found if one exists, and that only one consistency check needs to be done. However, this also eliminates all the advantages of viewpoint specification in this phase. No matter how sophisticated our unification techniques will become, it remains likely that unifications will be complex and more unwieldy than traditional complete specifications. (Though they are still likely to be more correct due to the separation of concerns that viewpoint specification allows.)

The other extreme is to only use unification for consistency checking, and to develop the viewpoint specifications independently as far as possible. Because every development step potentially introduces an inconsistency (by choosing a refinement that is not “common”), consistency checking needs to be done relatively often. That makes this method more suitable for situations where the overlap between the viewpoints is relatively small. Combining these two extremes, a rough guideline would be to unify early where there is much overlap between the viewpoints, and to develop independently where there is little. Additionally, there are approaches [24] which allow for development to continue in the presence of a (temporary) inconsistency.

Thus far we have only described a linear (or tree-like) development process, with success or failure at the end of it, depending on the outcome of the final consistency check. The discovery and resolution of inconsistencies will add iterations to the development process. Not every inconsistency discovered is a serious error in specification or development. For example, there may be no serious problem if an operation’s precondition is restricted in the unified state space because of conditions imposed through another viewpoint (“restrictive co-refinement” in the terms of [2], cf. section 7.1). This will often be the desirable effect, and this can usually be resolved by restricting the viewpoint operation or even the state space it operates on in the initial specification, or by reducing the correspondence relation. Another example is given in the case study of our techniques in [7], where operation consistency holds only if a “free” constant of the specification has a trivial value. Such restrictions change the meaning of the initial specification, though in the light of the discussion in section 6.1 the correspondence relation may in some cases be viewed as derived from the specification.
7 Related issues and approaches

7.1 Viewpoint amalgamation and co-refinement

An approach very similar to ours is the one advocated by Ainsworth, Wallis, et al [1, 3, 2]. They use the term amalgamation for what we call unification, and union for what we call operation unification. Their state unifications are driven by ad-hoc reasoning [1] or by retrieve relations [2] – the latter are fairly close to our correspondence relations. This can be observed from the retrieve relations we used in the proofs in section 5: together these contain exactly the same information as the correspondence relation.

An important concept in their approach is co-refinement [3]. They claim that ordinary refinement (for example in Z) is too restrictive to be used in viewpoint specification, because it does not allow viewpoints to put restrictions on operations in other viewpoints. Using co-refinement instead of refinement amounts to maintaining a predicate which represents these restrictions, and which needs to be satisfiable for co-refinement to hold. Comparing this to our approach, part of these predicates would indeed show up as inconsistencies; others will be part of non-trivial correspondence relations. Having such a predicate also gives increased possibilities for incremental specification.

7.2 Specification by views: non-functional correspondence relations

The method of specification by views as advocated by Daniel Jackson [30] is very similar to viewpoint specification. The arguments in favour are similar to ours: separation of concerns, with a special emphasis on the possibility of having multiple co-existing representations of states. Such multiple representations are linked by invariants which fulfill the same role as our correspondence relations. The views are linked in a syntactically simple way: by defining a new state space consisting of the view state spaces restricted by the invariant. This has as a side effect that the combined views do not necessarily relate as well semantically to the original views. In terms of this paper, the combined state space is the correspondence relation rather than its totalisation, so when the invariant is not total some operations may not be refined because some of their after values have been excluded in view composition. An extensive comparison of these methods may be found in our paper [10], we will present part of an example here.

So far in this paper all correspondence relations (except in example 13) have actually been injective functions. We can incorporate (and generalise) Jackson’s method, and in general incorporate data type refinement, by using non-functional correspondence relations. As an example, we will present some of the editor example as used by Jackson, based on [41]. For more details of the specification, cf. [30, 10]. This example will also point out the semantical difference between the two methods.

Example 34 (Two views of an editor) One way of specifying the state space of an editor is the following.

```
File
left, right: seq Char
```

The sequence left describes all the characters to the left of the cursor, and right all those to the right of it. One operation on this view is inserting a character:

```
insetChar

File
c?: Char
left = left \cup \{c?\}
right = right
```
In the second view on editors, the Grid view, the state is a sequence of sequences of limited length, each constituent sequence representing a line, with a cursor position. This allows specification of operations like moving the cursor down.

\[
\text{Grid lines: seq seq Char}
\]

\[
x, y: \mathbb{N}
\]

\[
pred_{\text{Grid}}
\]

where \(pred_{\text{Grid}}\) ensures that lines is a correctly wrapped sequence of lines of limited length with \((x, y)\) a sensible cursor position in that grid. A non-immediate consequence of this predicate is that no word can be longer than the maximum line length, because it cannot then be correctly wrapped.

The predicate linking the views has both views in its signature, so one way of representing it is as the schema

\[
[\text{Editor} \mid \text{File}, \text{Grid}]
\]

\[
\text{left} \cap \text{right} = \cap /\text{lines} \wedge \\
\#\text{left} = x + \sum (i: 1 \ldots y-1 \cdot \#\text{lines}[i])
\]

This states that both views should represent the same text, and that the cursor positions should match: left should be as long as all of the lines before line \(y\) together, plus all of line \(y\) up to column \(x\).

In view composition, this is all the information we need. The schema Editor acts as the unified state space, to which we can now adapt the operations, for example

\[
\text{insertChar}E \equiv [\Delta \text{Editor} \mid \text{insertChar}]
\]

This ensures that a corresponding Grid for the new File will be found. However, using Editor as the unified state tacitly excludes some of the values from the original views. In particular, any File with a word longer than the maximum line length is excluded because there is no corresponding Grid for it. This has a serious semantic effect. Editor with insertCharE is not a data refinement of Grid with insertChar. A state where a word only just fits on a line is still in Editor, but the state after adding one more character is not, thereby excluding the former one from pre insertCharE.

In viewpoint composition, this problem can be resolved. Because the invariant is not total on the File state space, some bindings of File will get linked to \(\perp\), using the invariant as the correspondence relation. The resulting state space, after some renaming, is:

\[
[\text{File and Grid}]
\]

\[
(x_1: \text{File} \quad x_2: \text{Grid} \quad (x_1, \text{the Grid} \ x_2) \in R \cap (x_2 = \perp_{\text{Grid}} \wedge x_1 \in \text{Longwordfiles})]
\]

where \(R\) is the relational representation of the invariant, and \(\text{Longwordfiles}\) the set of “forbidden” Files. The adaptation of insertChar to this state space will be a data refinement.

\[\square\]

In general, data refinements and other relations between state spaces can be incorporated in viewpoint unification, by taking the predicates involved as the basis of correspondence relations. This yields all the advantages of view composition and data refinement, often without introducing their disadvantages. A formal justification of this can be found in [10].
7.3 Demonic join and feature interaction

Desharnais, Frappier, Mili and others [11, 25, 26] study a calculus (lattice) of binary relations with a refinement relation which has great similarities to operation refinement in Z. In their framework, our “operation unification” appears as “demonic join”, which is only defined if a consistency condition (our operation consistency) holds. They use the term “program construction by parts” [25] for what we call viewpoint- or partial specification. In their recent work [26] they demonstrate that this approach can also be used to investigate the problem of feature interaction. Features (e.g. of a telephone system) can only be combined without interaction when their demonic join is well-defined. In our approach, each feature would be a separate viewpoint (operation).

7.4 Conjunction as composition

Zave and Jackson describe in several papers [43, 44] a multiparadigm specification technique, with impressive applications in specifications of telephone switching systems. Their work is similar to ours in that it uses Z and other languages for partial specification. For consistency checking, they use a translation of all specifications to first order predicate logic. Composition of partial specifications is then “just” conjunction [43]. In our approach to unification in Z and between Z and other languages, at some level of interpretation composition is also conjunction – however, as we have argued in [6], we prefer not to work at this level for reasons of traceability.

A particular concern mentioned in [44]:

“There is no general method for establishing inter-specification consistency in the presence of shared state components.”

we believe is one of the main issues that has been addressed, and partially solved, in the current paper.

7.5 Others

Approaches in which Z specifications are augmented with specifications in other formalisms can also be viewed as specifications with multiple viewpoints, which may have consequences similar to those described in our work on comparing viewpoints in LOTOS and Z [17, 15]. However, most methods that combine Z with some other language manage to avoid the consistency issue by the use of layering techniques, or by using the various languages in different stages of development [28, 35]. Kasurinen and Sere [33], for example, in their integration of Z and action systems use a layering technique, Z providing the types and operations to be used in the action systems descriptions.

Other viewpoint methods [22] generally do not base their notion of consistency on development relations. Partly this is due to the fact that they use languages which are less formal or development oriented than the ones we use. Consistency is often determined by explicit consistency relations on and between the viewpoints [23], based on overlap identification (akin to our correspondences) and similarity analysis. Unification, however, also seems a useful process for consistency checking in requirements engineering [14].

8 Future work

Promotion

An established method of combining state spaces and their operations in Z is that of framing and promotion. The actual promotion is where operations on components of a system get combined to form top level operations. Often so-called framing schemas are used in this, which ensure that uninvolved parts of the system remain unchanged. This technique can be profitably used for specifying viewpoints at different levels of abstraction, cf. the example of a telephone system in [30] or that of the dining philosophers in [18]. The latter example also shows that, provided it is used in a particular way (which
describes one viewpoint’s using “standard components” provided by another, consistency is almost guaranteed. We wish to further investigate how promotion-based specification styles can significantly reduce consistency checking obligations. The examples mentioned above, and the fact that promotion commutes with refinement [42] indicate this is a promising approach.

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