

UNKNOTTING OPERATIONS INVOLVING TRIVIAL TANGLES

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(Received September 6, 1989)

In this note we study knots and links in the 3-sphere S^3 . Our starting point is the first author's observation that any link can be transformed into the unlink (in fact unknot) by repeatedly altering a diagram of the link as shown in Fig. 1 (Theorem 3 (1)). We generalize this unknotting operation to n -string trivial tangles as shown in Fig. 2 and call such a diagrammatic change an $H(n)$ -move.

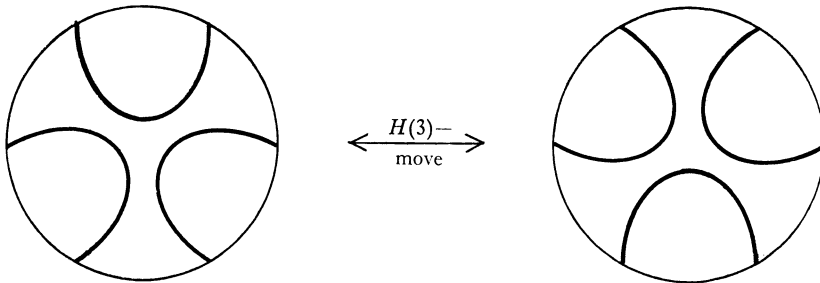


Fig. 1

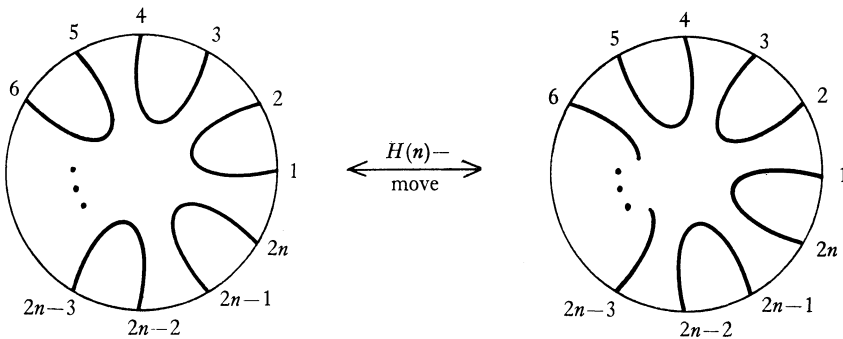


Fig. 2

* Supported in part by Grant-in-Aid for Encouragement of Young Scientists, Ministry of Education, Science and Culture.