

# Populism and λαϊκισμός through the linguist's lens

Discourse analysis: Theories and Methodologies.

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# Populism and λαϊκισμός [populism] through the linguist's lens

- As can be appreciated, the linguist is not a sociologist or a political scientist or a philosopher; but s/he can cast the linguist's glance at the use of words (and linguistic phenomena at large), their place of occurrence, etc., that is, the linguist will try to contextualise as much as available possible the use of lexis in focus so that they derive as much information as possible for the 'right' interpretation. This enterprise will hopefully inform and complement a broader non-linguistic analysis of the use of such terms as per title.
- We'll try to look at what (a linguistic) discourse analysis can contribute to the analysis of lexes, in the case at issue of the word 'populism' but also at its Greek 'equivalent' term 'λαϊκισμός', esp. as we know that word histories have their own stories to tell and translational equivalence is often a myth. We'll also see if corpus linguistics (a quantitative analysis) has anything to offer in our endeavour.
- (all translations are mine, as close as possible to the Greek text)

# ‘λαϊκισμός’ [populism], ‘λαϊκίζει<sub>verb</sub>’ [?populise]: Colloquial terms used across the board (not just in politics)

Όταν η Άνγκελα λαϊκίζει (title, 31/8/13) ‘When Angela \*populises’

Ακόμη και οι Γερμανοί πολιτικοί λαϊκίζουν ασύστολα (31/8/13)

‘Even German politicians \*populise unashamedly’

Ο Βενιζέλος έριξε με πραξικόπημα τον Παπανδρέου και λαϊκίζει (2014), ‘Venizelos overthrew Papandreou and \*populises’

Ασημακοπούλου (politician): Ο Τσίπρας να σταματήσει να λαϊκίζει ... αντί να ακούμε τον ΣΥΡΙΖΑ να λαϊκίζει να καθίσει στο ίδιο τραπέζι με εμάς. (2014) ‘Tsipras must stop \*populising, and rather than hear SYRIZA \*populising, etc.’

Όταν ο πρωθυπουργός λαϊκίζει γελοιωδέστατα.... (title, 29/6/14), ‘When the PM \*populises ridiculously...’

Παπανδρέου (former PM): Έφυγε τρέχοντας ο Καραμανλής και λαϊκίζουν σε βάρος μου.  
‘Karamanlis [former PM] left office in a night, and they’re now \*populising against me’

Μάλλης (TV political panel coordinator): Ε, λαϊκιστής είναι και ο κ. Στουρνάρας; (ΣΚΑΪ στις 6, 9/7/14) ‘Come on, Stournaras [a former Finance Minister], too, is a populist?’

Μικρούτσικος (music composer): Αισθάνθηκα ότι πρέπει να συνομιλήσω με τον κόσμο χωρίς λαϊκισμούς. (interviewed on Radio Στο κόκκινο, 2/7/14) ‘I felt that I had to converse with the people without populism<sup>s</sup>’ [notice pluralisation of ‘populism’] (talking about a music event)

Λαϊκίζει και "εκβιάζει" ο Ιβάν (2014) ‘Ivan is \*populising and blackmailing’

Ο Πάπας λαϊκίζει: Τηλεφώνησε σε γυναίκα που είχε βιασθεί (title, 27/8/13) ‘The Pope is \*populising: He made a phone call to a woman that was raped’

# ‘Popular/populist’ definitions of ‘populism’, or else, ‘populism’ debated in political panels (in Greece)

9 July 2014, SKAI news at 6 (<http://www.skai.gr/player/TV/?mmid=250792>)

*Tzavaras:* Populism is when we magnify the problems of a specific social group... without taking into account, e.g., that 1,5 million in the private sector are jobless, etc., when we overstate a situation without pointing to what is of significance, and we do not look at it in perspective.

*Filis:* It is not populism/[ist] to fight for the right to work on decent terms, to prevent being fired, for wages above poverty line, this is not populism. This is fundamental welfare state. It is not populism if you allow for the operation of hospitals without tragic cuts, if you're against cutting down on pensions, etc. etc.

*Mallis:* But it's populism to say that there's money when coffers are empty and to give promises...

*Chatzis* (after a round of arguments on defining ‘populism’, wrapping it up, reading out from his ipad): Populism is the political activities that aim to represent the wishes of the people, says the Cambridge dictionary,<sup>4</sup>

## Άλλο λαϊκός<sub>[populist<sub>1</sub>]</sub> κι άλλο λαϊκιστής<sub>[populist<sub>2</sub>]</sub>

**Populist<sub>1</sub>** is one thing and **populist<sub>2</sub>** is quite another

Μερικοί τα μπερδεύουν. Λαϊκός δεν σημαίνει πανηγυρτζής. Δεν σημαίνει ευτελής, βάρβαρος, ημιμαθής ή και αγράμματος, για κατανάλωση. Η αληθινή λαϊκότητα απέχει από αυτή της τηλοψίας όσο το αυθεντικό λαϊκό τραγούδι από τα σκυλοτραγούδα. Άλλο ο Μάρκος κι άλλο ο Καρβέλας.... Η **λαϊκότητα** εμπεριέχει καθαρότητα, ντομπροσύνη και πάνω απ' όλα θάρρος... Η λαϊκότητα και στην πολιτική δεν σημαίνει να είσαι λαϊκιστής του κερατά, «ευπώλητος», να εκφράζεις τα χαμηλότερα ένστικτα των ανθρώπων... Ο **λαϊκιστής** εξαπατά τον λαό, υποκρίνεται, τον παραμυθιάζει για να τον παρασύρει. Ο λαϊκός σέβεται τον λαό, του λέει την αλήθεια, τον οδηγεί, αφουγκραζόμενος τις αληθινές ανάγκες του και πάντα προσπαθεί να τον πάει πιο ψηλά. (<http://www.dimokratianews.gr/>)

'Some confuse the two. P<sub>1</sub> does not mean rabble-rouser... mean, barbaric, illiterate, consumerist... [True] populism means clarity, forwardness, and mainly bravery... [True] populism in politics does not entail being a nasty populist... This one cheats the people, is unreal, tells lies to lead them astray. The [real] populist [P<sub>1</sub>] respects the people, tells the truth, leads the way with the people's real needs as his beacon, to lead them to better /higher paths'

# Dictionary entries

Having seen how the terms are used across the board and a commentary distinguishing between **λαϊκός**<sub>[populist<sub>1</sub>]</sub> and **λαϊκιστής**<sub>[populist<sub>2</sub>]</sub>, in the next few slides, we'll review some Modern Greek Language dictionary entries of these terms (from older to more recent dictionaries) to see if there's any semantic evolution of their meanings recorded in them, or how the meanings of those terms are registered/ordered. E.g., the order of senses in a dictionary is significant, with the first regarded as prevalent, etc. (Note the dates, highlighted, as they're important)

# **Populism:** definitions in Greek dictionaries

Γεωργοπαπαδάκου **1980**, Το μεγάλο λεξικό της νεοελληνικής γλώσσας.

- Λαϊκισμός: η επιφανειακή μίμηση λαϊκών προτύπων,
- Λαϊκιστής, δεν υπάρχει ούτε στο ίδιο λήμμα
- **Populism:** the superficial imitation of popular role models (paradigms)
- **Populist:** no entry, not even noted in the entry for 'populism'

# Λεξικό της *KNE* (1998)

(Pls., note: For English translation, go to the next slide, Greek speakers, skip next slide)

**Λαϊκότητα**=η ιδιότητα του λαϊκού, αυτού που προέρχεται από το λαό, είναι δημιούργημά του, που απευθύνεται στο λαό ή τον εκφράζει

**Λαϊκισμός**=ιδεολογία ή στάση που εκφράζεται κυρίως στην πολιτική κ στην τέχνη κ που χαρακτηρίζεται από υπερβολική κ μη αυθεντική λαϊκότητα (φτηνό λαϊκισμό)

**Λαϊκιστής**= (noun) ο οπαδός του λαϊκισμού, που στην πολιτική εφαρμόζει τον λαϊκισμό (η πτέρυγα των λαϊκιστών)

(adj) (Λαϊκιστές πολιτικοί/ηγέτες), populist<sub>1</sub>

**Λαϊκιστικός, λαϊκιστικός**=που ανήκει ή αναφέρεται στον λαϊκισμό (Λαϊκιστική κυβέρνηση, Κόμμα/πολιτική λαϊκιστικού χαρακτήρα), populist<sub>1</sub>

Note: the pejorative meaning of the terms is not prevalent, almost non-existent. Also, ~~λαϊκίζω~~ is not an entry



# *Diction. of Common Modern Greek* 1998

**λαϊκότητα**<sub>[populism<sub>1</sub>/popularity]</sub>: quality of the people, of those coming from the people, their creation, addressing or expressing the people

**λαϊκισμός**<sub>[populism<sub>2</sub>]</sub>: ideology/attitude expressed mainly in politics & arts, characterised by excessive & non-authentic populism<sub>1</sub> (cheap populism<sub>2</sub>) (my underlining)

**λαϊκιστής**<sub>noun</sub><sub>[populist]</sub>: follower of Populism practising Populism in politics, *the Populist wing*,  
*adj.: Populist politicians /leaders*

**λαϊκιστικός**<sub>adj</sub><sub>[populist]</sub>, **λαϊκίστικος**<sub>adj</sub><sub>[populist(ic)]</sub>: belonging or referring to populism<sub>1</sub><sub>[λαϊκισμό]</sub> (*Populist<sub>1</sub> government, populist<sub>1</sub> party/politics*)

Note: the pejorative meaning of the terms is not prevalent, almost non-existent. Also, ~~λαϊκίζω~~ is not an entry. Notice the dynamic stress (red highlighted, prob. rendered by an extra suffix: -ic)

# *Paryrous Larousse*

Le Petit **2003**

# *Babiniotis*

Abridged, **2004**

**λαϊκισμός**[populism]: 1. πολιτική στάση κ πρακτική που κολακεύει τις λαϊκές μάζες... [the political attitude /practice flattering the masses]

2. ιδεολογία, ....[ideology]

**λαϊκίστικος**[populist(-ic)<sub>2</sub>], [entered]

**λαϊκιστικός**[populist<sub>2</sub>], [entered]

**λαϊκίζω**[\*populise], [entered]

**λαϊκισμός**[populism]: ο έπαινος / κολακεία των αδυναμιών κ ελαττωμάτων του λαού... [praising/flattering the weaknesses of the people]

~~2 [no other sense]~~

**λαϊκιστικός**[populist<sub>2</sub>], [entered]

**λαϊκίζω**[\*populise], [entered]

We witness a shift in the meaning from the ideological domain (signifying the movement, membership, etc.) to the pejorative /evaluative domain prioritised in dictionaries.

# The obvious question raised:

- In the current landscape of this recent resurgence of the discourse of populism,
- In view of the discrepancies encountered in **dictionaries** (i.e., development of pejorative uses, prioritised in recent, even abridged dictionaries, and the new coinage of pejorative verb only registered later in more recent dictionaries), **can we make the assumption that pejorative uses of those terms, as well as the use of a verb with a pejorative meaning, λαϊκίζω** [<sup>\*</sup>populise], **are emergent meanings/uses of recent years?**
- In what follows, we'll try to answer these questions.

# The origin of 'populist'

- From Latin 'populus'=λαός, δήμος, 'popularis'=λαϊκός, δημοτικός
  1. popularis strepitus=θόρυβος του λαού, - aura
  2. popularis consul=δημοτικός ύπατος
  3. popularia verbia= ο λόγος του λαού

λόγος χυδαίος

From agency : 1, as the clearest case

to quality relating to the people (objectively used, e.g., of the people as actors/experiencer, etc. )

to axiological modification or evaluative assessment (which is always subjective)

Hence, the later pejorative use

# The meaning of 'populist'

- Noun: A member or adherent of a political party seeking to represent the interests of ordinary people.
  - A person who supports or seeks to appeal to the concerns of ordinary people [here we can note a slippage in meaning, i.e., from 'representing' to 'appealing' only]:
    - *She is something of a populist—her views on immigration resemble those of the right-wing tabloid press.*
    - *Instead he is becoming a Shi'ite populist whose appeal will be enhanced by American accusations of treachery.*
    - *His supporters say the left-leaning populist is a visionary, but his detractors call him a dangerous lunatic. (Oxford Dictionaries)*

# In USA

- **(Populist)** A member of the Populist Party, a US political party formed in 1891 that advocated the interests of labor and farmers, free coinage of silver, a graduated income tax, and government control of monopolies.
  - *In 1890, for instance, the People's Party (the Populists' official name) won 52 seats in the U.S. House of Representatives and three in the U.S. Senate.*
  - *These comprised successively the Whig, Know-Nothing, Populist, and Republican parties in the city. (Oxford Dictionaries)*
- This is to note the original meaning of the term 'populist' to denote members of a party/group, etc., sharing ideologies and/or practices. This use we can call 'denotative' since it is used mainly to assign reference to entities/individuals/groups, etc.

# Populist floating beyond party membership to more generic use

“To my knowledge the first uses of the term “populist” in the generic sense (rather than as a word designating the historical Populists and Narodniks) came in 1934-5 in two articles in the New York Times, which used the term to describe Father Coughlin, Huey Long, and Upton Sinclair (who was actually a Socialist). The generic use of the term finally appeared in the Second Edition of the OED, citing a highly-pejorative 1958 reference by Walter Laqueur highlighting **populist antisemitism** – as well as a rather more sympathetic 1969 use of the term in the book Student Power edited by one Alexander Cockburn.” (John Emerson, 2013)

Eliza’s comment: But we need to see the text and make sure that this purported ‘pejorative’ use of ‘populist’ has been divorced from a denotative ‘populist’ as its agent/actor/experiencer and totally assimilated into the noun ‘antisemitism’ (i.e., any kind of antisemitism, not just populist, is disapproved of), or if it is characterised as practised by populists as referential/denotative entities; in this latter case it needn’t be pejorative, though with hindsight we may look on it as being used pejoratively.

# Derivatives of 'populist'

- **Populism**

1. *But the tension remains, though we may now call what we have some doubts about **populism** rather than **democracy**.*
2. *His rightwing **populism** is the reviled but legitimate offspring of official European policy.*
3. *Latham has resorted to cheap populism in an effort to win back disaffected working class voters.*

- **Populistic**

1. *To most people it's clear that the Freedom Party and Haider is a very **populistic** and **opportunistic** conservative party.*
2. *Together with Marxism, this was to be something **populistic** - this is different from the American term **populism**.*
3. *a **populistic** kind of **pluralism** (Oxford Dictionaries)*

**From**

Abstraction  
(movement,  
ideology)

**To**

Specificity,  
relating to  
specific  
individual's  
doxas/behaviour



# Is there a course of meaning evolution?

- From abstraction (movement ‘populism’)
- To members of a movement (populist)
- To specificity (relating to specific individual’s doxas/behaviours seen in a specific unflattering light? ‘populist’)
- If this is so, then there’s further pressure for a new coinage
- **-ic** is an adj-forming suffix
- Hence, from ‘populist’ +**ic** to ‘populistic’
  - popul-~~us~~-ist +ic= populist
  - Cf.: national+ist+**ic** (‘nationalist’ CAN be pejoratively used/interpreted [mainly due to context and current ideologies], but the more adjectival ‘nationalistic’ is always pejorative)
- Is there then a tendency to move from the adj ‘populist’ to the more adjectival ‘populistic’ when we wish to encode a pejorative tone (just as in the analogy of ‘nationalistic’)?

# Populistic: more examples

1. "populistic, declamatory, irresponsible and saturated with racism" (Haaretz) (Huffington Post, 2010)
2. While transparency opens the way to better accountability, there is a permanent risk that information is used for opportunistic and **populistic** reasons.
3. That's why we prefer television, **populistic** politics, and Starbucks.

Notice that 'populist' co-occurs with those other negative adjectives (underlined), and in a zeugma with 'Starbucks'

But often 'populistic' (as more adjectival!) is used for 'populist' with no pejorative hue.

No entry in Longman's Diction. of Contemp. English, 2003

In OxfordDicts and on line if noted, it's below 'populist'; in wikipedia we're redirected to 'populism' with no reference to 'populistic'.

# Similar evolution for Greek?

From

λαός

to

λαϊκός

λαϊκισμός

λαϊκιστής

λαϊκιστικό

λαϊκίστικο

From

people (populus)

to

popular (1570s)(suited to the people)

populism (1893 onwards)

populist<sub>noun (denotative) (1893)</sub>

populist<sub>adj (modifier, 1920- representing the views of the masses)</sub>

populist<sub>adj, pejorative hue, mid-20th c</sub>

populist<sub>ic</sub><sub>adj., pejorative sense, very recent</sub>

# My methodology

1. The meaning of words is to a great extent determined by its co-text (what follows/precedes) and context (genre, discourse, social setting, etc.). To find co-occurrences/collocations, clusters, etc. I'll use Corpus Linguistics (CL) as a methodological approach
2. CL is a quantitative methodology to gauge co-occurrences of terms, frequencies and keyness of terms, etc. in very large data
3. It originates from perspective 1, as introduced by Firth (1935), taken up by Sinclair (1965) and others (R. Quirk, G. Leech) in compiling originally manual and then computerised corpora (texts)
4. Corpus tools have been designed to process corpora and find results
5. I used a number of corpora (from earlier to recent/last month's, (June-July 2014) in both English and Greek to trace the frequency and semantic evolution (possibly emergent meanings) of these terms.
6. I also used ANTCONC as one corpus tool (thanks to Laurence Anthony) to get results from recent corpora ( the Press)

# Corpora used:

## English

1. Brown corpus (Am.) and LOB (Br.) corpus, **1961**
  - A. Press: reportage (44 texts)
  - B. Press: editorial (27 texts)
  - C. Press: reviews (17 texts)
2. BNC, **1990** (British Nat. Corpus)
3. AmerE**2006**, BritishE**2006** (ca 1 million)
4. Brit/Amer Press **2010-2012**  
(specific same dates, our corpus)
5. *Guardian/Telegraph*, June/July **2014**, our corpus  
But with keyword 'populi\*'

## Greek

1. Hellenic National Corpus  
**47013924** words, Written only  
**1990** onwards but to **present date**  
Includes mainly newspaper material  
(there's paucity of Gr corpora/tools)
2. XXX no available corpus
3. XXX no available corpus
4. Greek Press **2010-2012**  
(specific same dates our corpus)
5. Newspaper *Kathimerini*  
June/July **2014**, our corpus  
But with keyword 'λαϊκι/ί\*'

# Partial Findings

- **1961** Brown corpus (AmE.), 1 million words
  - **No hits** for **populist, populism, populist**, but
  - popular (rank) 1103 (hits) 99
- **1961** LOB corpus (BrE.), 1 million words
  - **No hits** for **populist, populism, populist**, but
  - popular (rank) 1087 (hits) 97

**Mid 20<sup>th</sup>: there is no single occurrence of these terms in these corpora in either Britain or USA**  
(small, ca 1million wrds)

# British corpora: findings

**BNC, 1985-93, 20 yrs later**

**Spoken: populism:** no hits, **populist:** 2 hits in 1 text, 0.19 instances per million words (0.00019‰)

**Written: populism:** 66 hits; freq.: 0.83 instances per million words, or **0,00083 ‰**

**Newspapers only: populism:** 3 hits; freq.: 0.32 instances per million words, or **0,00032‰**

**populist:** 250 hits; freq.: 3.14 instances per mil.wrds

**Newspapers only: populist:** 24 hits; freq.: 2.55 instances per million words (**0.00255‰**)

**Total: 3.9 instances per million words (0.0039‰)**

It's worth noting that both 'populism' and 'populist' appear to have a significant frequency in other genres than the Press. This may indicate that they occur with their denotative or non-pejorative meaning/connotation rather than in any pejorative use, since such uses are likely to initially occur in genres of current affairs like the Press.

# BNC examples from the Press, 1985-93

- Populist Party (many hits)
- Ticino League, Haider, politics, president, policies, Conscience, Civic Solidarity Union, outsiders, leader , a left-wing populist who, alliance, Centre-Centre Union ( UCC ), Democratic Party of Indonesia, Abdala Bucaram Ortiz , populist politician of the Social Democratic Party ( PDS ), leader the Rev. Jesse Jackson , a populist who had formerly been an ALP supporter
- Populist stance/tone, class warfare rhetoric, as populist as they are irresponsible , etc.

In all examples above, pls. supply the term 'populist' each time, e.g., populist Haider, etc.



# Further findings: 2006

**AE2006** (American corpus) 1million    **BE2006** (British corpus) 1million

**populist**: freq.: 6 matches;  
freq.: **5.1** instances per  
million words

populist in the press: no results.

**populism**: 2 hits; freq.: **1.7**  
instances per million words

**Total**: **6.8** per mil., 0.0068‰

**populist**: freq.: **0.87** per million  
words: 'Mr Chalabi has cast  
himself as a populist and joined  
the Shia list ...'

–Newsp only: frequency: 4.98 per  
million

**populism**: no hits

**popular**: (Press only): 114.59  
instances per million words

**Total**: **0.87** per mil., 0.00087‰

**AE2006** concordance:    **no (apparent) pejorative hue due to ...**

1	" Sherrod Brown had beaten incumbent Mike DeWine by running an energetic	<u>populist</u>	campaign in Ohio --
2	unless the party rejoined its economic	<u>populist</u>	roots .
3	America 's fears ....that some leaders of the	<u>Populist</u>	and Farmers Alliance movements
4	These ugly stereotypes served a	<u>populist</u>	purpose . Updating and hardening Jefferson 's anti-elitist suspicions,
5	the vaudeville stage, commercialism, jazz,	<u>populist</u>	religion, and the prize ring
6	It is a stunning reversal of the old	<u>Populist</u>	wisdom that of course the rich are less moral than the poor

**... collocations, but only due to encyclopaedic knowledge**

# Hellenic National Corpus

47.000.000 words 1990 onwards

Word/lemma	Hits	Frequency
λαϊκισμός /populism	45	0,0097‰
λαϊκιστής /populist <sub>noun</sub>	72	0,0015‰
λαϊκιστικός /populist(ic) <sub>adj.</sub>	89	0,0019‰
λαϊκίστικο /populistic	X	
λαϊκίζω / *populise <sub>verb</sub>	39	0,0008‰

*The Times, Daily Telegraph,  
Financial Times*  
(342755 tokens)

*Kathimerini  
Eleftherotypia*  
(ca 800000 words)

## Br/Amer Press 2010-2012

### Populism

hits: 2; rank: 11639

### Populist

hits: 3; rank: 8708

1. Mr Orban's populist style, and international anxiety
2. But that leaves the field open to populism, which the republicans of Sinn Fein
3. the right-wing populist Viktor Orban (2 hits)
4. knee-jerk populism

**Total hits: 5, 0,014‰**

## Gr Newsp 2010-12

**Populism**, hits: 34, rank: 4139

λαϊκισμός (notice high freq.)

**Populist**<sub>noun</sub>, hits: 10, rank: 12836

λαϊκιστής

**Populist(ic)**<sub>adj</sub>, hits: 3

λαϊκιστικό

**Populistic**, hits: 7

λαϊκίστικο (with dynamic stress)

**?Populise**<sub>verb</sub>, hits: 3

λαϊκίζει, λαϊκίζοντα

**Total hits: 57, 0,076‰**

Terms are 5,5 times more frequent in Gr corpus

**Last month's** 13.06-07.07.2014 corpora

but targeted with: **keyword: populi\*, λαϊκι/ί\***

**Guardian and Daily Telegraph**

**Kathimerini**

**English corpus: Tokens: 28427**

**Greek corpus: Tokens: 27435**

**Populism** hits: 7

**Populism** hits: **44**

λαϊκισμός (notice high freq, also in plural)

**Populist** hits: 27

**Populist** hits: 23

λαϊκιστής

**Populist(ic)**<sub>adj</sub>, hits: 8

λαϊκιστικό

**Populistic**, hits: 13

λαϊκί**ι**στικό (with dynamic stress)

**?Populise**<sub>verb</sub>, hits: 1

λαϊκί**ι**ζει,

**Total hits: 34,**

**1,2‰**

**Total hits: 89, 3,25‰**

# Total Findings

## English

**1961**, Brown & LOB, no hits

**1985-93**, BNC, Gen. **0,011‰**

Press only **0,0057‰**

**2006**: AE2006 & BE2006

General: **0,016‰**

**2010-12**: Press only **0,014‰**

**Last month**: targeted: **1,2‰**

Note: **0,014‰** of 2010-12 is significantly higher than **0,016‰** of 2006 since the former is for the Press corpus only while the 2006 is a general corpus frequency result

## Greek

**1990-**, HNC, General

**0,014‰**

(mainly newspaper corpus)

**2010-12**: Press only

**0,076‰**

**Last month**: targeted: **3,25‰**

Note: The freq. of the terms is 5,5 times higher In the Greek Press (2010-12) than in their counterpart corpus of English/Am. Press

## Some BNC examples, mostly referential, no apparent pejorative hue

, gave them a	<u>populist</u>	anti-government
, the more ruggedly	<u>populist</u>	Greg Dyke
this support for ‘	<u>populist</u>	’ writers who drew their inspiration
the ostentatiously	<u>populist</u>	action of one member
Mr Gaunt is a	<u>populist</u>	.
if the AFBD's new	<u>populist</u>	hastened the downfall of
The monetarist line is the	<u>populist</u>	line and to prove it
’ It is	<u>populist</u>	zeal which is moving
the success of our	<u>populist</u>	policies.’ —

# Populistic 'and other evils'

- "populistic, declamatory, irresponsible and saturated with racism
- information is used for opportunistic and populistic reasons.
- That's why we prefer television, populistic politics, and Starbucks.

Notice the co-occurrences! Very recent examples



# Recent Greek data: λαϊκισμός/populism,

- λαϊκισμού, των πελατειακών σχέσεων (the populism and **cronyism**)
- λαϊκίζουν, οι ακραίες συμπεριφορές ( and **extreme behaviours**)
- λαϊκίστικες αποφάσεις που ισοπέδωσαν (that **clamped down on**)
- λαϊκίστικες πλειοδοσίες» (**excessive claims-betrayal**)
- λαϊκίστικη αριστερά» (**populistic left**)
- λαϊκίστικη δεξιά (**populistic right**)
- λαϊκίστικη πόλωση (**populistic polarisation**)
- λαϊκίστικο ελιγμό του υπουργού (**populistic manoeuvre**)
- λαϊκίστικος μηχανισμός (**populistic apparatus**)
- λαϊκισμού που διατρέχει οριζόντια όλα (populism **across the board**)
- λαϊκισμό, ημιμάθεια και στρεβλώσεις λαϊκισμός (populism, **illiteracy/ignorance and distortion/twisting**)
- εχθρεύεται την αριστεία (**hostile to merit**)
- λαϊκισμός των ελίτ» (populism **of the elite**)

# Λαϊκιστές/**populists** (recent data)

- λαϊκιστές δεν είναι τίποτε      **populists are nothing (but)/no more than**
- λαϊκιστές κάθε είδους      **populists of all sorts**
- λαϊκιστές και δημιουργούς ψεύτικων εντυπώσεων  
   **populists and those generating illusions**
- λαϊκιστές καιροσκόπους      **populist opportunists**
- λαϊκιστές πολιτικοί εμποδίζουν κάθε      **populists hampering everything**
- λαϊκιστής δεν είμαι      **I'm not a populist**
- λαϊκιστική αριστερά χαϊδεύει τα αυτιά      **populist left flattering**
- λαϊκιστική δεξιά με τον αριστερό      **right with a left...**
- λαϊκιστική υποτροπή      **populist subversion**
- λαϊκιστικών και ακροδεξιών κομμάτων      **and ultra-right parties**
- λαϊκιστών και των τραμπούκων, **populists and thugs/rabble-rousers**
- λαϊκιστών-κρατιστών      **populist-statists**

# Meaning is contextual

- Voloshinov (1929: 79): “the meaning of a word is determined entirely by its context. In fact, there are as many meanings of a word as there are contexts of its usage.”
- Firth (1935): a full appreciation of the meaning of a word can only be achieved in terms of its use.

# Populist: from nounness to modifier, from agency to things/objective qualities

- Populist as a member of a party/movement, etc.
  - denotative modification, e.g., all the populist participants, etc.
- Populist as a **non-inherent** adjective
  - the more ruggedly populist Greg Dyke
- Populist as a not stative, **dynamic** adjective
  - I'm not a populist, Don't be a populist, He's being a populist=behaving/thinking like one
- 'Populist' meaning spilling over to a populist's attitude, behaviour, practices, etc., gradually severed from agency
  - the success of our populist policies (as if policies have no agents)
- Λαϊκίζω[\*populise], coinage of a dynamic verb denoting unacceptable verbal (and not only) behaviours

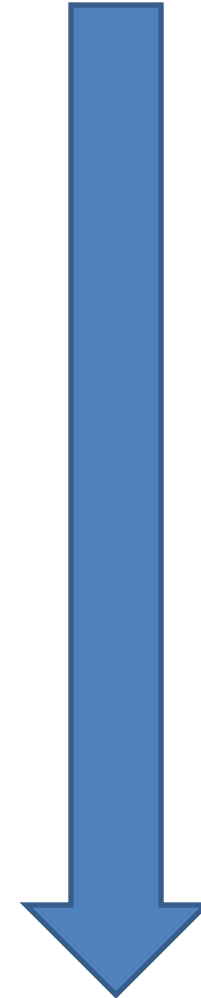
From  
Noun (denotation, reference)  
To  
denotative adjective  
To  
Agent denoting adjective  
To  
Non-inherent modification  
To  
Dynamicity  
(stage-level predicate)  
To  
Its 'liberation' from agency  
To  
pejorative hues/connotations  
To  
Pejorative sense

Nounness

To  
Modifier

to  
Pejorative  
hues

to  
Pejorative  
sense



m e  
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# Conclusions

1. The widespread use of the terms at issue is a rather recent phenomenon (corpus findings).
2. The recent use of the terms has acquired a rather different and distinct meaning that clearly differs from the original one (corpus findings).
3. The pejorative meaning or use of those terms is much more prevalent in Greek (almost exclusive) than in English (corpus findings). This finding needs to problematise the surrounding theoretical discourse in the Greek landscape.
4. 3 probably yields evidence that the terms in the Greek society **have been more drastically bleached, i.e., desemantised or resemantised and relexicalised** (lost their original meaning or broadened their original meaning range and acquired further senses [probably linked to parallel political processes]).
5. The use of the terms, esp. of 'populism' is more widespread in the Greek media/society (slides 28, 29) than in the Anglosaxon world (USA, mostly Britain), probably signifying the more widespread problematisation and/or exploitation of the phenomenon for particular rhetorical /demagogic and other purposes.
6. The terms are hotly, at times ferociously (slide 4), debated in the Greek political scene (panels, political speeches, the press, etc.), hence the high occurrence of 'populism.'
7. The terms are used pejoratively in the Greek political, and not only, landscape across the board, applied to both right and left policies and practices.
8. In Greek, but not in English, a new verb has been derived 'populise' to denote populist<sub>2</sub> (pejoratively used) verbal and other behaviours.
9. Finally, the recent widespread resurgence of the terms in both E and Gr is probably connected to their broadened resemantised status, to their current diffuse and diluted meaning and to pejorative connotations and ultimately pejorative sense. Naturally, all this links up to socio-political processes.

# Implications or Conjectures

- Some local scholars/philosophers (e.g., Giannaras, Ramphos), engaging with and theorising the local crisis, often claim in more popular platforms (media, talks, etc.) that the crisis in Greece is not a political one, but a crisis of meaning.
- (*An aside*: meaning is most fixed and unambiguous when it is denotative, or, to put it starkly or graphically, when a signifier can at times be anchored to an 'objective,' 'bumpy' object, its purported signified. Meaning can be 'lost' or diffused in ambiguity, vagueness, but also in *ad hoc* and other uses that generate further meaning or connotative dimensions)



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**Thank you!**

**<http://www.enl.auth.gr/staff/kitis.htm>**