SELF-STYLIZATION, STYLE STRATEGY,
STYLISTIC PATTERNS RE-EVALUATED:
THE MAIN STYLISTIC FEATURES OF A PERSONAL BLOG

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Abstract

The goal of the present paper is to identify certain stylistic elements of the newly emerging genre of the I-blog, partly by exploring possible correlations between style and this novel form of communication, and partly by analysing the main stylistic features of one particular personal blog.

The analysis seeks to account for the linguistic and stylistic factors that contribute to construing the blogger's identity in discourse and to examine their specific roles. It also aims to identify any earlier stylistic patterns activated by the genre of the I-blog and any new specific stylistic forms it may generate, with regard to the socio-cultural components of style. The study also examines the role that ironic attitudes and typical metaphoric and metonymic patterns may play in self-stylisation.

Keywords: I-blog, stylising, stylistic pattern, sociocultural components of style, irony

1. The genre of the I-blog and its communicative features

The internet as a sphere of communication has brought with it new forms of expression, new genres and text types. In the netted, multimedial, interactive communicative situations, significant changes occur in the relationships between speaker, addressee, audience, channel, topic and arrangement of information. The newly emerging speech events evoke novel qualities of style.

Blogs are web pages for public access that contain short, regularly occurring, consecutive entries in chronological order. According to the blogger's intention, anything can appear in a blog, such as hyperlinks to other pages, reading logs, important events of the blogger's life, video recordings, poems, etc. The decisive factor in what makes an internet page a blog is "the personal touch, that is the informal, individual tone" (Tarsoly w.d. [without date])

Blogs are delayed discourses of variable interactivity (Bódi 2010), in which anybody is free to add comments (short, spontaneous remarks) to the premeditated entries of the blogger called posts but these contributions can only appear on the public surface of the blog with the approval of the blogger. Posts are more consciously composed units with features of the prototypical written, literary, monological texts, whereas comments, despite their written character and the delay in dialogue, also adopt the devices of prototypical conversations, which follows from their interactive character.

There have been several attempts at classifying the world of blogs, which is colourful both thematically and functionally (cf. Tarsoly w.d.; Csala 2005: 91—94, Juhász 2010). Blogs can be personal, thematic, or meditative, etc., with special categories including buddy-blog,

blog-novel, newsblog, description-blog, company-blog, complex blog and spamblog; or from another angle e.g. textual blog, pictures-only blog, link-collection blog, newsletter blog, society blog. Their arrangement into groups varies and aspects of thematic groupings often mingle with those of media type or authorship (for details, see Juhász 2010). I-blogs or personal blogs, however, figure among the first in each classification.

The distinctive feature of the I-blog is that it presents one particular person's life events, opinions and feelings. The reason this type has a preeminent role among blogs and can be regarded as central in the category is that it allows for the fullest expression of individual tone, which is considered to be a key feature of blogs in general.

2. I-blog and style

Stylistically speaking, the blogosphere shows a colourful picture: it is not easy to put one's finger on any feature of usage or style that would generally apply to all web journals as they represent an infinite variety of individual usage. According to the attitude of the speaker as it appears in the text, a great variety of styles can be detected, from the refined to the rude (see Csala 2005: 106). There are two recurring features only: the posts are relatively short and spontaneous (Tarsoly w.d.) and they reflect the influence of spoken language.

In most communicative opportunities provided by the internet, interactivity plays a decisive role and so the genres of netted communication offer a rich resource for studying style as it is shaped by negotiation in written dialogues (cf. Hámori, this volume). Similarly to discourse on forums (message boards) and community websites, most blogs are also interactive, i.e. they are open to contributions or comments. However, bloggers' entries generally have a predominant role even in personal blogs followed and commented by many. The I-blog offers a kind of self-representation which builds on the traditions, genre and stylistic patterns of journal writing as well as personal and fictive letter-writing. Using the techniques of story-telling, including the projection of the narrative 'I', bloggers create a vivid impression mainly through linguistic construal and style.

By elaborating a digital identity fundamentally based on language use, I-blogs are a more liberal, more open means of self-representation than other means of identity formation with more restrictive templates, such as personal profiles on a community website.

In the majority of blogs, language use and style play a crucial role. The discourse partners have no personal contact and do not know each another so recipients have to rely primarily on (for the most part) linguistically shared information to form an image of the speaker. Thus language acts as the primary means of creating and managing one's personal identity.

The possibilities of self-representation provided by the blog genre support Coupland's insight, who found that the medium of late modernity is a socially construed world to an extent unmatched by any period of the past. This makes the role of language and discourse even more obvious as language is our main resource for creating a social world around us (2007: 29—30).

Coupland's notion of stylisation eliminates the methodological problem of variationist sociolinguistics which requires the use of real and authentic data. In regard to stylisation, one can argue that social meaning is also created when speakers caricature themselves, or when they pretend to be someone else. Furthermore, this approach to stylisation (regarding the language use of bloggers as part of their identity formation through the operations of

stylisation) can eliminate some of the poetic problems concerning the relationship between biographical authors and storytellers.

It follows from the above that with the creation of I-blogs, a linguistically construed speaker identity is formed. As Miller and Shepherd (2004) put it, the bloggers try to locate and build up "an identity that they can understand as unitary, as real."

This also entails that in personal blogs, a key role is played by the discursive centre provided by the linguistically construed storyteller (cf. Szûts 2010). In her detailed communication theoretical analysis, Tarsoly Ikdikó (w.d.) interprets the use of a personal tone as an indispensable feature of blogs: "A factual description of an event on a webpage does not make a blog. On the other hand, when a story is spiced with lots of personal details, and presented in a journal-like format, it can already be called one."

The functioning of blogs also shows the dynamic character of linguistically construed identity. Despite the relative uniformity of the style of certain blogs, stylistic changes can and do occur as a result of reader feedback or intrinsic shifts in the functions of the blog. To quote Juhász (2010), "In active blogs, the process of writing (i.e. the fact that it is not a finished journal) feels highly important, counterbalanced by feedback and comments. The archived contents preserve not only events/descriptions but also snapshots of the fluid identity construal of the blogger's personality. These footprints then continue to generate dialogues in both the readers and the author in the further development of their respective identities."

The linguistically construed personality in the blog can be regarded as the product of a stylisation strategy. Building on the available means of linguistic variation, the blogger creates a specific manner of speaking and in this sense stylises "herself", i.e. her blog identity. Linguistic behaviour, including the language use of the blogs, is a series of identity marking acts in which the speaker's identity continuously develops through usage events.

In view of the communicative features of blogs presented above, most of their stylistic properties can be interpreted as devices serving the strategy of linguistic identity formation. Although interactivity is a defining factor of the text type, it follows from the popularity of blog writing — with the estimated number of blogs in the tens of millions — that most of them are only visited by few people and no genuine interaction ever occurs in them (cf. Bódi 2010). A key factor of the popularity of I-blogs with a large following is their style, since a character construed linguistically in an authentic and entertaining way can contribute significantly to the maintenance of interest in a personal story.

3. Framework and criteria for the study of style

Regarding the phenomenon of style, researchers from various fields including pragmatics, conversation analysis, sociolinguistics and cognitive linguistics seem to have converged on the view that social meanings and identities in interaction are in part construed linguistically by style. Moreover, these approaches also suggest that the socio-cultural factors which were previously regarded as determinants of style (e.g. gender, social group, age) are not a priori given and neutral categories independent of evaluation; rather, they themselves are created and shaped over the course of interactions.

In the present paper, I will use analytic criteria and insights from different but (in my view) not incompatible sources to interpret the key stylistic features of an I-blog.

In the analysis, I build on Coupland's concept of style, which originates from sociolinguistic approaches and views style as a discursive dynamism. Coupland regards stylistic variation as a dynamic representation of the individual. Consequently, he does not simply focus on the use of particular variables but rather on what strategy these linguistic factors support. Each level of linguistic variability offers resources for speakers to stylise themselves in different ways; that is, they provide strategic possibilities for speakers to create their identity in conversation (cf. Coupland 2007).

I also consider the phenomenon of *mind styling* as an aspect of stylising strategies (cf. Semino 2002, 2007), which concerns the role that metaphors, schemes and pragmatic operations play in the linguistic elaboration of a speaker's self. More generally, I regard as part of the self-stylising strategy any linguistic devices that in some way contribute to the formation of the speaker's identity in the discourse universe.

The other analytic system I will employ is based on Gábor Tolcsvai Nagy's cognitive approach (1996, 2005) to the socio-cultural factors of style. Specifically, I will aim to show that the blog as a text type can give rise to new stylistic patterns by reconfiguring the usual co-occurrence of values across socio-cultural domains.

On the basis of Gábor Tolcsvai Nagy's model, Szilárd Tátrai (this volume) argues for the introduction of the concept of stylistic attitude, interpreted as a "context-dependent vantage point that brings the socio-cultural factors into play". I assume that neither Tátrai's notion of stylistic attitude nor the functioning of socio-cultural domains is independent from the speaker's stylising strategy. On the contrary, it is precisely the speaker's stylistic attitude that determines her stylistic strategy as it is dynamically played out in discourse. In this sense, style as a strategy is not only directed at the continuous creation and transformation of the speaker's image. Rather, it is also manifested in the processing and construal of all aspects of the scene of joint attention and the referential scene. Having said this, my chief focus will be on the speaker's self-stylisation as this factor is central to establishing the highly personal style of I-blogs.

4. Stylistic features of a personal blog

Studying the style of specific blogs can be a fruitful way of exploring style as a strategy and the stylistic features that contribute to it. With regard to the relevance of analysing individual styles, Johnstone (1996) argues that it may be useful to consider individuals as individuals if we are to understand social meanings. A detailed account of individual style, a specific case study can be more sensitive to the properties of context and contextualisation than other methods of data collection with a simplified model of stylistic processes. The individual case studies cannot reveal how speakers generally tend to behave; in our case, they cannot inform us about the style of personal blogs in general. However, they may permit even general conclusions about the kinds of processes that occur in such texts through their style.

The text chosen to illustrate the questions of style in I-blogs can be accessed at www.nesztelencsiga.hu, with the title being *settenkedve lopakodó* 'sneaking about stealthily'. This web journal has been updated continuously since August 2005, and has been widely read by up to 1.500 people a day in certain periods. The blog has also attracted frequent and varied comments, which makes the site highly interactive. In an earlier paper (Domonkosi 2011), I analysed the linguistic features of this blog with a focus on the uniqueness and coherence of

its style. This time, I follow up on my previous findings and re-interpret them by applying a range of novel criteria.

The stylistic features addressed in the sections below are the products of different analytic criteria which, however, can be applied in parallel. Hence, it is important to bear in mind that the phenomena are closely intertwined. For example, the issue of ironic interpretation cannot be separated from interactivity and usually not from intertextuality either, with the adoption and mixing of style patterns also bordering on the phenomena of intertextuality and style imitation. Thus, section titles should be thought of as indicating only the chief focus of each section. Throughout the paper, my main concerns will be (1) the stylisation of the speaker, (2) the prevalence of socio-cultural factors and relatedly, (3) the dynamic adaptation of conventional stylistic patterns.

4.1. Patterns of style: following, mixing, transformation

Among the forms of communication on the internet, there are text types which are taken over from indirect communication without alteration, others which go through partial modification as a result of the technical possibilities, and thirdly, there are entirely new text types owing their very existence to novel technology (cf. Domonkosi 2005: 147). The blog can be regarded as a new genre which is nevertheless based on tradition. This duality manifests itself in the way it follows and reconfigures the so-called proto-styles, emerging from typical co-occurrences between stylistic patterns, conventional stylistic devices and socio-cultural variables.

The norms bearing on particular genres and text forms as social activities are always open-ended, changing continuously. Naturally, the socio-cultural norms, habits and style strategies associated with newly emerging internet genres such as the blog can be moulded more flexibly than those of historically established text types.

In this respect, the stylistic properties of the I-blog represent a balancing act between two entirely different stylistic patterns: the refined style of journals as well as personal or fictive letters (possibly with a literary appeal) on the one hand and the casualness of everyday conversation on the other (cf. Tolcsvai 2005, Tátrai, this volume). Furthermore, as a result of the joint presence of the written medium and (delayed) interactivity, adjustment to the features of both the written and the oral proto-discourses may also form part of the stylistic strategy (cf. Tátrai 2011: 74—80).

Regarding the domain of situation as a socio-cultural variable, an unusual display of intimate style can be observed in contemporary public written language when compared with traditional stylistic patterns. The widespread use of I-blogs with their directness and confessional character has overwritten the boundary between private and public dimensions of social life. (cf. Weinberger 2002). This transformation affecting the borders of intimate, personal, social and public spheres of communication in turn brings new forms and qualities of style in its wake. In the I-blog genre, it is primarily the use of informal tone in a public domain that transforms the typical co-occurrences between socio-cultural factors in conventional style types.

4.1.1. Formal criteria of the blog as devices of a style strategy

Similarly to other digital text forms mediated by the internet, the I-blog has a few external properties required by the medium, such as a domain name or the so-called blogroll, which makes

reference to other blogs possible. These (quasi-)compulsory formal elements adapt the literary-journalistic practice of grabbing attention by titles to the new communicative situation.

The domain name and title of the blog (the most prominent elements accessible to even non-readers) may become a decisive force in the style strategy. In the blog analysed below, both the domain name and the title are made highly salient and provocative by linguistic means. They clearly serve self-stylisation by giving readers a sense of the ease of style, playfulness and sensitivity to linguistic expression they can expect from the speaker construed in the blog.

The compound word *nesztelencsiga* 'silent snail' in the domain name is a phonetic figure of speech based on substitution evoking the paronymous phrase *meztelen csiga* 'slug'. On one occasion, the blogger discloses the fact that the snail originally made its way into the name of the blog as an intertextual reference inspired by another text, namely the song *Csiga* 'Snail' by the Hungarian band *Kispál és a Borz*.

The two words in the title, *settenkedve lopakodó* 'sneaking about stealthily', which are connected in a pleonastic phrase, have similar meanings but different phonetic shapes (with front vs. back vowels). The expression immediately sets the scene for the light-hearted, playful and amusing character of the text. The prominent role of style in I-blogs in general and the analysed blog in particular is clearly shown by the fact that these elements point forward and enter a relationship with the text not through their meaning but rather through foregrounding the playfulness of linguistic construal.

In addition to the domain name and the title, the frame of the blog includes elements such as links to other pages (friends' blogs, other websites of the blogger), the so-called blogroll, and access to archived material. These elements, which can be interpreted as constituting the paratextuality of the blog (cf. Genette 1982), are situated at the "borders" of the text, mediating between the text and its environment, with a strong influence on the processing of the dynamic content.

In the blog under investigation, links to other texts also have unique titles, adding linguistic support to the blogger's image formation. As they are always in sight, their style can be influential at any moment while the blog is being read. Apart from a few inconspicuous outward-pointing titles (e.g. *nonprofit reklám* 'nonprofit advertisement'*, kiemelt kategóriák* 'priority categories'), the wordings give evidence of the speaker viewing herself from outside. Additional pages profile the fields of interest of a *lucia* in the third person, who can be identified as the speaker of the blog: *lucia játszik* 'lucia is playing', *lucia fordít* 'lucia is translating'*, lucia dolgozik* 'lucia is working'*, lucia olvas (mer okos is)* 'lucia is clever ('cause she's clever too)'. References to the narrator of the blog in third person singular occasionally occur in the text as well. The remark in parenthesis shows one of the most typical features of the style of the blog, self-irony, while the phonetically contracted form (*mer* ''cause' < *mert* 'because') captures a sense of how the blog's language use imitates spoken discourse.

The title for the list of referenced blogs is *így írtok ti* ('this is how you write'), which fits into the intertextual world of the blog by alluding to Hungarian writer Frigyes Karinthy's classic work. In a parallel way, selected comments come under the title *így kommentáltok ti* ('this is how you comment')*.* In this expression, playfulness is also achieved by replacing the usual verb in Hungarian for 'comment (e.g. a blog post or other online article)', viz. *kommentel*, by a similar-sounding, etymologically related verb, *kommentál* 'commentate.'

The title for a list of previous posts of the blogger is *ilyenek voltam* 'such-PL be-PAST-

1SG' / 'These are what I was like', which is made salient by the lack of number agreement between the copula (in first person singular) and its predicative complement (in the plural). At the same time, it also helps recall the familiar title of a film and a song, *ilyenek voltunk* 'this is what we were like'.

The author's remark on the outward appearance of the blog features the figure of litotes as well as an ironic tone, in line with the tone of the blog as a whole (*A nem hibátlan designt a Yummie kreatív ügynökség szállította* 'The not faultless design has been delivered by the creative agency Yummie').

A further recurring element is the signiture closing each blog post: *ezzel lucia [16:22]-kor szórakoztatta magát* 'lucia entertained herself with this at [16:22].' Of the possible functions of blog writing, this phrase emphasises a person's writing to oneself rather than the interactive function.

These parts of the blog are important determinants of style strategy as they mark reflection on the interactive character of blog-writing and reading, in line with the fact that blogs tend to highlight the issue of genres/text types (cf. the notion of meta-genres, Giltrow 2002). These titles function as explicit meta-discursive elements naming aspects of the interactive situation as well as the roles and activities of the participants. These explicitly self-representing elements contribute significantly to the speaker's identity formation in the blog by their continuous presence.

The blog creates the new formal elements required by the communicative situation by drawing on, and entering a dialogue with, the title-giving tradition of literature and journalism, especially its current with a penchant for puns. It thus presents an example of how conventional linguistic devices can be dynamically adapted.

4.1.2. Post titles — subverting tradition

Giving titles to posts is not compulsory in blogs; in some of them, the posts are organised only by dates or so called labels. Labels are keywords for indicating recurring thematic elements or the function of the post and thus possibly also stylistic features. They are useful in the classification of blogs and are usually listed at the end of each post. In the blog at hand, posts generally start with titles in lower case letters. Linguistically speaking, the most typical construal is the use of short, elliptic sentences including a nominal with the *-ról/rôl* case suffix ('on, about'). This is reminiscent of the titles Sándor Márai uses in his *Herbal* (cf. Raisz: 2008: 111), cf. *a hagyományokról* 'about traditions', *az áldozati ajándékokról* 'about sacrificial gifts', *a kádár lányairól* 'about the cooper's daughters', *arról, amikor kaptam enni* 'about the time I was given food.' This title-giving practice might suggest that the title specifies the theme of the text but the relationship between the title and the post is usually more complex than that. Titles with a definite article raise the expectation that the topics designated in the title will be addressed in a general and comprehensive way. Such titles, however, generally foreground less significant elements of the posts concerned. For example, in the second paragraph of the post *az anna kareninából* 'about Anna Karenina' (five paragraphs in total), the characters are discussing the screen adaptation of the novel in a few lines; the post as a whole, however, is about a day spent with a girl-friend. Another post called *az esti mesékrôl* 'on bedtime stories' expounds on the complicated communicative habits of the blogger's partner, only noting in the end that their future child will hardly ask

them to read bedtime stories. These titles play against the expectations of the reader: instead of specifying the theme as required by tradition, they merely give hints as to its nature.

This title-giving practice subverts the tradition of thematic title-giving and by evoking short texts with titles given in a similar manner, associates the world of blogs not only with the text type of journals but also with other genres of literature and journalism. The device does not overwrite the tradition of title-giving; rather, it only exploits a traditional stylistic device for the purpose of playfulness and entertainment (cf. Balbus 1993). From the resetting of readers' expectations it may however follow that the occasional thematic title of a blog looks surprising when it does conform to tradition, e.g. *a házról* 'about the house' is indeed about a newly purchased house. Other noteworthy titles include *szóval* 'that is', a discourse marker highlighting the continuity between otherwise independent posts, and titles referring to the manner of communication rather than the theme, cf. *képes* 'in pictures', *most csak gyorsan* 'just a quick one for now', and *fotó* 'photo'.

There are also titles explicitly reflecting on linguistic construal. For example, an awkwardly worded post with multiple subordinate clauses has the title *bejegyzés sok hoggyal* 'a post with lots of 'that's', and another one is titled *bejegyzés sok lábjegyzettel* 'a post with lots of footnotes.' Overall, the title-giving practice of the blogger challenges reader expectations, and expresses a polemic attitude to the title-giving tradition of certain genres of literature and journalism (cf. Balbus 1993). However, by keeping the habit of title-giving, it also follows the practice of monological literary text types. The provocative intention behind post titles plays a part in self-stylisation as well. Specifically, these titles contribute to the elaboration of the speaker's original, unique, and interesting character.

4.1.3. Levels of elaboration, planning, and refinement

The structure of posts in the blog is highly elaborated and carefully planned. The devices based on rhetoric/stylistic figures of speech indicate a conscious approach to the forming of the text and an attitude that puts a premium on form. The use of figures of speech as traditional text-structuring devices indicates conformity to the proto-discourse (cf. Tátrai 2011: 74—80) of planned, written, monological texts reflecting indirect interaction.

(1) Tegnapelőtt azt álmodtam, hogy szétrúgtam a volt pasim fejét. Mezítláb. Naturális volt, hallottam (éreztem) a fogak reccsenését, porcok csikorgását, ilyesmi.

Tegnap azt álmodtam, hogy most már mindenképpen gyerek kell nekem. Naturális volt. Kiszámoltam például, hogy május-júniusban kéne teherbe esnem, mert a vízöntők-halak még egészen elviselhetőek (megnyugtató, hogy azért álmomban is megvannak a prioritásaim), és megterveztem, hogy melyik sarokban legyen a babaágy.

Ma azt álmodtam, hogy abortuszt hajtanak végre rajtam (néha kicsit túlkompenzálok álmomban). Naturális volt. Kötőtűvel csinálták.

The day before yesterday I dreamt that I was kicking the head of my ex-bloke to pieces. Barefooted. It was naturalistic, I heard (felt) the teeth cracking, the gristles gritting, like that.

> *Yesterday I dreamt that I wanted a child at last, by all means. It was naturalistic. I calculated for instance that I should become pregnant in May or June as the Aquarius-Pisces types are still quite tolerable (it is reassuring that I do have my priorities even in my dream) and I worked out which corner should the baby's bed go to.*
>
> *Today I dreamt that I was having an abortion (sometimes I overcompensate in my dream). It was naturalistic. They used a knitting needle.*

The three paragraphs have a parallel structure and characteristically, the sentences in each of them are broken into parts. The unchanged repetition of one sentence in each paragraph only strengthens the cohesion between them.

The conscious construal and rhetorisation of the narrative can be detected even in posts which otherwise show the immediacy of spoken language, thus creating a new mixed quality of style in which the properties of planned, elaborate language exploiting figures of speech mingle with the looser features of spoken discourse in text formation. Post (2), illustrated with the photo of a cheese cake in the blog, shows this style through the interplay of discourse markers in initial and closing positions, puns and its structure relying on ever higher doses of preterition (paralipsis). The high level of reflection on text-building is accentuated by the author's playing with antecedent ambiguity.

(2) Ja, azt nem is említettem, hogy C. Eastwood ezzel a kezében (vagyis a kezemben, mert rögtön belenyomta) állított be hozzám. Azt viszont nem véletlenül nem említettem, és nem is fogom, hogy két nap alatt végeztem vele (mármint a sajttortával (alternatív vélemények szerint túró-), C. E. nem bírta addig).
    Nem rossz nekem, na.

By the way, I forgot to mention that C. Eastwood popped in with this in his hand (that is in my hand, as he forced it into mine right away). However, it is not by chance that I haven't mentioned yet, and will not either, that it took me two days to finish off the poor thing (the cheesecake, that is (according to alternative views, it was curd, not cheese), C. E. did not stand it that long).
I'm having it good you see.

Conscious planning and elaboration do not go hand in hand with a homogeneous refinement of style. In this respect, the blog is not uniform, with passages representing varying points of the loose—neutral—refined continuum. On the other hand, looseness can be interpreted as part of the style strategy as it imitates casual conversations.

4.1.4. Interactivity and self-representation

The possibility of dialogue, interactivity and the attempt to establish an informal relationship with the readers through linguistic construal also associates the style of the I-blog with the protodiscourse (cf. Tátrai 2011: 74—80) whose main features are direct interaction, spontaneity, spokenness and dialogicity. The examined web journal is a popular, widely read and frequently commented text. Still, the posts rarely profile the recipients themselves or their

relationship with the speaker, and only rarely initiate interaction in an open way. The speaker generally uses comments to reply to the readers' feedback.

Posts with an explicit claim on readers' reactions only appear in the blog in a later phase of its existence, after 5—6 years, when meaningful personal connections have been set up.

(3) Írjatok nekem légyszi-légyszi olyan „mi a különbség" vicceket, amik beleférnek egy Pratchettbe (tehát sikamlós lehet, de torpedóromboló ne legyen benne például), kérte a lány, akit barátai tréfás-mókás embernek tartottak, ennek ellenére egy sem jutott eszébe.

Please, please send me "what's the difference" jokes that fit in a Pratchett (so they can be racy but with no torpedo destroyer for example), was the request of a girl who was considered a funny person by her friends but still could not remember any.

The *légyszi-légyszi* ('please-please') conversational form adds intimacy to the situation while the request is softened by the interplay and happy mix of style patterns as well as the ironical third person self-representation.

Example (4) illustrates the contradiction between the ironical self-representation (to be discussed in more detail later), and the genuine interactivity of the communicative situation; in other words, the negotiation of a depreciating self-representation rendered less certain by irony. It is interesting to observe the interplay between an apparent initiation of interaction in the blog post and the responses it provokes.

(4) Én nagyon drukkolok magamnak (aki blogírásért cserébe pelenkát, fodrászt vagy kaját szeretne biztosítani nekem, annak üzenem, hogy nyitott vagyok bármire).
Como:
Nekünk maradt egy fél csomag 5-ös méretű Pampers (kb. 30 db), ha hasznát tudjátok venni, nagyon szívesen odaadom. :)
lucia:
@Como: tényleg nagyon köszi, de nem lenne pofám elfogadni, azért nálunk sokkal több rászorulóbb van :)
zsuzska:
öööö, tulajdonképpen ha megmondod, hogy melyik kajáldából szeretnél szállíttatni, megmondom nekik a bankkártyám számát. Vagy valami ilyesmi. Simán blogelő-fizetésnek tudom majd be.
lucia:
@zsuzska: :D ááá, tényleg ég a pofám :)

I am keeping my fingers crossed for myself (if anyone is ready to provide me with nappies, a hairdresser or food in exchange for blog-writing, I let them know I am open to any suggestion.
Como: We've got half a package of size 5 Pampers left (cca. 30 pieces), if you can use those, I am more than happy to offer them :)
lucia:
@Como: thanks a lot indeed, but I wouldn't have the cheek to accept them,

there are a lot of people needier than us :)
zsuzska:
er, in fact if you tell me which food-place you'd like the food delivered
from, I will give them my card number. Or something like that. I'll just
take it to be subscription fee for the blog.
lucia:
@zsuzska: :B oh my cheeks are really red with shame :)

In these dialogues, we can detect a negotiation about the role of irony. In part, the post's irony comes from the contradiction that the author only seemingly intends to use the blog surface for a purpose he could actually even use it for, given its interactive character, and there is a lack of consensus between the blogger and her readers about the genuineness of her request.

In the case of similar initiatives, the common standpoint which is the prerequisite of irony is reached more easily due to the absurdity of the request. The devices that contribute to the ironic reading of (5) include the stylistic incompatibility of linguistic elements, their contradictions resulting from a discrepancy between evaluative perspectives, and the recognition that the conflicts are generated intentionally.

(5) Ha lehet kérni, akkor csábítson már el egy blogmotor-üzemeltető (és keltse életre a vinyómat, továbbá csináljon nekem ikreket, mert háromgyerekesként egész pofás összeget kapnék családi pótléknak gyerekenként, meg persze az otthon melege, az ôszinte, csilingelô gyermekhangok, a pénz ezek mellett természetesen semmi, de akkor is másfélszer annyi fejenként, na).

If I may ask, could a blog engine operator please seduce me (and bring my hard drive to life again, and then would he please make me pregnant with twins so I could get a nice sum for child benefit as a mother of three, and of course the warmth of the home, the innocent, tinkling voices of children, money of course pales in comparison, but even so it is 50 per cent more per head, after all).

The interactive character of the style-play is illustrated by the following comment whose speaker recognises the irony of the post, and continues with the same tone, reinforcing the intimacy of the situation:

(6) A blogmotor-üzemeltetést kitanulom hamar, vinyómentés első hallásra 'csak' pénz kérdése, babákat meg max. olyan gyorsan csinálunk, hogy szinte egyszerre születnek vagy egyszerűen júniusban. ;)
I can learn blog engine operation in no time, on first hearing rescuing the hard drive sounds like 'only' a small question of money, and if needed we can make babies so quick they are born practically together or simply in June. ;)

Albeit rarely, there are some references in the main body of blog texts to the presumed reactions of recipients. For example, commenters often ask whether or not the author is on intimate terms with certain men mentioned in the blog. Then, whenever the men in question or

new male characters are referred to in the blog, there is nearly always a remark in parenthesis to follow *nem véletlenül nem járunk, vagy ilyesmi* 'no we are not dating by any chance, or anything like that', which becomes ironical by virtue of evoking the presumed beliefs of the recipients (cf. Tátrai 2011: 203). Whereas the self-irony directed at the speaker is continuous, this is an exceptional case profiling an ironic attitude to the recipients.

The possibility of feedback through comments opens up ways of reflecting on style too. The meta-stylistic reflections of readers highlight the originality and ironic style of the blog, also confirming the point that a blog may be more widely read if its style is entertaining. This can be illustrated by a reader's comment on the passage *felszínességem egy alsó tagozatos csillámpóniéval vetekszik* 'my superficiality rivals that of an elementary school scintillating pony': *Különben meg ez a csillámpónis hasonlat :) Lucia, nem semmi a stílusod.* 'And now this simile about the scintillating pony :) Lucia, your style is quite amazing.' The following comment to a note quoted from the speaker's grandmother also centres on style: *Legalább tudjuk, Lucia, hogy kitől örökölted a jegyzetelést, és az iróniát...* 'At least we know, Lucia, who you inherited the note-making and the irony from...'

4.1.5. Imitation of spoken discourse

In view of the adoption of different style patterns, with special regard to the informality and interactivity of conversation, it is worth reckoning with the presence of spoken language traits and their possible roles in the style of the blog.

Posts commonly begin with the discourse marker *ja* ('yes' > 'oh, by the way'), which imitates the informality of spoken language. As it has a discourse organising and marking function, and typically indicates taking the floor in conversation, it feels as though we were joining a conversation in the middle (2, 9). This device, by contributing to the elaboration of an informal communicative situation, forms part of a style strategy in which the speaker highlights her casualness and intimate relationship with the readers. Therefore, the element in question cannot be said to signal adaptation to the reality of spoken discourse; rather, it is a device for stylising the speaker and the situation by way of imitating spoken language. Hence, such elements in the posts only counterpoint but do not eliminate their refined style. This kind of beginning has been invariably common ever since the start of the blog, and there is even a blog post in which both paragraphs begin in this way (*még az építkezésrôl* 'more about the house-building').

Forms imitating spoken discourse by their phonetic spelling are remarkably rare in the main body of the blog's text, especially when compared to other digital texts. However, the phrase *asszem* (< *asz
iszem* < *azt hiszem* 'I think') is a regular occurrence. This contracted form complies with the trend of eliminating a second open syllable in the sound shape of a word (compare *asziszem*), and allows for easier pronunciation. The phonetic spelling does not simply evoke the processes of spoken discourse, as *asszem* has an increasingly wide currency in informal written language as well, in close correlation with its grammaticalisation into a modal adverb (cf. Markó 2003, Veszelszki 2010).

The close relationship between spoken language traits on the one hand and dialogicity/interactivity on the other is indicated by the fact that the fusional form *nemtom* (< *nem tudom* 'I don't know') does not occur in the main text of the blog, only in reply to a reader's comment.

Owing to the fact that in addition to the above properties, blog posts also show a high level of elaboration and even the adoption of literary-stylistic patterns, the abbreviation *h* (< *hogy* 'that'), which is accepted in informal digital written language, does not normally occur in the posts themselves, only in comments. One exception is a post with the title *kérés-kérdés* 'request-question', which is thus an explicitly interactive post. The difference between the posts and the author's comments can be regarded as a shift of style resulting from adaptation to the language use of commenters. Therefore, both the posts and the blogger's comments contribute to the speaker's self-representation, even though they betray different discourse strategies.

4.1.6. The functions of pseudo-errors

Crossed out passages are recurring playful linguistic devices in the blog. They attract attention precisely by having been crossed out: pseudo-correction seems to allow the recipient to establish a more intimate relationship with the speaker by affording him a glimpse into her secret thoughts. This practice, as part of the style strategy, strengthens the relationship between the author and the readers. Regarding the socio-cultural variable of the situation, it contributes to the creation of intimacy and informality.

(7)   Ma bent sürgölődöm a munkahelyemen, ~~mert már nagyon le vagyok maradva a kedvenc fórumaim olvasásával~~ hogy ne felejtsék el az arcomat (…).

     Today I am buzzing about at work, ~~as I am lagging behind with reading my favourite forums~~ so that they won't forget my face (...)

Usually the texts are grammatically well-formed without the crossed out parts as the latter are substituted by another passage. However, it does occur sometimes that there is no substitute and without the crossed out elements the sentence seems ill-formed and confusing. This device creates a highly intimate communicative situation and serves the identity formation of an informal and open speaker:

(8) Állítólag az alkohol előhozza az ember valódi énjét, ezt nem tudom, én simán csak ~~bárkivel smárolok~~ már nem, mert már nem vagyok szingli, szóval simán csak rendkívül szellemes vagyok, és nagyon szeretek mindenkit.

     They say alcohol brings one's true self to surface, well I don't know, I just simply ~~kiss with anybody~~ not any more as I've stopped being single, so basically I'm just extraordinarily witty and love everybody so much.

The high level of planning behind the posts is evident from their degree of elaboration and their use of structural devices built on figures of speech. Consequently these crossed out passages can by no means be regarded as traces of self-correction but rather only as stylisations thereof. They are meant to create a semblance of spontaneity. On the other hand, the technique also draws attention to the fact that the texts are changeable and incidental. And since this typographical device can also be found in postmodern literature, its application may be interpreted as expressing affiliation with literary traditions.

4.2. Ironical attitude — the functions of irony

Irony is a ubiquitous feature of the analysed blog, with the ironic attitude primarily directed at the speaker, less frequently at particular elements of the story and only occasionally at the communicative partners. The interpretation of self-irony as a self-stylising strategy is harmonious with the pragmatic interpretation of irony offered by Leech. Leech (1983: 82) assumes that irony directed at a communication partner is motivated by the intention to avoid open insult. Irony directed at the speaker herself also serves to avoid negative, offensive statements that would definitely harm her self-image. In addition, it contributes to the speaker's construal of a detached and self-critical narrator through rendering her own evaluative position uncertain.

Self-irony can be detected for example in the post called *sumaher* (a phonetic spelling of Formula 1 world champion Michael Schumacher's surname) in which the race driver serves as the blogger's self-ironic metaphor. Irony arises from the blog text refuting the expectations created by the title. Conversely, it is through the relativising function of irony that the inadequacy of the profiled evaluation of the situation becomes obvious (cf. Tátrai 2008: 318).

(9) Ja, a kocsival nem értem haza szürkület előtt, de napközben úgyis mindig az zavar, hogy nem látom az autó széleit, így nem tudom betájolni, hol van a járdaszegélyhez képest. A szürkület miatt tegnap viszont a járdaszegélyt sem láttam, úgyhogy ez nem volt probléma.

And by the way I did not get home before dusk, but anyway during the day I always worry that I can't see the edges of the car and so cannot judge how far it is from the curb. Yesterday in the dusk, however, I did not see the curb either, so this was not a problem.

The explicitly self-representative parts of the text are typically ironic in attitude, and one of the main themes of the I-blog is the speaker herself, that is, her life events. Regarding the socio-cultural variable of value, this creates a peculiar situation in which through the adoption of an ironic attitude the seemingly depreciating elements will contribute to the creation of a self-critical, modest profile of the speaker, supporting her positive self-image. Irony is thus a device that renders evaluation uncertain by establishing the possibility of alternative evaluations.

While most commonly directed at the speaker, irony may also extend to the stories or situations narrated in the blog. Example (10), which starts with self-irony, successfully evades open depreciation through the ironic construal inherent in evoking the style of official texts in an inadequate way (cf. Leech 1983: 82).

(10) Most két levél fogalmazódik az én nemesebb dolgokra hivatott elmémben: az egyiket, ha a csúnya szavakat kihagyom, úgy lehetne összefoglalni, hogy *Tisztelt Ügyintéző, a mulasztásomat pótolandó szeretném tájékoztatni arról a valóban megdöbbentő és kikövetkezhetetlen tényről, hogy a betegszabadságom előtti utolsó munkanapom a betegszabadságom kezdő dátuma előtti utolsó munkanap volt,* a másik pedig valahogy úgy szólna, hogy *Tisztelt Nyugat-Európai / Dél-Amerikai / Észak-Amerikai / Csendes-Óceáni / Balti / Afrikai Állam, könyörögve kérem Önöket, hogy annektáljanak minket, hajtsanak rabigába, és kényszerítsék ránk a közigazgatási rendszerüket.*

Two letters are now being formed in my mind destined for nobler things: one of them, if I leave out the obscene words, could be summed up as Dear Sir, to make up for my neglect I wish to inform you of the truly astonishing and incomprehensible fact that my last workday before my sick-leave was the last workday prior to the date when my sick-leave started, and the other would go more or less like this Dear West-European / South-American / North-American / Pacific Oceanic / Baltic / African State, I do implore you to annex us, subjugate us and force your public administration system on us.

4.3. The roles of conceptualisation techniques in stylisation

Another key aspect of the blogger's self-stylisation is the process by which metaphors and conceptualisations characteristic of the individual participate in the construal of that person's mind. Cognitive analyses of *mind styling* (Somino 2002, 2007) primarily focus on the role of schemes, metaphors and (more recently) pragmatic operations (Semino 2007: 164—167). According to Semino, consistently occurring metaphoric patterns reflect the conceptual system of the identity being construed in a text.

A frequent and especially prominent device of the analysed blog is to create mappings between the ANIMATE and INANIMATE conceptual domains. The permeability of the two worlds often has a formative influence on story-telling. One recurring mode of personification is the projection of feelings into the world of objects. Presenting the feelings of a bicycle or computer serves to highlight the presence of intense human emotions. In the background of these personifications, there is a metonymic mapping by which the objects of human beings show their owners' feelings and behaviour. Thus, people can be interpreted through their possessions, i.e. the idealised cognitive model (ICM) of POSSESSION is at work (cf. Kövecses—Benczes 2010: 69).

(11)   Én nagyrészt nem kaptam levegőt, de a lefelé gurulás állat volt, a bicaj is nagyon élvezte, most meg a raktárban a rács mellôl nézegeti vidáman a kamionokat, és feszít büszkén, mert mindenki mondja neki, hogy milyen szép piros bicikli, meg csengetik a csengőjét (…).

I could hardly breathe, but the rolling down part was terrific, the bike was enjoying it too, and now it is peeping happily at the trucks from behind the bars in the warehouse, proud of herself as everybody tells her what a pretty red bike she is and they are ringing her bell too (...).

Similarly, a metonymic relationship can be noted in the personification of the diet in (12). Here, the diet is blamed for the human behaviour it causes; a case of the ICM of CAUSATION (Kövecses—Benczes 2010: 68-69). Through an ironically stylised self-representation, this metonymic schema allows the speaker to pretend that she can defer responsibility for her actions.

(12)   Aztán egy jóakaróm elküldte nekem tegnapra a Touching the Void című kedvenc hegymászós történetem megfilmesítését, amit az étrendem úgy hálált meg, hogy kritizálta a helyesírása külalakját, mert a diéta az ilyen, fennhéjázó és szereti éreztetni mindenkivel, hogy hol a helye.

Then one of my well-wishers sent me yesterday the screen version of my favourite mountain climbing story Touching the Void, which my diet was so grateful for it went about criticising her orthography, because this is what diets are like, arrogant and keen on letting people feel where they belong.

Through the use of personification, the blogger literally brings concepts and objects to life, creating a sense that they are controlling people's lives. In the following example, the personification of time instantiates the YEARS ARE PERSONS conceptual metaphor, evident in everyday language use in expressions such as *érkezik az új év* 'the new year is coming', *búcsúztatjuk az elmúlt évet* 'we are bidding farewell to the past year', etc. What makes personification in the text original and poignant is that it is evoked by a speech addressed to the year in question (i.e. there is an attempt at interaction), with the unusual conceptualisation of the past year as a corpse also adding to the effect.

(13)   Továbbá ezúton üzenném 2010-nek, hogy van még két és fél hónapja arra, hogy összeszedje magát, mert bár sok szempontból irigylem magam mostanában, és nagy átlagban pluszban vagyok, de azért rengeteggel lóg még nekem, ha nem akarja, hogy 2011 a vendetta éve legyen (melynek során 2010 meggyalázott hullájának darabjait a kapura szegelem, okulásul az utána jövő éveknek).

Furthermore I'd like to send the year 2010 a clear message that it has two and a half months left to pull itself together, as although in many ways I am envious of myself these days and on the whole I have a positive balance, it still owes me an awful lot unless it wants 2011 to be the year of the vendetta (during which I will be nailing pieces of the disgraced corpse of 2010 on the gate, as a lesson to the years to come).

4.4. The functions of intertextuality

Blogs, similarly to all internet genres, are characterised by hypertextuality, i.e. the display of links to other websites. However, intertextuality as created by hypertext is only one way in which texts may enter a dialogue. In particular, it differs in several respects from transtextuality in the sense of Genette (1982). First, the recognition of links is not dependent on reader competence. Second, linking does not show the strength of references. Third, it does not make multiple associations possible. Fourth, links can also refer to pictures for example, not only to texts. Fifth, it provides an easy way for connecting even totally different texts (cf. Józsa w.d.).

Reference to other internet pages may be found in the paratextual part of the blog, i.e. the frame surrounding all blog posts in the same form, and the posts themselves may also contain links to other texts. The blog under study makes frequent use of such elements, with a special subset of them referring to a second, thematically independent blog by the same author, which is dedicated to her child. These texts are not only connected through the links but also complement each another. They exemplify genuine transtextuality, with correlations in content and frequent cross-references from both directions.

(14)   Ezt talán igazából a <u>gyerek blogjába</u> kellene rakni, de Lamot (nem járunk, vagy ilyesmi) nincs szívem egy Muciblogba száműzni, úgyhogy akit nem érdekel, az ugorgyon.

> *Maybe I'd better put this <u>in the child's blog</u> but I haven't the heart to banish Lam (we don't go out or something) into a Muciblog so those who don't care should just skip it.*

Example (14) supports the view that "in a digital text, links and transtextuality markers can go side by side without entirely covering each other; transtextuality can be established not only by links but by other devices as well" (Józsa w.d.). In particular, in the same sentence which references the author's other blog, the use of the verb form *ugorgyon* ('he/she should skip it') alludes to the novel *Légy jó mindhalálig* 'Be Faithful Unto Death' by Zsigmond Móricz.

Other forms of transtextuality can also significantly contribute to the stylistic effect of the blog. One important result of transtextuality is the intimate tone which gradually develops through reference to shared reference texts (known to both the author and the readers), which helps create a sense of community. The analysed blog features allusions to several television series. In (15), a commenter specifies more precisely the source of an explicit reference which also functions as a marker of irony. The tone of the ensuing dialogue highlights the fact that reference to shared knowledge helps strengthen interpersonal connections.

(15a) Itt viszont a magyar vámhatósággal van dolgunk, ami egy rejtélyes, titokzatos szervezet (ahogy a Middlemanben mondják, its power is only exceeded by its mystery) minden szempontból, ki itt belépsz, satöbbi.
Here, though, we are dealing with the Hungarian customs authority, which is a mysterious, secretive organisation (as they say in Middleman, its power is only exceeded by its mystery), in every respect, ye who enter here, etcetera.

(15b) Csillaggyermek:
The middleman!
De abban szerintem nem volt ilyen. A hé haver, hol a kocsim. Na, abban volt, csak fordítva. :)
    lucia:
    @Csillaggyermek: valóban, the continuum transfuctioner!

Star child:
The middleman!
But I think there was no such thing in it. The hello, buddy, where's my car. Well, it was in it, only the other way round :)
lucia:
@Star child: indeed, the continuum transfuctioner!

Occasionally, there are intertextual markers almost amounting to set phrases which cite a well-known passage word by word, and function as though the author was winking to the reader. Clearly, this kind of text formation based on commonly known passages can also be a device of community building with the reader, a way of speaking which highlights the proximity of the recipient. In other words, with regard to the socio-cultural factors of style, it can contribute to the intimacy of the situation. For example, a reference to Attila József's poem *Mama* ('Mum') is a recurring indication of longing after something:

(16) Delhibe Moszkván keresztül utaztunk (otthagytam a reptéri könyvesboltban két Lukjanyenkót, azóta is rájuk gondolok mindig, meg-megállva, itt egyszerűen nem ismerik sehol).

We were flying to Delhi through Moscow (I left two Lukyanenko's at the airport bookshop, I have been thinking of them ever since, pausing and pausing, simply no one knows him around here).

In some cases, the context gives clues to the reader for identifying an intertextual reference. For example, the post title *egy messzi-messzi fürdőszobában* 'in a bathroom far far away' alludes to the opening lines of the legendary epic movie, Star Wars, the motivation being that the blogger's child has just received a shower gel in the form factor of a movie hero from a Star Wars-loving friend. Similarly, it is textual reference that makes the use of images in (17) decipherable by anybody:

(17) Azután azért nagyon sok minden történt, volt olyan is, hogy ide csak műanyag állatok jártak, meg tengeralattjáró, és már nagyon rég volt minden, de azért a gyökerek (a születésnapját úgyis mindig elfelejtem a blognak, szóval pár hétre előre boldog ötödiket).

Lots of things have happened since though, sometimes only plastic animals came this way, and a submarine, and all this was a very long time ago but the roots… (I always forget the birthday of the blog anyway, so a few weeks in advance [I wish you] a happy fifth anniversary).

In an earlier part of the post, there is an explicit reference to a *Kispál és a Borz* song, then the passage in (17) cites the same song, this time without any indication of the source, which goes *Itt akkora boldogság van, / Hogy ide már csak műanyag játékok járnak* 'There is so much happiness here that by now only plastic toys are coming this way'.

The interplay between cross-referenced texts in the blog at hand (and probably also in many other blogs, due to the properties of the genre) has a further dimension as well. Specifically, it often highlights the fact that the same events can be told from various perspectives, producing different narratives. This possibility is signalled, among others, by the post title *linkek oldalt* 'links at the side.' In the post, the author tells the story of an evening spent with an acquaintance of hers who also has a blog featured in the blogroll.

4.5. The functions of style imitation

Conscious play with stylistic forms and style types becomes part of the storytelling in the blog. Playful style imitations appear relatively late in the history of nesztelencsiga.hu. In comparison with features of style adopted beforehand, there is a drift towards an explicit emphasis on stylistic games and the possibility of style shifts.

The title of the post in (18) clearly indicates that Virginia Wolf is being evoked. In the passage, the author is playing with shifts of perspective, a characteristic feature of the blog as a whole. The comments make it clear that readers unambiguously identify the girl presented in third person with

the default storyteller marked by first person singular. These shifts of perspective and the uncertainties they create contribute to the development of a sense of secrecy and mystery, and with it to the style strategy of the speaker's identity formation. On the other hand, playing with style and the explicitness of doing so draw attention to the fact that stories can be construed in alternate ways.

(18) mrs. dalloway

Most már igazán írnom kellene valamit a blogomba, kár, hogy velem nem történik soha semmi, gondolta a lány, aki kicsit egyhangúnak érezte az életét, majd kisétált a hóesésben a kapuhoz, és átvett egynél valamivel több cápát a csomagpostástól.

mrs. dalloway
I really should write something in my blog, it's a pity that nothing ever happens to me, thought the girl who found her life a bit boring, then she walked out to the gate in the snowfall and took over somewhat more than one shark from the delivery man.

Remarkably, roleplay through style does not preclude the presence of a discursive centre with a characteristic voice, as the shifts of style and perspective are indicators of the flexibility and openness of speaker identity.

Among the labels of the posts in the blog, the category 'noir' refers specifically to style. (Originally the word denotes a film style, a crime story or gangster movie that uses strong contrasts, exploiting the device of *clair-obscur* to the extreme to create an oppressive atmosphere.) Posts marked 'noir' do not appear until the sixth year of the blog's life, and represent a conscious shift or break of style deserving a new label.

These posts do without the first person singular storyteller who would ensure the continuity of the story. Still, the comments indicate that in cases like (19), readers have no difficulty identifying the third person female character with the default first person singular narrator of previous texts. These identifications arguably follow from reading habits and expectations related to the genre of journals. The expectation is that life stories and personal accounts should be continuous.

(19) A szlávos arcú lány kifizette az eladónak a nyírfalevet és a kvaszt, majd autóval elment a megadott címre. Nem írta fel. Soha nem szokta. Megjegyezte.

A férfi, akinek egybetűs neve volt, később érkezett. Vodka is volt nála, azt mondta, mindig tart magánál vodkát. Internetet is, de mindig mindennek megkérte az árát, az a fajta volt. Mostantól mindig a közelemben kell maradnod, mondta a szlávos arcú lánynak, akit a nehezen becézhető Contact néven tárolt el.

A lány valamivel később, amikor már nem bírta angolosan távozott.

The girl with a Slavic face paid the shop-assistant for the birch leaf and the quass and drove to the address given. She did not write it down. She never did. She made a mental note.
The man with the one-letter name arrived later. He had some vodka with him, he said he always did. He also had internet, but always charged money for everything, he was that sort of chap. From now on, you must always stay near me, he said to

the girl with the Slavic face, whom he stored in his phonebook as Contact, a rather awkward basis for a pet name. The girl took a French leave [literally, English leave] somewhat later, when she could not bear it any more.

Recognising the referential identity between the third person character and the first person narrator of other posts is also aided by contextual clues. One such example is the following title: *az egybetűsnek, aki szereti, ha noirban írom meg, mi történt, mert úgy sokkal érdekesebb* 'to the one with the one-letter name who likes it if I'm telling what happened à la noir as it is much more interesting like that.' Such indications are crucial for preserving a stable discursive centre despite the breaks of stylistic homogeneity. On the other hand, this title also acts as a meta-stylistic marker that signals both the author's adaptation to readers' demands and the stylistic effect being created.

In terms of the socio-cultural variables of style, these posts can be described as highly refined (sophisticated), formal, value saturating, and adhering to the official register in addition to the standard. In and by themselves, these stylistic choices could be considered as distance-creating or alienating but since they form part of an entertaining style strategy, they can be interpreted as aspects of stylistic play or style parody.

The first post labelled as 'noir' only features this style in the beginning, and continues in the usual tone thereafter. By contrast, later posts are homogeneous in this respect. Subsequently, noir as a guest-style returns in more and more posts, illustrating the interactive development of the style of blogs. In particular, positive reader feedback gives incentives for new posts of this kind. Indeed, one blog post even has the title *a nagy sikerre való tekintettel* 'in view of the great success'; moreover, commenters reacting to the post also join in the game, using the same style and narrative technique:

(20) és akkor mit is intézett pontosan az enyhén szlávos arcú lány? :) üdv: a lány, aki még nem járt földhivatalban, de most kedvet kapott

and what exactly did the girl with the slightly Slavic face sort out? :) best, the girl who hasn't been to the land registry yet but now she's beginning to fancy the idea

Through its imitations of style in all their varied functions, the analysed blog clearly shows that the I-blog, even with the emergence of genre-specific conventions, is a remarkably open-ended terrain. It offers ample room for experimenting with the mixing and imitation of a wide range of speech styles.

5. Summary

The linguistic and stylistic variety of the internet is enriched with innumerable shades of colour by the so called blogosphere. It is practically impossible to give a comprehensive picture of the often novel qualities of style that are generated in the various blog types. Still, even by limiting attention to a single blog, one may detect several stylistic features characteristic of the genre.

In this paper, I have explored interrelated aspects of the style of nesztelencsiga.hu, focusing on the speaker's self-stylisation, the adoption of stylistic patterns, and the functioning of socio-cultural variables. In the text of the blog, adherence to the norms of traditional written language, with its

stylistic patterns profiling high levels of elaboration, is counterbalanced by stylistic devices fore-grounding the author's directness and the informality of the communicative situation. The ironic attitude of the author (in part by involving a variety of conflicting speech styles) destabilises the assessment of value as a socio-cultural component of style, while at the same time presupposing a shared evaluative vantage point. In addition, self-irony also contributes to the creation of a positive image of the speaker reflecting on herself. Finally, intertextuality and style imitations foreground the possibility of telling stories from multiple culturally determined perspectives, and help establish a high level of familiarity, even a sense of community between the author and the readers.

On the one hand, the elaborate style of the posts, the well-rounded stories often organised by figures of speech, and the metaphorical conceptualisations with recurrent patterns evoke a refined/sophisticated quality of style. On the other, forms and phrases taken from spoken discourse, neologisms, and value-depriving self-representations point toward looseness on the same spectrum. This duality may also shed light on the fact (in line with Simon 2012) that a speaker's stylistic attitude (cf. Tátrai, this volume) is not monolithic, since her attitude may vary with particular aspects of the scene of joint attention. In the blog at hand, the author's attitude to the utterance act is characterised by refinement, although her disposition to other aspects of the speech situation generally supports an impression of looseness.

On the whole, the style of the blog may draw the attention of researchers to a rarely noted, less conspicuous feature of internet genres, namely the combination of sophistication and intimacy, which is becoming increasingly typical of the public forms of communication. Previously restricted for the most part to the non-public text types of journal writing and private correspondence, this feature now affects varied forms of public communication, and thus may also induce shifts in the alignment of stylistic patterns.

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