

The Scattering Matrix

At “**low**” frequencies, we can completely characterize a **linear** device or network using an **impedance** matrix, which relates the currents and voltages at **each** device terminal to the currents and voltages at **all** other terminals.

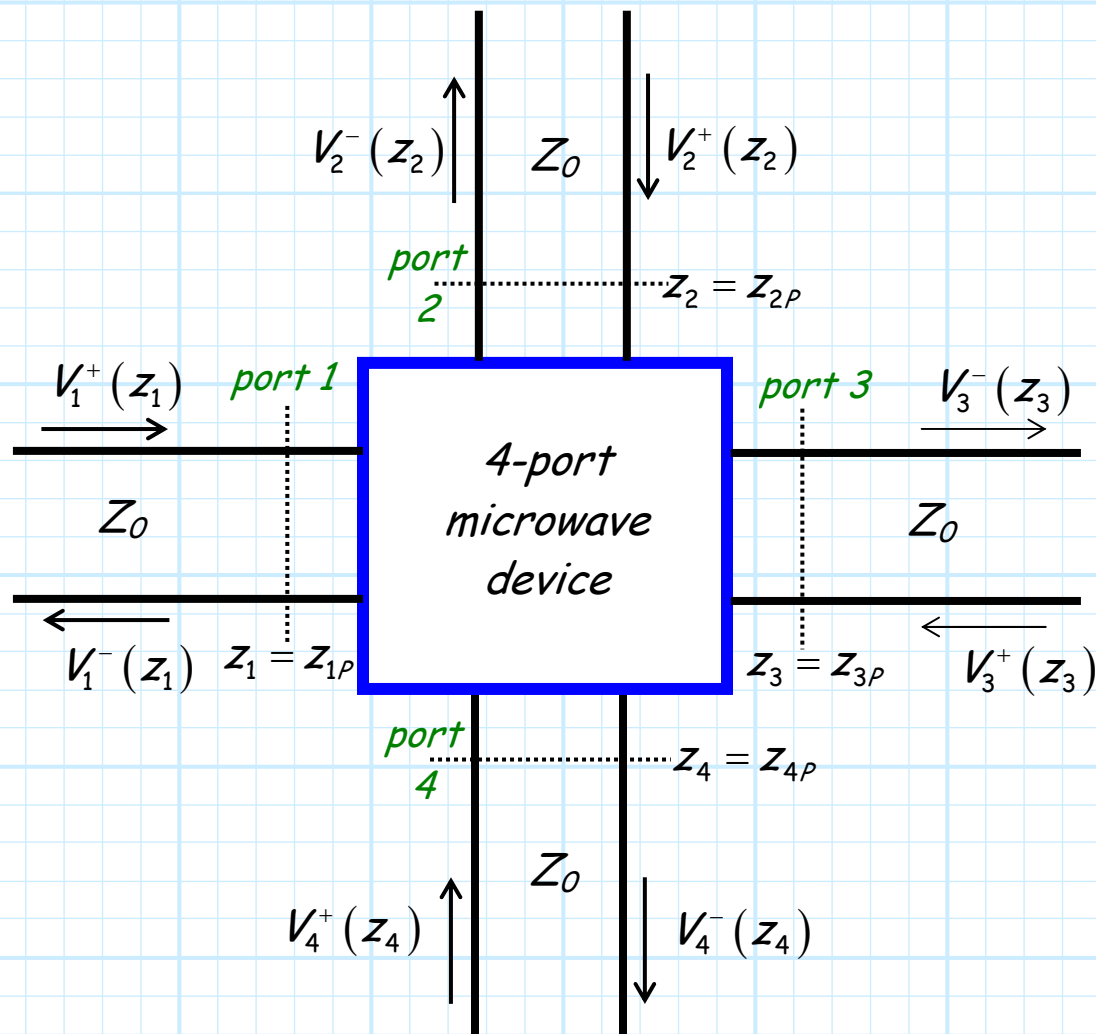
But, at microwave frequencies, it is **difficult** to measure total currents and voltages!



- * Instead, we can measure the **magnitude** and **phase** of each of the two transmission line **waves** $V^+(z)$ and $V^-(z)$.
- * In other words, we can determine the relationship between the incident and reflected wave at **each** device terminal to the incident and reflected waves at **all** other terminals.

These relationships are completely represented by the **scattering matrix**. It **completely** describes the behavior of a linear, multi-port device at a **given frequency** ω , and a given line impedance Z_0 .

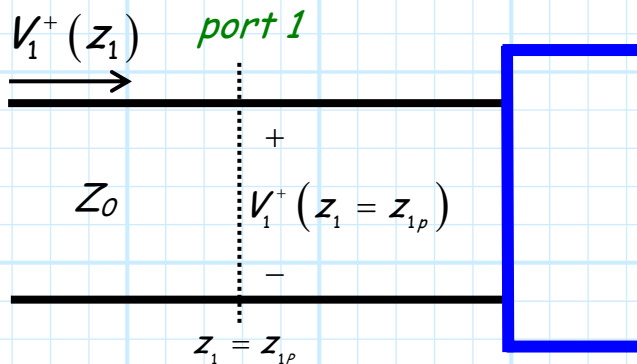
Consider now the **4-port** microwave device shown below:



Note that we have now characterized transmission line activity in terms of incident and "reflected" waves. Note the negative going "reflected" waves can be viewed as the waves **exiting** the multi-port network or device.

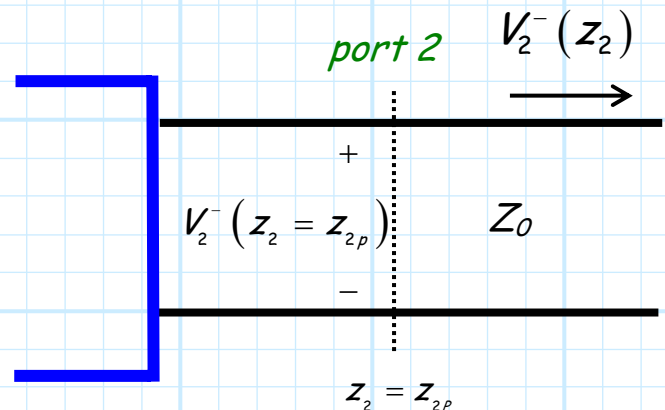
→ Viewing transmission line activity this way, we can fully characterize a multi-port device by its **scattering parameters**!

Say there exists an **incident wave on port 1** (i.e., $V_1^+(z_1) \neq 0$), while the incident waves on all other ports are known to be **zero** (i.e., $V_2^+(z_2) = V_3^+(z_3) = V_4^+(z_4) = 0$).



Say we measure/determine the voltage of the wave flowing **into port 1**, at the port 1 **plane** (i.e., determine $V_1^+(z_1 = z_{1p})$).

Say we then measure/determine the voltage of the wave flowing **out of port 2**, at the port 2 plane (i.e., determine $V_2^-(z_2 = z_{2p})$).



The complex ratio between $V_1^+(z_1 = z_{1p})$ and $V_2^-(z_2 = z_{2p})$ is known as the **scattering parameter** S_{21} :

$$S_{21} = \frac{V_2^-(z_2 = z_{2p})}{V_1^+(z_1 = z_{1p})} = \frac{V_{02}^- e^{+j\beta z_{2p}}}{V_{01}^+ e^{-j\beta z_{1p}}} = \frac{V_{02}^-}{V_{01}^+} e^{+j\beta(z_{2p} + z_{1p})}$$

Likewise, the scattering parameters S_{31} and S_{41} are:

$$S_{31} = \frac{V_3^-(z_3 = z_{3p})}{V_1^+(z_1 = z_{1p})} \quad \text{and} \quad S_{41} = \frac{V_4^-(z_4 = z_{4p})}{V_1^+(z_1 = z_{1p})}$$

We of course could **also** define, say, scattering parameter S_{34} as the ratio between the complex values $V_4^+(z_4 = z_{4p})$ (the wave **into** port 4) and $V_3^-(z_3 = z_{3p})$ (the wave **out of** port 3), given that the input to all other ports (1,2, and 3) are zero.

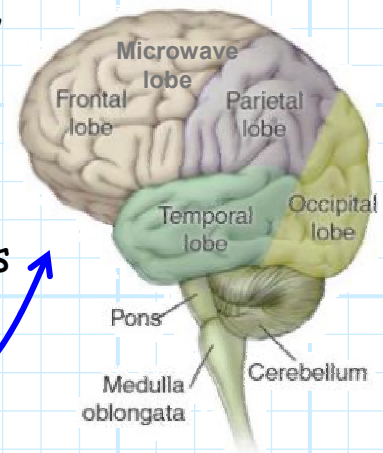
Thus, more **generally**, the ratio of the wave incident on port n to the wave emerging from port m is:

$$S_{mn} = \frac{V_m^-(z_m = z_{mp})}{V_n^+(z_n = z_{np})} \quad (\text{given that } V_k^+(z_k) = 0 \text{ for all } k \neq n)$$

Note that frequently the port positions are assigned a **zero** value (e.g., $z_{1p} = 0$, $z_{2p} = 0$). This of course **simplifies** the scattering parameter calculation:

$$S_{mn} = \frac{V_m^-(z_m = 0)}{V_n^+(z_n = 0)} = \frac{V_{0m}^- e^{+j\beta 0}}{V_{0n}^+ e^{-j\beta 0}} = \frac{V_{0m}^-}{V_{0n}^+}$$

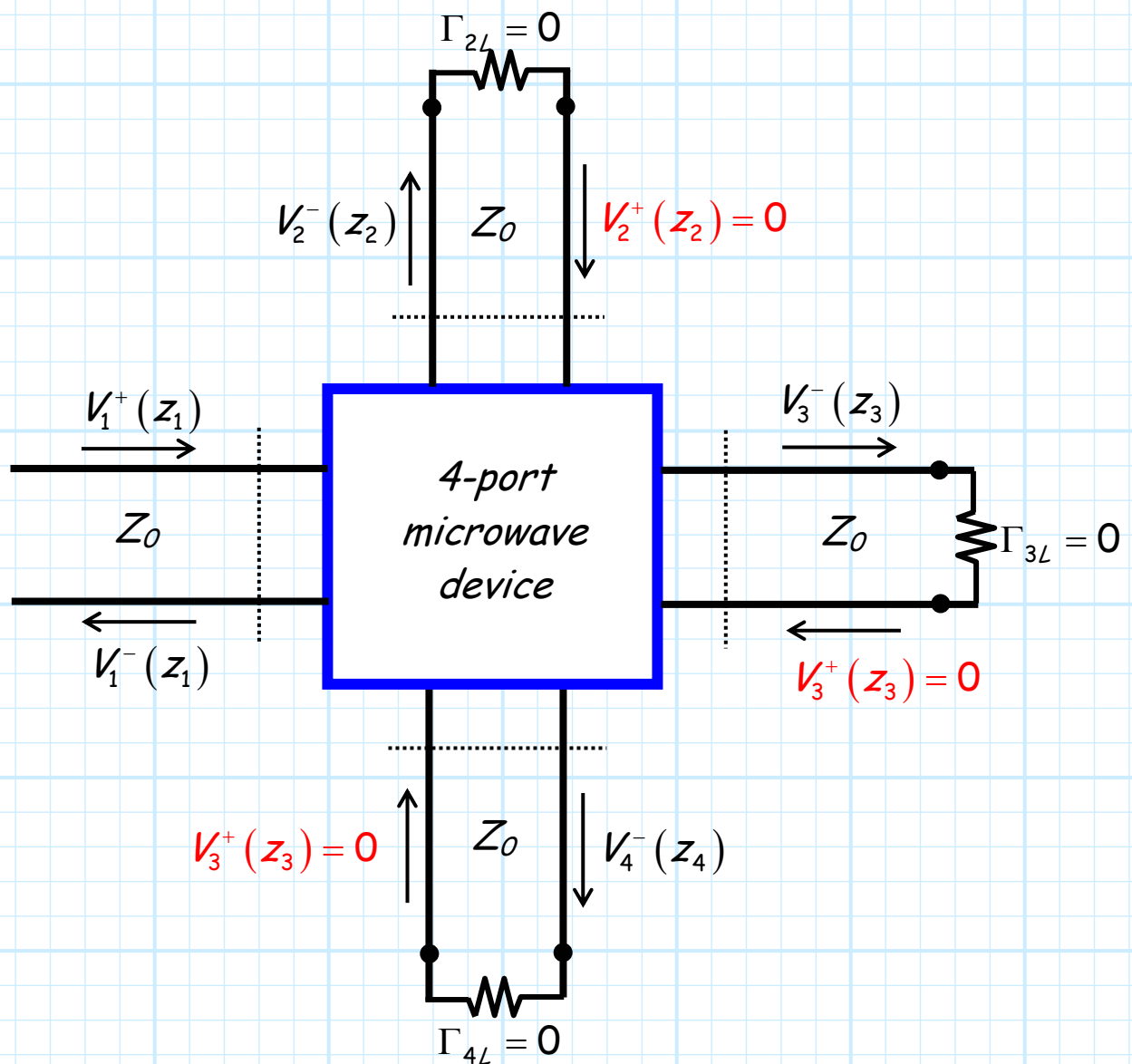
We will **generally assume** that the port locations are defined as $z_{np} = 0$, and thus use the **above** notation. But **remember** where this expression came from!





Q: But how do we ensure that *only one* incident wave is non-zero?

A: Terminate all other ports with a matched load!



Note that if the ports are terminated in a **matched load** (i.e., $Z_L = Z_0$), then $\Gamma_{nL} = 0$ and therefore:

$$V_n^+(z_n) = 0$$



In other words, terminating a port ensures that there will be **no signal** incident on that port!

Q: *Just between you and me, I think you've messed this up! In all previous handouts you said that if $\Gamma_L = 0$, the wave in the **minus** direction would be zero:*

$$V^-(z) = 0 \quad \text{if} \quad \Gamma_L = 0$$

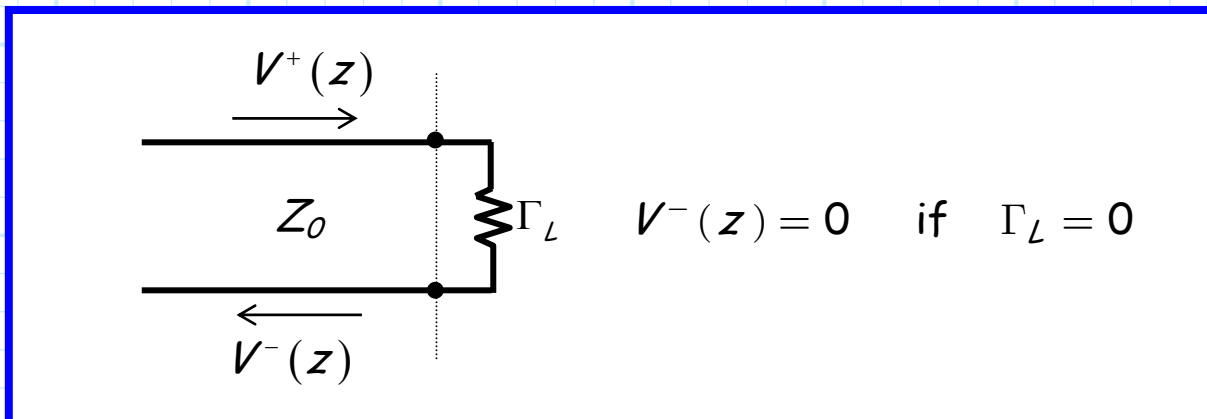
*but just **now** you said that the wave in the **positive** direction would be zero:*

$$V^+(z) = 0 \quad \text{if} \quad \Gamma_L = 0$$

*Of course, there is **no way** that **both** statements can be correct!*

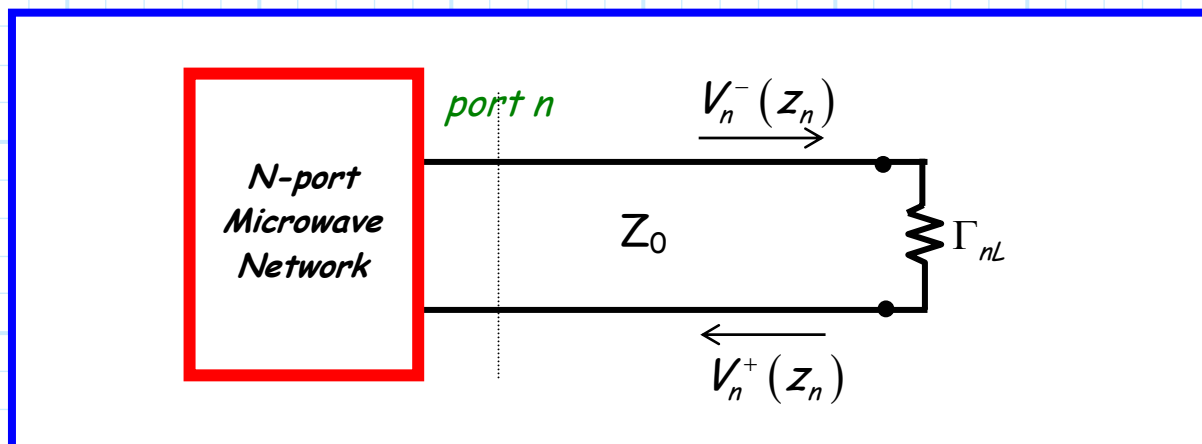
A: Actually, **both** statements are correct! You must be careful to understand the **physical definitions** of the plus and minus directions—in other words, the propagation directions of waves $V_n^+(z_n)$ and $V_n^-(z_n)$!

For example, we **originally** analyzed this case:



In this original case, the wave **incident** on the load is $V^+(z)$ (**plus** direction), while the **reflected** wave is $V^-(z)$ (**minus** direction).

Contrast this with the case we are **now** considering:

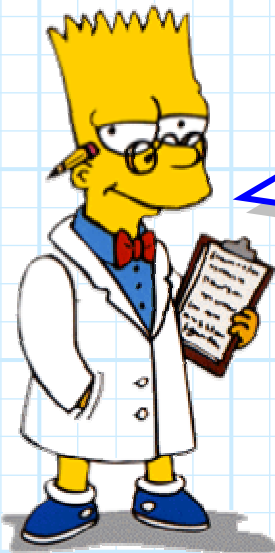


For this current case, the situation is **reversed**. The wave incident on the load is **now** denoted as $V_n^-(z_n)$ (coming **out** of port n), while the wave reflected off the load is **now** denoted as $V_n^+(z_n)$ (going **into** port n).

As a result, $V_n^+(z_n) = 0$ when $\Gamma_{nL} = 0$!

Perhaps we could more **generally** state that for some load Γ_L :

$$V^{\text{reflected}}(z = z_L) = \Gamma_L V^{\text{incident}}(z = z_L)$$



*For each case, **you** must be able to correctly identify the mathematical statement describing the wave **incident** on, and **reflected** from, some passive load.*

*Like most equations in engineering, the **variable names** can **change**, but the **physics** described by the mathematics will **not**!*

Now, **back** to our discussion of **S-parameters**. We found that if $z_{np} = 0$ for all ports n , the scattering parameters could be directly written in terms of wave **amplitudes** V_{0n}^+ and V_{0m}^- .

$$S_{mn} = \frac{V_{0m}^-}{V_{0n}^+} \quad (\text{given that } V_k^+(z_k) = 0 \text{ for all } k \neq n)$$

Which we can now **equivalently** state as:

$$S_{mn} = \frac{V_{0m}^-}{V_{0n}^+} \quad (\text{given that all ports, except port } n, \text{ are **matched**)}$$

One more **important** note—notice that for the **matched** ports (i.e., those ports with **no** incident wave), the voltage of the exiting **wave** is also the **total** voltage!

$$\begin{aligned} V_m(z_m) &= V_{0m}^+ e^{-j\beta z_m} + V_{0m}^- e^{+j\beta z_m} \\ &= 0 + V_{0m}^- e^{+j\beta z_m} \\ &= V_{0m}^- e^{+j\beta z_m} \quad (\text{for all terminated ports}) \end{aligned}$$

Thus, the value of the exiting wave **at** each terminated **port** is likewise the value of the total voltage **at** those ports:

$$\begin{aligned} V_m(0) &= V_{0m}^+ + V_{0m}^- \\ &= 0 + V_{0m}^- \\ &= V_{0m}^- \quad (\text{for all terminated ports}) \end{aligned}$$

And so, we can express **some** of the scattering parameters equivalently as:

$$S_{mn} = \frac{V_m(0)}{V_{0n}^+} \quad (\text{for matched port } m, \text{ i.e., for } m \neq n)$$

You might find this result **helpful** if attempting to determine scattering parameters where $m \neq n$ (e.g., S_{21} , S_{43} , S_{13}), as we can often use traditional **circuit theory** to easily determine the **total** port voltage $V_m(0)$.

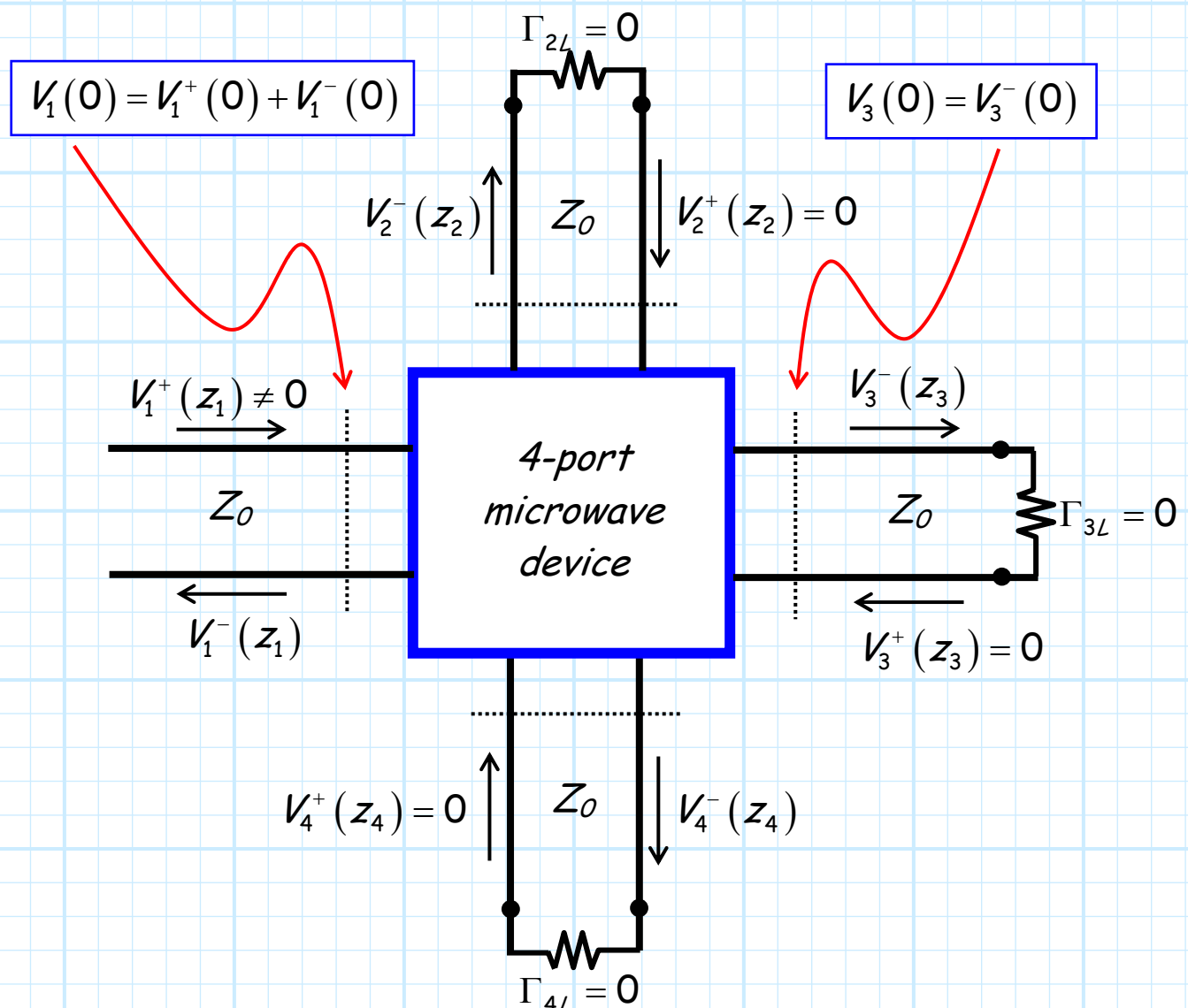
However, we **cannot** use the expression above to determine the scattering parameters when $m = n$ (e.g., S_{11} , S_{22} , S_{33}).



Think about this! The scattering parameters for these cases are:

$$S_{nn} = \frac{V_{0n}^-}{V_{0n}^+}$$

Therefore, port n is a port where there actually **is** some incident wave V_{0n}^+ (port n is **not** terminated in a matched load!). And thus, the total voltage is **not** simply the value of the exiting wave, as **both** an incident wave and exiting wave exists at port n .



Typically, it is **much** more difficult to determine/measure the scattering parameters of the form S_{nn} , as opposed to scattering parameters of the form S_{mn} (where $m \neq n$) where there is **only** an **exiting** wave from port m !

We can use the scattering matrix to determine the solution for a more **general** circuit—one where the ports are **not** terminated in matched loads!



Q: *I'm not understanding the importance scattering parameters. How are they useful to us microwave engineers?*

A: Since the device is **linear**, we can apply **superposition**. The output at any port due to **all** the incident waves is simply the coherent **sum** of the output at that port due to **each** wave!

For example, the **output** wave at port 3 can be determined by (assuming $z_{nP} = 0$):

$$V_{03}^- = S_{34} V_{04}^+ + S_{33} V_{03}^+ + S_{32} V_{02}^+ + S_{31} V_{01}^+$$

More **generally**, the output at port m of an N -port device is:

$$V_{0m}^- = \sum_{n=1}^N S_{mn} V_{0n}^+ \quad (z_{nP} = 0)$$

This expression can be written in **matrix** form as:

$$\bar{\mathbf{V}}^- = \bar{\bar{\mathbf{S}}} \bar{\mathbf{V}}^+$$

Where $\bar{\mathbf{V}}^-$ is the **vector**:

$$\bar{\mathbf{V}}^- = [V_{01}^-, V_{02}^-, V_{03}^-, \dots, V_{0N}^-]^T$$

and $\bar{\mathbf{V}}^+$ is the vector:

$$\bar{\mathbf{V}}^+ = [V_{01}^+, V_{02}^+, V_{03}^+, \dots, V_{0N}^+]^T$$

Therefore $\bar{\bar{\mathbf{S}}}$ is the **scattering matrix**:

$$\bar{\bar{\mathbf{S}}} = \begin{bmatrix} S_{11} & \cdots & S_{1n} \\ \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\ S_{m1} & \cdots & S_{mn} \end{bmatrix}$$

The scattering matrix is a N by N matrix that **completely characterizes** a linear, N -port device. Effectively, the scattering matrix describes a multi-port device the way that Γ_L describes a single-port device (e.g., a load)!



But **beware!** The values of the scattering matrix for a particular device or network, just like Γ_L , are **frequency dependent!** Thus, it may be more instructive to **explicitly** write:

$$\bar{\bar{\mathbf{S}}}(\omega) = \begin{bmatrix} \mathcal{S}_{11}(\omega) & \cdots & \mathcal{S}_{1n}(\omega) \\ \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\ \mathcal{S}_{m1}(\omega) & \cdots & \mathcal{S}_{mn}(\omega) \end{bmatrix}$$

Also realize that—also just like Γ_L —the scattering matrix is dependent on **both** the **device/network** and the Z_0 value of the **transmission lines connected** to it.

Thus, a device connected to transmission lines with $Z_0 = 50\Omega$ will have a **completely different scattering matrix** than that same device connected to transmission lines with $Z_0 = 100\Omega$!!!