

# Need and competition in word formation and where to find data to study them

## Word formation

Morphological theory is concerned not only with the structure of existing complex words but also with morphological productivity (Baayen 2001, Bauer 2001, Nishimoto 2004, Lüdeling/Evert 2005, Meibauer/Gutropf/Scherer 2004 and many others).

There are two aspects of morphological productivity

the 'availability' or 'qualitative productivity':

Which morphological processes are available in a language?

the 'profitability' or 'quantitative potential':

How many complex words have been produced by a given process P?

How likely is it that P will produce more words in the future?

How does the potential of a rule change over time?

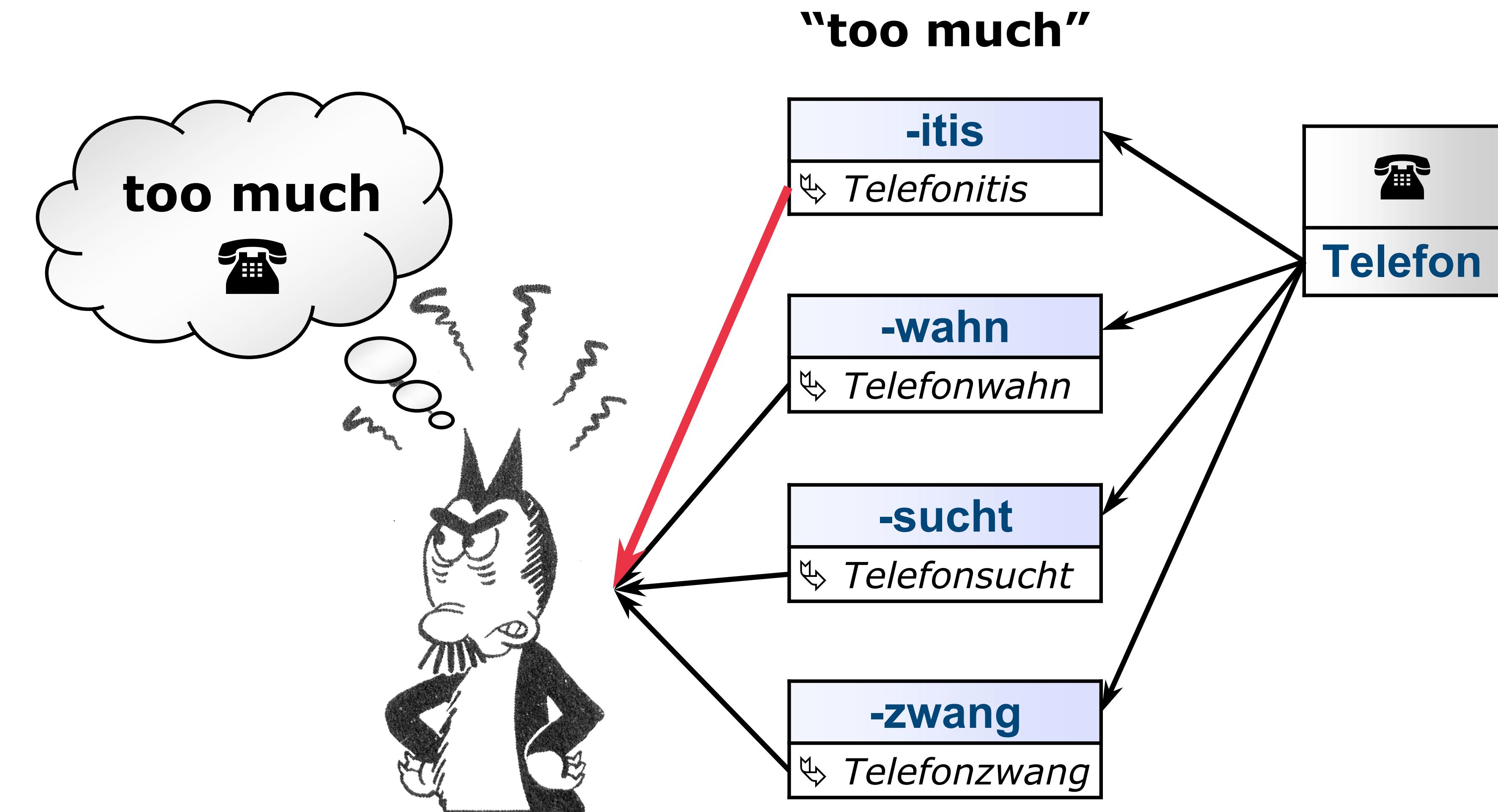
Studies of the quantitative potential use frequency data from corpora, mostly focussing on the frequency distribution of the words formed by a given process, and especially on low-frequency data.

## Need – extralinguistic

"Die Möglichkeit zur Bildung von Zuss. aus zwei Substantiven ist unbegrenzt. Ob solche aber wirklich gebildet werden, hängt natürlich vom Bedürfnis ab." (Paul 1920, 15)

"The possibility to form noun-noun compounds is unlimited. Whether they are actually formed, however, depends on the need."

"Words are only formed as and when there is a need for them [...]" (Bauer 2001, 143).



, Liftboys , Berühmtheiten , über <Telefonitis> und Kinder reicher Leute . Mascha Kaléko " hasse " : Die sich ausbreitende <Telefonitis> . Vor allem am Mt.Blanç , in Biel und au en Vortrag über Sexsucht ! Ob die <Telefonitis> wirklich mit der Edelsteintherapie zu be der Universität eine zunehmende " <Telefonitis> " zu beobachten . Sicher hat auch nieman keiten wie Raserei , Alkohol oder <Telefonitis> gibt es noch richtigen keine Vorstrafen en diese Szene bekannt vorkommt : <Telefonitis> ist ein Phänomen , das in den meisten Fa

Corpus data reflect both need and competition.

Measures of productivity computed from corpus data:

- ☞ cannot be interpreted as purely linguistic quantities
- ☞ are based on the misconception that it is possible to describe a single word-formation process without taking its competitors into account

## Our current approach

Control for influence of the need by studying a (nearly) exhaustive set of (nearly) synonymous affixes that can be used to express a certain need.

Study relative productivity of competing affixes.

Analysis of qualitative restrictions and contexts of usage for each of the competing processes helps to predict differences in relative productivity under certain conditions (such as stylistic factors or precise semantics of the need).

## Competition – linguistic

The need can often be satisfied in several ways. All morphological and syntactic ways of expressing the need compete with each other: 'Y-ing too much' – {Y-besessenheit, Y-hysterie, Y-itismus, Y-sucht, Y-wahn, Y-zwang}

Ich spreche bewusst von **Arbeits-Sucht** und nicht von Workaholism. In dem Ausspruch: "Ich bin ein Workaholic" fehlt in der Regel die Einsicht in die Krankheit.

"I consciously speak of work-addiction and not about workaholism. Someone who says 'I'm a workaholic' typically does not understand that he is ill"

[...] im Plädoyer für den Müßiggang können die LeserInnen im Diskussionsforum "Arbeit und Leben" Stellung beziehen und persönliche Alternativen zur **Arbeitsbesessenheit** aufzeigen.

"The readers of the discussion forum 'Work and Life' can add their comments on the 'Plea for Idleness' and discuss personal alternatives to work obsession."

Deswegen fördern wir als Arbeitsamt in Zukunft nur noch folgende Kurse: [...] fortgeschrittenes Faulenzen - psychologisches Training zum Abbau des verinnerlichten **Arbeitszwanges**.

"For this reason the employment centre will in the future only support the following courses: [...] advanced idling – psychological training in the reduction of the internalized work obsession"

**Arbeitssucht**, Spielsucht, Kaufsucht, **Telefonitis** – die Zahl der bekannten Abhängigkeiten wächst ständig.

"Work addiction, gambling addiction, shopping addiction, telephone mania – the number of known addictions is growing constantly."

Aber Vorsicht: hier lauern **Telefonsucht**, Fernsehsucht und Lesesucht.

"But be careful: telephone addiction, TV addiction and reading addiction are waiting."

In einer anderen Sequenz wird der **Telefonwahn** in Szene gesetzt und karikiert.

"In another sequence telephone mania is staged and caricatured."

All data from a German Web corpus collected by the WaCky initiative, see <http://wacky.sslmit.unibz.it/>

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