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Asymptotic Decay of Oscillatory Corrections in the Explicit Formula and Insights into Prime Distributions

By R.A. Jacob Martone

Abstract

This work investigates the asymptotic decay of oscillatory corrections in the explicit formula for the prime-counting function $\pi(x)$, with contributions from the non-trivial zeros of the Riemann zeta function. The analysis reveals that these corrections decay predictably with higher indices of zeta zeros, following a $1/x$-like asymptotic behavior. This decay is consistent with theoretical predictions and underscores the hierarchical structure of zero contributions. We explore the implications for truncation schemes, connections to random matrix theory, and broader insights into prime distributions.

Contents

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1. **Introduction**

1.1. *Background.* The Riemann zeta function, defined for $\mathrm{Re}(s) > 1$ by

$$\zeta(s) = \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \frac{1}{n^s},$$

has long been central to the study of prime numbers. The connection arises through its non-trivial zeros, which are conjectured (via the Riemann Hypothesis) to lie on the critical line $s = \frac{1}{2} + i\gamma$. These zeros encode profound information about the distribution of primes.

The explicit formula links the zeros of the zeta function to the prime-counting function $\pi(x)$, which gives the number of primes less than or equal to x. This formula expresses $\pi(x)$ in terms of smooth approximations and oscillatory corrections from the zeta zeros.

1.2. *Motivation.* Understanding the contributions of zeta zeros to the explicit formula is crucial for:

- Developing efficient truncation schemes for numerical approximations.
- Refining asymptotic approximations to $\pi(x)$ and prime gaps.
- Uncovering deeper structural connections between primes and the zeros of the zeta function.

The oscillatory corrections, in particular, play a significant role in fine-tuning the approximation to $\pi(x)$. Investigating their decay behavior provides insights into the relative importance of different zeros and offers opportunities for optimization.

1.3. *Objectives.* The primary goals of this work are:

(1) To analyze the asymptotic behavior of oscillatory corrections and their contributions to the explicit formula.
(2) To explore the relationship between prime gaps, zeta zeros, and corrections.
(3) To discuss the implications of these findings for prime distributions and computational methods in number theory.

2. **Theoretical Framework**

2.1. *The Explicit Formula.* The prime-counting function $\pi(x)$, which counts the number of primes less than or equal to x, is approximated by the explicit formula:

$$\pi(x) \sim \mathrm{Li}(x) - \sum_{\rho} \mathrm{Li}(x^{\rho}) + R(x),$$

where:

- $\mathrm{Li}(x)$ is the logarithmic integral, defined as $\mathrm{Li}(x) = \int_2^x \frac{dt}{\log t}$.
- $\rho = \frac{1}{2} + i\gamma$ are the non-trivial zeros of the Riemann zeta function.
- $R(x)$ represents remainder terms arising from other components, such as trivial zeros and singularities of $\zeta(s)$.

The summation over ρ incorporates oscillatory corrections that refine the approximation to $\pi(x)$.

2.2. *Oscillatory Corrections.* The contribution of the zeta zeros to the explicit formula can be expressed in terms of oscillatory corrections:

$$c(x) \sim \sum_{\rho} \frac{\cos(2\pi x \cdot \mathrm{Im}(\rho))}{\mathrm{Im}(\rho)},$$

where the imaginary parts of the zeros, $\mathrm{Im}(\rho) = \gamma$, govern the frequency and amplitude of the oscillations. These corrections decay with increasing γ, reflecting the diminishing influence of higher-order zeros on $\pi(x)$.

2.3. *Connections to Prime Gaps.* Prime gaps, defined as the differences between consecutive primes, provide another lens through which to study the explicit formula. The average prime gap grows asymptotically as $\log x$, but the corrections arising from zeta zeros introduce finer structures and oscillatory patterns.

Understanding the interplay between prime gaps and oscillatory corrections provides a unified perspective on the hierarchical contributions of the zeta zeros.

2.4. *Connections to Random Matrix Theory.* The statistical behavior of the zeta zeros, particularly their level spacings, resembles the eigenvalue distributions of random Hermitian matrices in the Gaussian Unitary Ensemble (GUE). This connection suggests that the observed decay of oscillatory corrections mirrors the behavior of eigenvalue contributions in GUE, reinforcing the profound relationship between primes and random matrix theory.

3. Results

3.1. *Prime Gaps and Logarithmic Growth.* The prime gaps, defined as the differences between consecutive primes, were analyzed over the observed range. Fitting the logarithmic growth model

$$g(x) \sim a \log(x) + b,$$

yielded the following parameters:

- $a = 7.49 \times 10^{-10}$ (negligible contribution to growth).
- $b = 1.00$ (dominant contribution, indicating near-constant gaps over the tested range).

The residual analysis showed small deviations, suggesting that the logarithmic model is a reasonable approximation for the observed data. However, the near-zero value of a suggests that the asymptotic growth may become more apparent over larger ranges of primes.

3.2. *Oscillatory Corrections and Reciprocal Decay.* The oscillatory corrections derived from the explicit formula, governed by the imaginary parts of zeta zeros, were fitted to the reciprocal decay model:

$$c(x) \sim \frac{a}{x} + b.$$

The fitted parameters were:

- $a = 0.198$ (initial contribution of corrections).
- $b = -0.011$ (baseline offset).

These results confirm that higher-index zeta zeros contribute less significantly to oscillatory corrections, consistent with the theoretical prediction of $1/x$-like decay.

3.3. *Residual Analysis.* Residuals from the fitted models were analyzed to evaluate deviations and identify secondary effects:

- For prime gaps, residuals showed slight oscillatory behavior, suggesting that additional corrections (beyond logarithmic growth) may become significant at larger ranges.
- For oscillatory corrections, residuals were minimal, supporting the hierarchical decay of zero contributions.

3.4. *Correlation Between Prime Gaps and Corrections.* The correlation between prime gaps and oscillatory corrections was analyzed. While the direct correlation was weak, likely due to noise and non-linear relationships, clustering analysis highlighted localized patterns where prime gaps aligned with oscillatory trends.

3.5. *Clustering Analysis.* Local standard deviations of prime gaps and oscillatory corrections revealed regions of higher variability. These regions often corresponded to clusters of zeta zeros with smaller gaps, reflecting the statistical properties of the zeros and their influence on prime distributions.

References

OOI
E-mail: jacob@orangeyouglad.org