From the illegal migrant-criminal to the illegal migrant-invader: Critical analysis of the semantic change of the Greek term λαθρομετανάστης "illegal migrant"

Nikos Stamatinis, University of Patras, Department of Philology, Greece
Argiris Archakis, University of Patras, Departement of Philology, Greece
Villy Tsakona*, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Department of Early Childhood Education, Greece
*Corresponding author: villytsa@otenet.gr

Abstract

Following a critical discourse analysis (CDA) approach, the present study reports on the analysis of 49 texts from the Hellenic Parliament Proceedings, where the term λαθρομετανάστης "illegal migrant" is used. The texts under scrutiny date back to 2015 (i. e., the year the migration crisis reached its peak) and reveal the re-contextualized use of this term, which is identified with the hegemonic national-racist discourse of the 1990s perceiving migrants as criminals. Since the 1990s, the term has been stigmatized by political correctness as racist and inaccurate. We consider political correctness as a type of corrective practice, since it detects naturalized language uses reproducing stereotypes and power relationships. We will examine how the re-emergence of the older, racist use of the term in question as a reaction against the guidelines of political correctness is anew connected with national-xenophobic discourse and, in particular, with framing migrants as invaders and a national threat. Overall, tracing the semantic trajectory of the term λαθρομετανάστης "illegal migrant" allows us to explore how language use at the micro-level is dialectically connected with discourses at the macro-level.

1 Introduction

In 2015, Greece was faced with two huge challenges, while also dealing with an economic recession and the subsequent collapse of how the country saw itself at global stage. One of these challenges was the election of the Left to the government and their tough negotiation with the country's creditors and the European Union; the other was the migration crisis.[1] During the

latter, the country found itself in the middle of an emergency, as it had to choose between two management policies: the policy of accepting migrants and the policy of excluding them. For legitimatizing each of the above ways of management, corresponding discourses were reproduced.

In this paper, we contribute to the study of political communication in the Greek context and follow a critical discourse analysis (CDA) approach by tracing the semantic trajectory of the Greek term λαθρομετανάστης "illegal migrant" to refer to the migrants Greece received in 2015.

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1   We acknowledge that the terms μετανάστης/immigrant and πρόσφυγας/refugee do not have the same meaning. If, however, the distinction between them is based on the *need* some people have to move to a new place for various reasons, it is likely that the subtle, technical differences between the two terms are not that important and the critical question concerns how they are treated

in the host communities. Therefore, in this study we will not insist on distinguishing between the terms μετανάστης/immigrant and πρόσφυγας/refugee and will use the terms *migrant* and *migration* throughout.

More specifically, we explore the public debates about the (in)appropriateness of the term through the dialectic relationship between the micro-level of personal linguistic choices and the macro-level of the discourses concerning the migration crisis and its management (Blommaert, 2005).

We consider that in the semantic trajectory of the Greek term λαθρομετανάστης "illegal migrant", a catalytic role was played by political correctness, which we will approach as a linguistic *corrective practice* (Moschonas, 2005) and as a form of *verbal hygiene* (Cameron, 1995). Assuming that the generalized use of a lexical item is supported by hegemonic discourses, we will investigate how, through the attempt of a corrective intervention, political correctness highlights the hegemonic, naturalized discourse hiding behind the generalized use of the term in question and simultaneously suggests a new term attempting to avoid the racist content of the previous one.

In the end, taking into consideration the corrective interventions of political correctness as well as the various sociopolitical circumstances in Greece, we examine the use of the term in a corpus of 49 texts from the Hellenic Parliament Proceedings, classifying the distribution of the term per political party. In other words, we examine how political correctness ideologically stigmatized the term, so that it ended being used only by specific political parties. Then, we will analyze the co-texts in which this term appears, comparing our conclusions with the existing bibliography concerning the use of the term in the 1990s. Our general aim is to examine how the term λαθρομετανάστης "illegal migrant" as a means to refer to migrant populations was recontextualized (at the micro-level), and eventually how using or avoiding it was linked to the opposing discourses concerning the migration crisis (at the macro-level).

2   Theoretical background

In the present study, we follow the approach and theoretical assumptions of critical discourse analysis (CDA). CDA traces and scrutinizes *discourses*, namely representations of reality from specific points of view (Fairclough, 2003; Kress, 2010). Relevant studies focus mainly on institutional, political, and media texts, because "these texts have a broad distribution, while they constitute the most important source based on which we form our perception of social and political reality" (Stamou, 2014, p. 152).

A basic CDA assumption is that discourse practices and social practices are constantly in interaction (Archakis, 2020; Blommaert, 2005; Cooke & Simpson, 2012, p. 118; Zotzmann & O'Regan, 2016, p. 114). The research objective of CDA is to examine how texts cover up or even incubate social discrimination phenomena such as sexism and racism (Fairclough, 1995, p. 217). In other words, in the center of its attention is the point of view of those who are denigrated and marginalized by those in positions of power. CDA thus studies the reproduction of social control, dominance, social discrimination, and social inequalities in general through discourse (see among others Benwell & Stokoe, 2006, p. 105; Fairclough, 1989, 1992; Stamou, 2014; van Dijk, 2008; Wodak, 2011).

One of the most important research areas of CDA involves the dialectic relationship between the macro-level and the micro-level (Bennett, 2018, p. 3; Benwell & Stokoe, 2006, pp. 44–45; Blommaert, 2005, p. 25; Stamou, 2014, pp. 149–150; van Dijk, 2008, pp. 87–88). At the macro-level, one traces the discourses with their value standards and their dictates (social, linguistic, educational, etc.). Hence, at the macro-level we can detect, *inter alia*, the dominant national-xenophobic discourse. At the micro-level, one detects the various social (linguistic, communicative, semiotic, etc.) choices, practices, and eventually positionings of speakers toward the discourses of the macro-level (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 591). It could therefore be suggested that the macro-level, formed by dominant discourses, constitutes the *structure* which defines and limits *agency* at the micro-level (Giddens, 1984). The macro- and micro-levels are not considered to

be two distinct poles of a vertical dichotomy (Blommaert, 2015). This distinction is employed only for analytical purposes, given that during social practices the two levels are constantly intertwining: agency at the micro-level is framed and fueled by discourses at the macro-level, which are either reinforced or questioned through agency (Baxter, 2016; Horner & Bellamy, 2016, pp. 322–326; Macgilchrist, 2007).

The proposed analysis is based on the premise that discourses about migrants are often considered as ways to legitimize and justify the policies for the integration of the latter in the nation-state or their exclusion from it. In the present study, at the macro-level, we detect the discourses concerning the Greek management policies for the migration crisis of 2015. In particular, we draw on the distinction made by Triandafyllidou (2018, pp. 14–15) between two opposing discourses. The first one advocates the moral obligation and solidarity the country is expected to show towards migrants by highlighting their experiences (see also De Fina, 2020). Against it, rises a second discourse according to which migrants are a threat and should therefore be excluded. In other words, the *moral obligation/solidarity* discourse stands against the *threat/exclusion* one. We will connect the latter with the national-xenophobic discourse, which dominates public debates since the 1990s and seeks for a "solution" to the "problem of the influx of immigrants" (Christopoulos, 2020). The *moral obligation/solidarity* discourse will be linked with the pro-migrant, humanitarian discourse, in which "the people moving are seen as victims" (Triandafyllidou, 2018, p. 14).

In the light of the distinction between the two discourses at the macro-level, we trace the semantic trajectory of the Greek term λαθρομετανάστης "illegal migrant" at the micro-level, from the beginning of the 1990s until about the mid-2010s, and then we examine its uses in Greek parliamentary discourse. Emphasis is placed on the debates about how the term is used, that is, on its recontextualizations through its dialectic relationship with the above-mentioned discourses about migration. The corrective practices of political correctness play a significant role in such recontextualization.

3 Political correctness as a corrective practice

Cameron (1995, p. 127) observes that for most people the content of the term *political correctness* depends on context. Political correctness is an especially complex phenomenon, the characteristics of which have changed radically during the past few decades (Hughes, 2010). An important step in conceptualizing the phenomenon is drawing a distinction between political correctness and its myth (Wilson, 1995). As myth of political correctness we consider every perception of it as the result of conspiracy processes and organized networks that impose a *thought police*. This mythology is constructed via circulating made up or real stories about its extreme interventions and stigmatization of linguistic and other behaviors. Moreover, the myth was constructed owing to the representation of political correctness as triggering *moral panic* mainly in the American public sphere (Cameron, 1995).

In the present study, we will not examine the myth of political correctness *per se*. Instead, we perceive political correctness as a process that concerns language. We define political correctness as a field correlating language to ideology in the context of corrective practices. Moschonas (2005) suggests that corrective practices almost always take the form of corrective guidelines. Indeed, the supporters of political correctness explicitly state the need to replace the "wrong" word that contains negative evaluations, with a new "right" one, which does not contain negative evaluations. Cameron (1995, pp. 143–147) mentions as a typical example the contrast between the "forbidden" words *black* or (the even more offensive) *nigger* and the politically correct word *African-American*. The first two words are chosen when describing a group of people based on their skin color. This gives the impression of a supposedly objective representation of

reality, although it is actually a way to approach and classify this group in the light of a hegemonic discourse. The politically correct term, on the contrary, is suggested as appropriate for replacing the previous terms by emphasizing the history and the roots of the community rather than the skin color of its members. As Cameron (1995, p. 145) observes,

> the meaning of such a gesture has to be understood in the context of history: for a group brought to America as slaves and until very recently denied the rights of American citizens, this assertion of identity also represents a claim of the uprooted to historical roots ("African") and of the historically unequal to full equality ("American").

The ultimate aims of political correctness are speakers' compliance with the corrective guideline and their avoidance of racist, offensive, etc. language uses. The main goal of such corrective processes is to highlight that naturalized lexical items imposed by the hegemonic discourse of the white, Western, wealthy and heterosexual man are not at all neutral but negatively stigmatized in a way that they marginalize specific social groups. As already pointed out, political correctness is, first of all, a practice related to language and, more specifically, to the use of lexical items, as it introduces new terms or redefines previous ones. In this respect, it falls under the linguistic phenomenon of *renaming*, that is, the change of the signifier of a signified by using another new or preexisting signifier (Xydopoulos, 2008, p. 271).

At the same time, the social and historical circumstances which give birth to specific language uses and meanings are highlighted through the corrective practices of political correctness.[2] Corrective practices function as interventions at the micro-level of specific hegemonic language uses with the aim of stigmatizing

them, and reveal the hegemonic discourse that fuels them at the macro-level. For ease of comprehension, the process of political correctness is described below in the form of specific stages / steps:

› First, activist organizations and intellectuals detect a lexical (or grammatical) item carrying offensive or degrading connotations for specific social groups. An effort is thus made to restrict the extent to which the item in question is acceptable as "neutral". In other words, the denaturalization of this lexical item is attempted (Blommaert, 2005, pp. 25–26).
› Then, a new, politically correct word is proposed to replace the old one. This new word is coined to question the evaluative connotations of the old one and eventually to assess the reality to which reference is made from a new point of view (Cameron, 1995). Coining new words next to old ones creates conflict inside the linguistic community, which is expressed by defending the old or the new word. Thus, choosing one word or the other is evaluatively / ideologically colored in a salient manner.
› The supporters of the new, politically correct word try to entrench the replacement of the old word by turning to official bodies and institutions or by propagating their positions through the press, arguing about the need to replace the old word with the new one (Fairclough, 2003, p. 21).

One of the first and most characteristic conflicts about politically correct uses of terms in Greek public discourse is the discussion concerning the "right" way to refer to migrants. In the beginning of the 1990s, the transformation of Greece from a country of emigrants into a host country for migrants (Karantinos, 2001) brought Greek society in front of a new reality. The population census of 1991 estimated that the migrant population in Greece was 161,000 people. Ten years later, according to Hellenic Statistical Authority data, the number of migrants in Greece increased

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2   In this sense, political correctness could be seen as an application of CDA's theoretical assumptions, on the grounds that CDA aims at highlighting social inequality as created, expressed, signified, and legitimatized in and through discourse.

to 761,813 (Kotzamanis, Agorastakis, Pilidis, & Stathakis, 2006).

4 The recent history of the Greek term λαθρομετανάστης "illegal migrant"

4.1 Illegal migrants as criminals: The generalized use of the term in the 1990s

The bigger the number of migrants a country hosts, the more hegemonic anti-migrant discourse becomes (Wodak, 2015). This was also the case with Greece during the 1990s, when the migration issue was considered to be a solvable problem. In the middle of the decade, and in the absence of an organized plan to handle the new situation, mainstream media, parliamentary parties, state and public authorities supported a xenophobic discourse including an exaggerated representation of the conditions of the undeclared work done by migrants and eventually their connection with criminality (Figgou, Sapountzis, Bozatzis, Gardikiotis, & Pantazis, 2011; Gropas & Triandafyllidou, 2005).

This criminalization of entire communities of migrants was organized mainly via using the term λαθρομετανάστης "illegal migrant" (Karydis, 2004, p. 216). Etymologically, the use of the Greek terms λαθρομετανάστευση "illegal migration" and λαθρομετανάστης "illegal migrant" attributes two different but interconnected characteristics to the process of migration: it is illegal and hence it is concealed. Λαθρομετανάστης "illegal migrant" is a compound word produced by the adjective λαθραίος "illegal, unlawful, latent, concealed" and the noun μετανάστης "(im)migrant". Migrants seem to retain the identity of the "illegal" not only when crossing the Greek borders, but also during the whole time they reside within them. Simultaneously, they retain the identity of the "latent" living out of state custody and welfare, since they live inside the Greek territory but, at the same time, they are at its margins. By using the term λαθρομετανάστης "illegal migrant", Greek speakers draw lines distinguishing *Us* from

the Others, the latter becoming unwanted on the grounds of being associated with criminality (King & Wood, 2001; Pavlou, 2001). Thus, they are deprived of the right to coexist on equal terms with the "legal" citizens of the country.

In an attempt to trace the semantic trajectory of the term λαθρομετανάστης "illegal migrant", we looked it up in some of the main dictionaries of Modern Greek. The entry is absent from the *Great dictionary of the whole Greek language* (Dimitrakos, 1936–1953), although several entries can be found in it having as their first component the adjective λαθραίος "illegal, unlawful, latent, concealed". The entry is not found either in the more recent *Dictionary of the Modern Greek language* (Stamatakos, 1952–1955). It cannot be detected either in the *Contemporary dictionary of the Modern Greek language* (1991). The word begins to show up as a separate entry in the two major dictionaries published in the second half of the 1990s: *Dictionary of Modern Greek* (Babiniotis, 1998) and *Dictionary of Standard Modern Greek* (1998). Finally, it appears in the most recent *Utilitarian dictionary of Modern Greek* (2014). It should be noted, however, that the term was not coined during the 1990s. It occurs in newspapers since the Interwar Period (Sarantakos, 2009). It appears that these are sporadic uses of the term and that its use became frequent and consistent much later, namely from the 1990s onwards. It therefore seems that an old word which is not particularly common was chosen to become one of the basic ways to refer to migrants who arrive in Greece initially from the Balkan area (mainly from Albania) and later on (i. e., 2015 onwards) from Muslim countries.

In early 1990s in Greece, not only were most migrants typically illegal and ignored by labor law, the state, and public opinion (Mousourou, 1991, p. 105), they were also linked with delinquency and criminality, as the use of the term λαθρομετανάστης "illegal migrant" shows. There is a great number of studies with data from the Greek press, which highlight exactly this connection (see among others Karydis, 1996, 2004; Konstantinidou, 2001; Kountouri, 2008;

Vamvakas, 1997). Karydis (2004, p. 216) in particular refers to a "process of criminalization and social construction of the migrant-criminal".[3] The problematization of the mass arrivals mainly of Albanian migrants is based on the correlation of these arrivals to the rise in criminality in Greece in line with a cause-and-effect logic. This arbitrary correlation was not based on any data but on stereotypes entrenched through media and political discourse and suggesting that migrants were criminally inclined (Archakis & Tsakona, 2021). In this context, the term λαθρομετανάστης "illegal migrant" has functioned as a linguistic means for explicitly expressing political positions against migrants and stigmatizing them as unwanted and dangerous for public security.

4.2 The corrective practice as a means for the stigmatization of the term

As discussed in section 4.1, the term λαθρομετανάστης "illegal migrant" emerged in the 1990s as a prevalent lexical way for reproducing the negative stereotype connecting migrants with criminality. De Fina (2020) observes that anti-migrant discourses are widespread and entrenched, resulting in migrants and their supporters trying to construct different representations of themselves through activist actions and through their participation in social networks and alternative media. In fact, in recent years alternative humanitarian discourses have become more and more accessible to the wider public and are constructed as a means of opposition to anti-migrant ones. In Greece, part of the effort to highlight alternative humanitarian discourses is political correctness including the corrective practices that aimed, and still aim, at eliminating the use of the term λαθρομετανάστης "illegal mi-

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3 Needless to say, linguistic expressions and terminology linking migrants to criminality have been employed in other linguocultural communities (see among others Mehan, 1997; Nelson & Davis-Wiley, 2018; Paspalanova, 2008; Pearson, 2010). Due to space limitations, however, we will not elaborate on the comparison between different languages and cultures in this paper.

grant" and at pinpointing and combating the respective racist stereotypes.

Early on, the occurrence of the term in extreme xenophobic contexts brought the first reactions against its use (Kountouri, 2008; Pavlou, 2001). As Pavlou (2001, p. 139) points out,

> [t]he expression ξένοι μετανάστες "foreign migrants" instead of λαθρομετανάστες "illegal migrants" appeared in the summer of 1998, initially on public mass media, as an attempt to control the hysteria that had developed during the previous months, and in view of a rationalizing attitude on the part of [state] administration but also of the Journalist's Union of Athens Daily Newspapers towards migrants.

As years go by, the stigmatization of the term becomes more frequent, initially among academics and pro-migration activist groups.

In this effort, and in a study conducted for the Hellenic Foundation for the European and Foreign Policy about Greek migration policy, Triandafyllidou (2005, p. 10) stresses her opposition to the term παράνομος μετανάστης "unlawful migrant", which she replaces with the term παράτυπος μετανάστης "irregular migrant", thus pointing out that "the only offense committed [by migrants] is the violation of the law concerning migration since they do not have the necessary documents for entering and residing in the country". In other words, the act of entering a country without documents is in fact illegal, although referring to an individual as "illegal" is inaccurate: committing a criminal offense does not make you an "illegal" person. This is the main argument used to highlight the inappropriateness of the term λαθρομετανάστης "illegal migrant" in the years to come.

The most organized attempt to eliminate the use of the term λαθρομετανάστης "illegal migrant" in institutional texts and mass media comes in the form of corrective guidelines by international organizations. Already since 1975, the United Nations General Assembly urged the organs of the United Nations (UN, 1975) and

the specialized agencies to use the term *non-documented migrant* or the term *irregular migrant workers* in every official document. This is one of the oldest corrective guidelines we could find concerning the most appropriate ways for referring to migrant populations, and which is obviously ignored in Greece in the 1990s, when the term λαθρομετανάστης "illegal migrant" becomes mainstream. The stricter guidelines concerning the inappropriateness of the terms that connect migration with criminality come to Greece much later, namely in late 2000s and early 2010s.

In a resolution, the European Parliament (2009, article 159) "calls on the EU institutions and Member States to avoid the term 'illegal immigrants', which has extremely negative connotations, and instead to refer to 'irregular / undocumented workers / migrants'".

The issue also concerns major international press agencies. In 2013, the Associated Press announced that they abandon the use of the term *illegal immigrant*, and any correlation of the adjective *illegal* as a defining characteristic of a person is deleted from the instruction manual (*AP Stylebook*)[4] and is only kept as a modifier of actions (Colford, 2013). Instead, expressions such *living in* / *entering a country illegally* or *without legal permission* are chosen.

Such interventions began to make their way into Greek public discourse, when the Commissioner for Human Rights Nils Muižnieks (2014, p. 1) in his letter to the then Greek Minister of Maritime Affairs, Miltiadis Varvitsiotis, makes suggestions as for the use of the term λαθρομετανάστης "illegal migrant", since

> [t]he choice of language is very important and the term "illegal migrant", widely used in European countries, including Greece, associates migrants with illegal acts under the criminal law. I am very much in favor of using the term "irregular migrant", and "irregular migration", given that this is more neutral

and does not carry the stigmatization of the term "illegal". It is also the term increasingly favored by international organizations.

Such corrective practices against the use of the term λαθρομετανάστης "illegal migrant" are attempted with a direction from meta-language to language: "A speaker should neither write nor say X but s / he has to say Y because Z" (Moschonas, 2020, p. 210). More specifically, X is the term λαθρομετανάστης "illegal migrant" (or the term παράνομος μετανάστης "unlawful migrant"), Y is the term παράτυπος μετανάστης "irregular migrant", and Z is the strong stigmatization of migrant populations, as it is evaluated in the context of humanitarian discourse.

The above extracts of corrective guidelines divulge a common attitude concerning the politically correct terms proposed to replace the term λαθρομετανάστης "illegal migrant". What is stressed through such corrective practices is that, as migration may take place outside a legal framework, discourse should not identify migrants with delinquents and criminals. The adjective παράτυπος "irregular" is used as a lexical bulwark against the criminalization of migrants: thus, they are not considered to be illegal, but not legalized either. At the micro-level, the corrective guideline, which stems from pro-migrant, humanitarian discourses, reacts against the use of the term λαθρομετανάστης "illegal migrant", which is related to national-xenophobic discourses promoting the connection between migrants and criminals.

5 Exploring the term λαθρομετανάστης "illegal migrant" in Greek parliamentary debates

In the broader context of a particularly deep economic crisis since 2009, Greece also found itself in the epicenter of the migration crisis in 2015, when Europe received an exceptionally large number of migrants. Hosting migrants was considered a major challenge for a society al-

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4   *AP Stylebook* is a style guide used by newspapers and the news industry in the USA and updated on an annual basis by the editors of the Associated Press.

ready in disorder because of the imposed austerity policies.

As discussed in section 4.3, the national-xenophobic discourse, which perceives migrants as a threat, promoted the use of the term λαθρομετανάστης "illegal migrant", whereas the humanitarian discourse in favor of migrants was built around the corrective guideline for avoiding the use of this term. This conflict of discourses was refueled in the mid-2010s through new conflicts at the micro-level of language use concerning the appropriate way to refer not only to migrant populations currently arriving in Greece (mostly from Muslim countries), but also to already established migrant populations (e. g., Albanians).

For exploring the use of the term in question in 2015, there are two basic parameters we should consider. First, in the 1990s, the term mainly referred to migrants entering Greece from the Balkans (mainly from Albania). However, in 2015, the demographic characteristics of the arriving migrants are entirely different: Migrants mostly come from Muslim countries. Secondly, Greece has undergone a severe financial crisis, which started in 2009 and during which the standard of living of the Greek people was shattered, especially in the middle and lower classes.

For investigating how the term was used in 2015, we compiled a corpus consisting of Hellenic Parliament Proceedings, since a) they document how Greek parliamentarians employ the term in public, b) such data provide solid evidence concerning the ideological-political identity of those who use each term, and c) they can be easily structured as a searchable electronic corpus.

More specifically, our corpus includes proceedings from 49 plenary sessions in which the term λαθρομετανάστης "illegal migrant" appears. The time range is between January 1, 2015 and December 31, 2015. During this period, two national elections took place. In the first election in January, seven parties entered the Parliament, whereas in the second one in September, one more party was added to those seven.

As expected, the Greek Parliament was the institutional arena *par excellence*

for debates related to the migration crisis Greece had to tackle. At the macro-level, the opposing discourses concerning the most suitable management policy for the migration issue framed the discussion at the micro-level about the most appropriate way to refer to migrants. That is, the conflict involved the tension between the corrective guideline for avoiding the term λαθρομετανάστης "illegal migrant", on the one hand, and the reaction against the corrective guideline and the assertion of the right to use the same term, on the other.

The ruling party elected in both electoral processes (i. e., end of January and mid-September 2015) was SYRIZA, a party of the Left, with pro-migrant and anti-austerity rhetoric. The major opposition party was New Democracy, namely the traditional conservative party of the bourgeois. In the third position was the neo-Nazi party of Golden Dawn with an extreme nationalist and antiracist rhetoric. Less parliamentary power was possessed by the socialist party PASOK, the communist party KKE, the liberal-reform party POTAMI, the party of the populist Right Independent Greeks, and the centrist-populist party Union of Centrists.

5.1 Quantitative analysis of the data

In the plenary sessions examined, the term λαθρομετανάστης "illegal migrant" is attested 118 times. If we classify these tokens according to the party to which the parliamentarians who used them belong, we get Figure 1.

Figure 1 shows that the use of the term has specific ideological-political characteristics, if we consider the political parties whose parliamentarians use it. The term was used by Golden Dawn (103 tokens), New Democracy (10 tokens), and by Independent Greeks (4 tokens). It was also used once by an independent parliamentarian who originated in Independent Greeks. It appears that the term is used exclusively by right-wing parties, mainly by the neo-Nazi Golden Dawn in the context of its extreme anti-migrant rhetoric, while most parliamentarians comply with the corrective directive and consistently avoid the term. Such behavior constitutes a sig-

Figure 1:   Uses of the term λαθρομετανάστης "illegal migrant" per political party
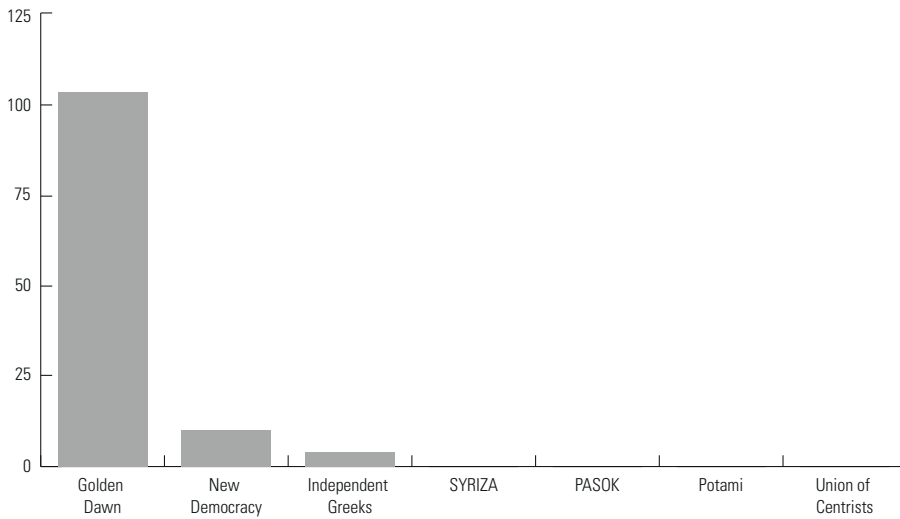
nificant difference from the generalized use of the term during the 1990s. In other words, from comparing the above findings with those of studies on its use in the 1990s (see section 4), it could be suggested that the term continues being used despite the corrective guidelines. Its use, however, is not widespread but correlates with specific political views.

5.2 Qualitative analysis of the data: Parliamentarians' reactions against the corrective directive

The data under scrutiny show that those Greek parliamentarians who use the term λαθρομετανάστης "illegal migrant" seem to be aware of the fact that the term was by then ideologically stigmatized and directly related with one of the two opposing discourses concerning the migration crisis, namely the national-xenophobic discourse, which perceives migrants as a threat, aiming at their exclusion. It is particularly important and indicative of the ideological stigmatization of the term that, in our data, those parliamentarians who use it feel at the same time the need to defend their choice and simultaneously

to avoid the stigma of being characterized as racists.[5]

For example, Golden Dawn parliamentarian Christos Pappas defends the use of the term λαθρομετανάστης "illegal migrant" in the plenary session of July 20, 2015. In his question to the then Minister of Interior and Administrative Reform, he talks about an ασύμμετρη απειλή λόγω της αθρόας εισβολής λαθρομεταναστών "asymmetric threat due to the massive invasion of illegal migrants".[6] In his talk, he refers to the use of the term in question:

> Υπάρχει μία τακτική από όλους να πετάτε την μπάλα στην εξέδρα και να κρύβετε πίσω από το δάχτυλό σας την ουσία του πράγματος, εμμένοντας σε μία θέση περί της λέξεως "λαθρομετανάστης". Ανατρέξτε […] στο τελευταίο λεξικό του καθηγητού κ. Μπαμπινιώτη. Στα παράγωγα της

5 The data analyzed here could also be explored through an argumentative perspective (e. g., Reisigl & Wodak, 2001; van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 2004). However, such a perspective lies beyond the goals of the present study (i. e., tracing the semantic trajectory of the Greek term λαθρομετανάστης "illegal migrant").

6 The Greek data discussed here is translated into English by the authors for the purposes of the present study.

λέξης "λαθραίος", "λαθρο" έχει και τη λέξη "λαθρομετανάστης". Ας κατηγορήσουμε και τον κ. Μπαμπινιώτη ως φασίστα. (Συνεδρίαση ΟΖ΄, 20.07.2015)

There is a strategy used by all [of you] to pretend not to know anything about the issue and to hide your head in the sand when it comes to the essence of the issue, insisting on a position concerning the word "λαθρομετανάστης" [illegal migrant]. Look it up […] in the most recent dictionary by Professor Babiniotis. Among the derivatives of the word "λαθραίος", "λαθρο" [illegal, unlawful, latent, concealed] there is also the word "λαθρομετανάστης" [illegal migrant]. Let us blame Mr. Babiniotis as well for being a fascist. (Session LXXVII, July 20, 2015)

In this extract, an argument is formed in response to the corrective guideline. Christos Pappas defends the use of the term λαθρομετανάστης "illegal migrant", while at the same time stressing the fact that he himself is a minority in the parliament as for this issue *(there is a strategy used by all [of you])*. The reaction against the corrective guideline is a reaction against its justification (i. e., that the term carries racist meaning), as Pappas claims that the term is not racist. He specifically refers to the entry of the prestigious dictionary by Professor of Linguistics Georgios Babiniotis (see Babiniotis, 1998) to sound more convincing. The parliamentarian resorts to an *argumentum ad verecundiam*:

[t]his fallacy consists of backing one's own standpoint by means of reference to authorities considered to be or passed off as being competent, superior, sacrosanct, unimpeachable and so on. The appeal to an authority is always fallacious if the respective authority is not competent or qualified, if she or he is prejudiced or if she or he is quoted inaccurately (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001, p. 72).

Through such an argument, the parliamentarian refrains from commenting on the appropriateness of the term or its racist meaning. Instead, he concentrates on the existence of an entry in a prestigious dictionary implying that all words included in dictionaries are inoffensive, that all

such words should be defended as appropriate, or even that the dictionary editor would have omitted the word from the dictionary if he as an expert thought that the word was racist or if he thought that he would be accused of racism. This could be interpreted as a kind of "misquotation" of the editor's work.

A similar strategy was followed a few days earlier (July 7, 2015) by Golden Dawn parliamentarian Ilias Kasidiaris, when he also defended the appropriateness of the term, after a comment made by the Chair about its use. Kasidiaris used a different kind of argument. This time, the parliamentarian employs an analogy: "drawing *analogies* between actual events and fictitious ones, often fulfils a persuasive function similar to the invention of unreal scenarios that are designated to function as an 'illustrative example' in an argumentation" (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001, p. 109, emphasis in the original). His argument compares other, non-racist Greek words having λαθρο- "illegal, unlawful, latent, concealed" as a first component (i. e., the real event) with the word λαθρομετανάστης "illegal migrant" to claim that the latter is not racist either (i. e., the fictional event):

Ασφαλώς και θα χρησιμοποιώ τον όρο αυτόν, διότι σέβομαι την ελληνική γλώσσα. Εξήγησα, δε, ότι ο όρος "λαθρομετανάστης" δεν έχει περιεχόμενο ρατσιστικό. Όπως λέμε "λαθρέμπορο" αυτόν που εμπορεύεται προϊόντα παράνομα, όπως λέμε "λαθροθήρα" αυτόν που κυνηγά παράνομα, έτσι λέμε "λαθρομετανάστη" αυτόν που εισέρχεται στην χώρα παράνομα. (Συνεδρίαση ΞΘ΄, 07.07.2015)

Of course, I will be using this term, because I respect the Greek language. In fact, I explained that the term "λαθρομετανάστης" [illegal migrant] does not have racist content. As we call "λαθρέμπορο" [smuggler] the person who trades products illegally, as we call "λαθροθήρα" [poacher] the person who hunts illegally, we also call "λαθρομετανάστη" [illegal migrant] the person who enters the country illegally. (Session LXIX, July 7, 2015)

In both cases, at the micro-level of the language use, we detect a reaction against the corrective guideline for avoiding the

term λαθρομετανάστης "illegal migrant". The etymology of the term and its correlation with other Greek terms that have the adjective λαθραίος "illegal, unlawful, latent, concealed" as their first component is employed to support the supposed "natural state" of the Greek language, which seems to be disrupted by the intervention of political correctness, as the latter ideologically stigmatizes a "natural" language use. The "natural state" of the Greek language is defended either through an *argumentum ad verecundiam* or through analogy. The corrective directive is thus presented as unnecessary and unjustified.

A similar dialogue took place in the parliament on October 30, 2015 during parliamentary scrutiny and Question Time, where the then Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras was asked about the arrivals of migrants and the migration policy followed by the government. In his speech, the then Prime Minister accused New Democracy (i. e., the then major opposition party) of having used and still using in its official positions and interventions the term λαθρομετανάστης "illegal migrant". New Democracy parliamentarian Georgios Koumoutsakos took the floor to summarize the arguments put forward by those who continued using the term, even after it had been consistently stigmatized:

> Είπατε κάτι για λαθρομετανάστες. Ξέρετε, παίζουμε με τις λέξεις. Στην ελληνική γλώσσα όποιος διαβάζει χωρίς να του επιτρέπεται, λέγεται «λαθραναγνώστης», όποιος κυνηγάει παρανόμως, λέγεται «λαθροκυνηγός». Όποιος επιβαίνει σε ένα μέσο παρανόμως λέγεται «λαθρεπιβάτης». Δαιμονοποιείτε έναν όρο, ο οποίος πράγματι στην ελληνική, όταν ταυτίζεται με άνθρωπο, μπορεί να δημιουργεί πρόβλημα. Όμως, όταν στηρίζετε την κριτική κατά μιας ολόκληρης πολιτικής -που πάντως ήταν αποτελεσματικότερη από τη δική σας- πάνω σε αυτόν τον όρο, τότε κάνετε λάθος. (Συνεδρίαση ΙΔ΄, 30.10.2015)

> You mentioned something about illegal migrants. You know, we are playing with words. In the Greek language, whoever reads without being allowed to do so is called "λαθραναγνώστης"

[illegal reader],[7] whoever hunts illegally is called "λαθροκυνηγός" [poacher]. The person who is aboard a means of transportation illegally is called "λαθρεπιβάτης" [stowaway]. You are demonizing a term, which indeed, when referring to a person, might create a problem in the Greek language. However, when you build the criticism against a whole policy -which nevertheless was more effective than yours- on this term, then you are wrong. (Session XIV, October 30, 2015)

Once again, the parliamentarian creates an analogy with other Greek compound words to propose that the term λαθρομετανάστης "illegal migrant" is a "natural", not necessarily offensive or racist formation of Modern Greek, while talking about the *demonization* of the term. However, he recognizes some problems in its use (*when referring to a person, might create a problem*). Not only does he react against the corrective guideline itself and its justification, but he also underestimates its importance by talking about *playing with words*.

All three extracts analyzed here attempt to respond to the corrective guideline by using arguments of linguistic formalism disconnecting the national-xenophobic discourse (of the macro-level) from the use of the term λαθρομετανάστης "illegal migrant" (at the micro-level). In other words, there is an attempt to denounce the racist conceptualization of the term and to question its correlation with that discourse, eventually aiming at returning to the generalized use of the previous years.

5.3 Illegal migrants as invaders
In the data examined here, the term λαθρομετανάστης "illegal migrant" appears to co-occur with specific metaphorical representations of migrants. In political communication, metaphors are employed to represent entities and / or events in simple,

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7   Λαθραναγνώστης "lit. illegal reader" refers to the person who stands in a kiosk reading newspapers without eventually buying one so as to save money, or s/he sits next to someone else (e. g., in the bus) for the same purpose.

Greek state and the national security. Such discoursal choices at the micro-level obviously reinforce a representation that is particularly compatible with the national-xenophobic discourse, which perceives migrants' entrance in the country as a threatening invasion and aims at their exclusion.

6   Conclusions

In this study, we attempted to analyze aspects of the opposing discourses about the migration issue in Greece before and during the migration crisis of 2015, as they can be detected through the use of the term λαθρομετανάστης "illegal migrant" but also through public discussions about its appropriateness. To this end, we followed a CDA approach, utilizing mainly its position concerning the dialectic relationship between the macro-level and the micro-level. By using this dialectic relationship in our analysis, we attempted to trace the semantic trajectory of the term λαθρομετανάστης "illegal migrant" from early 1990s until mid-2010s.

We claimed that, when in 2015 Greece found itself in the epicenter of the migration crisis, at least two main and opposing discourses emerged concerning its management: the *moral obligation/solidarity* discourse put forward to defend migrant rights versus the *threat/exclusion* one aiming at migrants' stigmatization and marginalization. It is exactly in this context that we examined the uses of the term λαθρομετανάστης "illegal migrant" as well as the sociopolitical circumstances that generated them.

In the beginning, we followed the semantic trajectory of the term based on already existing research. We observed that during the 1990s the term had become a means for connecting migration with criminality and, by extension, migrants with criminals. Consequently, the term λαθρομετανάστης "illegal migrant" was used back then as part of a hegemonic national-xenophobic discourse at the expense of migrants who were in the Greek territory (mainly Albanians). Such racist uses of the

term began to be detected and highlighted early on. At the same time, and objecting to such uses, an alternative pro-migrant discourse started to emerge at the macro-level. Political correctness played a significant role in the persistent debates about the appropriateness of the term and, eventually, its stigmatization in Greek.

In the present study, political correctness was deemed as a type of corrective practice, as it detects naturalized language uses that reproduce stereotypes and power relationships. Then, it intervenes at the micro-level by attempting their ideological stigmatization and replacement, and by suggesting new terms, which do not seem to reproduce stereotypes and power relationships. Such an intervention is not limited to individual language use at the micro-level: It is always performed in relation to the macro-level of discourses. After all, political correctness aims at the rupture with, or the subversion of, hegemonic discourses lurking behind the terms it stigmatizes.

As for the Greek term λαθρομετανάστης "illegal migrant", the corrective guideline suggested the following:

> The term λαθρομετανάστης "illegal migrant" should be replaced by the term παράτυπος μετανάστης "irregular migrant", because the first one represents migrant populations in a negative manner.

The politically correct term is chosen mainly to replace the term λαθρομετανάστης "illegal migrant" and to underline the stereotypical, racist connection between migration and criminality. Gradually, the corrective guideline becomes more intense and institutional. As a result, the term indeed lost the seeming evaluative neutrality it had in the 1990s. By 2015, the term λαθρομετανάστης "illegal migrant" was already stigmatized as racist and did not appear to exhibit the pervasive hegemonic use it had back in the 1990s.

Moreover, we demonstrated that, despite the corrective practice of political correctness, the term continues to be used inside the Hellenic Parliament in 2015. This time, however, it is not naturalized and

does not constitute the linguistic means of a hegemonic and, in fact, unquestionable national-xenophobic discourse. Those who use it inside the Hellenic Parliament often feel the need to defend their choice against the corrective guideline, which nonetheless continued being repeated during parliamentary debates. Thus, the term is not used as a "neutral" one but as a marked option in reaction against the corrective guideline.

At the same time, the analysis of our data shows that the correlation of the term λαθρομετανάστες "illegal migrant" with the national-xenophobic discourse and, more specifically, with perceiving migrants as a national threat is maintained, if not reinforced. This is attested in the discourse of right-wing and extreme right-wing parties in the Hellenic Parliament. Despite the corrective directive, the use of the term served to identify migrants with invaders through invasion metaphors. It is not a coincidence that we find the term in question to be modified by numerical adjectives, which stress the number of people belonging to these populations and, at the same time, downplay the significance of migrant experiences, which form the basis of the humanitarian discourse and the discourse of moral obligation and solidarity towards them.

Finally, it could be suggested that the semantic trajectory of the Greek term in question can be traced as follows: *Racist identification of λαθρομετανάστες "illegal migrants" with criminals > Stigmatization of the term in question via corrective directives in the framework of political correctness > Racist recontextualization of the term as "invaders".*

The semantic trajectory of the term λαθρομετανάστης "illegal migrant" allows us to trace how language use at the micro-level is dialectically connected with discourses at the macro-level. In particular, the term λαθρομετανάστης "illegal migrant" has been widely used since the 1990s, and later on as a reaction against a corrective practice. It was in particular used as part of a discourse perceiving migrants as a threat and, thus, functioned as a way to legitimatize their political exclusion. Therefore, the

term and its recontextualization, i. e., illegal migrant as invader, serve as an indication of the dialectical correlation between language use and opposing discourses: the *moral obligation/solidarity* discourse and the *threat/exclusion* one.

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