UNIVERSITEIT LEIDEN

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

MA THESIS IN LANGUAGE AND
COMMUNICATION

Word adaptions in the language of Twitter

First Reader

Prof. dr. Marian Klamer

Second Reader

Maaike van Naerssen, MA

Kozakou Elisavet

S1722808

e.kozakou@umail.leidenuniv.nl

Submitted: 15 December 2016

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Introduction

1.1 Aim of research

In this thesis, I investigate how Social Networks influence people's way of online writing. In order to achieve this I will go through a Social Platform and try to come up with some results regarding the language of a specific individual. Which word formations are mostly used? Are there any specific word-forming procedures that stand out? If the results of my research are accurate then I can explore and analyze them by using literature about what makes people write the way they do online. I will try to give answers to all these questions in the next sections, and correspond my findings with literature.

1.2 Language since forever

Language is the most important tool for human communication. All languages around the world have their differences and similarities, but the one thing that they have in common is the ability to change. Changes to a language can occur because of many reasons. For instance, every language adapts to the modern world that we live in, new vocabulary and grammar alters and makes the language newer. Many factors, such us immigration, industrial development and entertainment accelerate the phenomenon of the changes in every language separately. People make changes in their way of speaking in order to become more understandable to others, especially when they come from a different geographic place, with a different culture and language.

Nowadays, technology and Social Media play a significant role in the way people use language to communicate. Human language consists of lots of rules and patterns, something which is well known among linguists. The linguistic communication among people allows them to understand each other (Baron 2008, p. 167). Even the changes that update language give the opportunity for people to be in a position to be understood by each other and in that way, communicate. Every person has their own attitude on writing speaking and expressing themselves. What needs to be considered here is the language of the sender and the receiver. If either of them makes a spelling mistake or forgets an apostrophe, it is not a problem as long as they communicate with each other without paying any attention to grammatical mistakes (Baron 2008, p. 175).

Writing is quite new in human history, language used to be only oral. By the time people started to express themselves on paper, they use a different kind of language. Writing and speaking are two different things - we do not write as we speak. The formality of texts

contrast with the informal communication of oral speech. Nowadays, technology and more precisely, the evolution of Social Media through our mobile phones has formed a new kind of informal writing. Online writing became popular during this century, where our lives depend on mobile phones and the communication through them. Social Networks like Facebook and Twitter give the opportunity to communicate in the web world without any formalities. We type as we speak, and there is no one who judges this way of online language. Online writing, is being overused in our days, and this accelerate the use of informal language, especially in the writing of individuals.

More explicitly, according to an article by Cingel and Sundar (2012), who made observations regarding communication technologies, many 'word adaptations' and 'structural adaptions' are created by users of online technologies. Their article makes references to instant messaging and texting. Their findings also apply to the online language of Social Networks. 'Word Adaptions' are heavily used conventional abbreviations that they put into the following three categories: 'Initialisms' (e.g. '*OMG*' for *Oh My God*), 'Omission of Non-essential Letters' (e.g. *'Bc'* for *Because*) and 'Substitution of Homophones' (e.g. '*U*' for *You*) (see Jones and Schieffelin, 2009). In the current thesis, I describe the same word adaptations, naming them 'Phrase Abbreviations' 'One Word Abbreviations' and 'Homophonous Words', respectively. With these three categories of word adaptations Social Network users can write faster with brevity and ease.

Social Platforms play an important role for people that research language. It is an online corpus that gives access to everyone to use the given data. What interests people the most, is what makes the users of the Social Platforms leave aside the 'standard' language. To be able to investigate this it is essential to look at both standard and vernacular way of expression through Social Networks.

1.3 Standardization

Standardization is the process by which a language gets its own standard codes, rules, and system. Some people think that a language should never change. The process of standardization consists of the codification of grammar, publishing spelling books, dictionaries, and writing literature. This standard form of language most of the times is the 'natural' one, that fits people who use it. It deals with the heritage and identity of people, it is protected from any changes, and it goes with the norm. Apart from the linguistic dimensions that a language can have, standardization is multi-sided according to the variety of language

that has been taught. These dimensions rely on social, cultural and political ones. It is also difficult to choose one way of language variety as normal because this would favor the ones that speak that one kind of language variety. By giving power to just one variety of every language we give the opportunity to those users to be above the others who do not use it. This may cause problems to the social identity of other people who may feel inferior. This standardization process though eliminates the variety of languages and the polymorphic character of it. Nevertheless, it is clear enough that diversity to languages is as natural as it sounds (Mesthrie, Swann, Deumert & Leap, 2009).

There are people who believe that the grammar, lexicon and orthography of a language should be fixed, and most times, these people are the ones who have the most influence. As mentioned before, the use of texting and instant messaging in our daily life indicates that computers and mobile phones have entered our lives for good and there is nothing we can do to change this. The way users write on Social Networks bothers people who do not like such developments in language. However, changes in language should not be a problem - when a language changes it is totally acceptable and understood as a natural occurrence. Everything faces alternations at some point or another, why not language also.

1.4 Prescriptivism

People who are into prescriptivism, tend to have strong arguments to defend their preferences. They believe that a language should follow certain rules according to a specific theory. Latin is seen as the classical example for English. Prescriptive grammarians are interested in this kind of classical forms and they match English, in this case, with Latin in order to prove the correctness of language use. As a result of this, this type of grammarians prefer to use an older form of language in which innovations to a language and new words are not easily applied. For example, for them new meanings, new syntactic constructions, or even the use of foreign words, is already a big change. They have the desire to reject any kind of influence from foreign languages to their 'fixed' one. The reason for this may be pride of their nationality or the fear of being overwhelmed by a foreign/neighbor language (Mesthrie, Swann, Deumert & Leap 2009, p. 13-16).

On the other hand, there is a group of people who are against a standard form of language and believe that any changes that may occur, enforce its power. These people are the anti-prescriptivists. According to them, English adopted words from other languages, which means that it was influenced by other cultures. It is understandable of course that English as a

language is open to any kind of borrowings and neologisms. The influence of other countries accelerates the process of language alternation. Anti-prescriptivists have controversial views with prescriptivism. The former believe that there is no need for a language to match an older, dead one just to argue that it is valid. The theory of the latter which is that a language should follow mathematical rules, is not acceptable to the anti-prescriptivists (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2014).

According to Chomsky (1965), the complexity of language cannot be compared with the simplicity of mathematics. Languages have the ability to change continuously, but that does not mean that they lose their interaction with old versions or traditional versions of the language. This is part of the development of language: words or suffixes that are adapted from other languages, give the ability for another language to evolve within certain aspects. Sometimes people do not really understand the root of a suffix that entered the language, and they give the characterizations of 'new'. In fact, it is the ignorance of previous languages that makes us think that anything new did not exist before.

These two opposite views about changes in language, help us realize that language is more complex than most people think. A variety of factors influence language to either remain the same or change. Language can be lost; the changes in society can create significant problems for language evolution. Lexical items can lose their first and original meaning, or they can even vanish from the lexicon. Grammar is something that is not stable. English of the late Fourteenth Century is different from the Modern English that we all use nowadays, and without any practice it is difficult to be understood. Multiculturalism also leads to changes in language. Countries and especially people are now closer than ever. Communication between people with different idioms leads to the mixing of languages and in turn their transformation. Languages are never fixed. Day by day new vocabulary is being introduced as a result of the development of human relationships and communication. A language cannot be damaged because of new influences. Every single change that happens to any language is a sign of modernization and change. Many will argue that the phenomenon of Word Adaptions, where words are written differently from the standard, can destroy the form of the language. On the other hand, there are people who believe that those words can be added to the English lexicon as new ones.

There is definitely the perspective that these newly coined words are temporary, as they are mostly used by adolescents of the age group of 13-17 year olds. In comparison to any other

age group, adolescents are accepting the use of these words far more naturally as they have used computers and mobile phones from a very young age. They like texting because of its brevity and convenience (Cingel & Sundar 2012).

Another important way in which we can see how language is changing, is through loanwords. Every word that has been borrowed by another language is not authentic and has the power to change that language. Languages have no borders, everything changes around us in order for us to be able to talk about new things like technology and innovation (Christides, Arapopoulou & Chrite 2007). Language needs to be in a position to make things easier in terms of communication. This is a natural way of language evolution, not only in English but in all languages in general. The interaction between two or more languages can help fill the gap between people and cultures. Nothing like this should prevent changes in language. It is the way of all things, those changes may look different, but in the end, it is for the common good, and in our case for the benefit of language and communication.

1.5 The World of Social Networks

Social Networks have changed the way people use the Internet. The web used to be a place where users visited periodically in order to get information (Seargeant & Tagg 2014). Nowadays people use the online world to interact with one another. Social Networks allow users, both senders and recipients, to interact directly. Written speech is the tool of communication on these Social Platforms and the main reason why people stay connected. The purpose behind this is to be connected with people from all over the world. A status update or spread of information is the most common thing people do on Social Media. There are cases that Social Media is used for other reasons, and this can occur especially when people post on their wall. During the past year, there have been numerous examples where television shows mention the Social Media by reading and quoting posts which have been posted on these platforms, in order to include the audience and actively engage them (Page, Barton, Unger & Zappavigna 2014). It is obvious that communication among individuals has reached a different level in Social Networks.

However, a problem that occurs with the use of social communications is that it involves the loss of feelings of anticipation. We share our feelings, thoughts, and experiences through Social Media, and we inform our followers about what we are doing the exact moment we are doing it. As a consequence, our friends and family no longer have to wait with anticipation for us to tell them our daily news because it is already posted on a number of Social Platforms

(Baron 2008, p.17). This definitely influences human communication. Another negative aspect of these kinds of platforms is that on the Internet you can be whoever you want to be. Communication through the internet allows people to where a mask and to lie about their gender and age. Even your entire profile can be a fake. Sometimes this helps people express themselves in a more comfortable one knowing that they will not be judged about their age, gender, and nationality on these platforms (Baron 2008, p. 57). However everybody should be aware that the person behind the computer screen is different from the person they believe him or her to be. Every platform has different characteristics and enable the users to show their identity in different ways. There are different kinds of settings that participants can use. If someone posts something on a Social Platform that does not necessarily mean that what they post is valid or true. It depends on how genuine the person is and how other people filter the given information (Page, Barton, Unger & Zappavigna 2014, p. 13-15). All these risks should be considered when using Social Media.

Something common that is happening in the online world, is that people react in different ways. People can pretend to be someone else. One tool that people use to show-off online is in how they use their language. Language is modified too as it is being used with no formalities. It is the most common element that users use online. Abbreviations or missing vowels is the first thing that anyone can notice when looking at the walls of people on Social Networks. Researchers found that people copy from each other based on what they have seen online (Cingel & Sundar 2012). This observation will be helpful in the upcoming research of this thesis.

All this literature regarding language comes to match with this thesis research. As a matter of fact, Social Networks influence language and language influences Social Networks. This not only depends on who is using the language and Social Networks, but also who is receiving all this information. Every individual has their own communication characteristics in the online and offline world. The common ground among everyone though is to be short, quick and understood. Looking at the next sections of this paper, it will become clear to the reader what factors influence the way of writing in the online world, and whether this modernization in language is bad or good.

1.6 The Composition of thesis

The following sections consist of Domain of Research and Methodology, The Data, and the Analysis. In Chapter 2, I will explain my methodology and what made me choose Twitter as my platform of research, the reason behind my chosen person that provided me with the data, and finally how I managed to organize it. In chapter 3, I provide all my data with a description of the results I found for every category separately: Phrase Abbreviations, One Word Abbreviations, Homophonous Words. In chapter 4, the results from chapter 3 are explained. In this chapter, I give some information about the reasons why the chosen individual or an individual in general, uses a different language on Social Networks to that in daily life. Lastly, the conclusion will help the reader see the general point of this thesis, along with the further research that needs to be done.

Domain of Research and Methodology

2.1 Choice of Social Network

In this section, I will explain why I chose Twitter (https://twitter.com/) as my main domain for research instead of any other Social Network, and what makes it more searchable.

With the term Social Media, we refer to sites on the Internet that give the users the possibility to interact and participate in those services. Social Media differs from Mass Media because in the latter, the information is broadcasted from one to many. In contrast, Social Media enables the participants to publish anything and be seen by everyone (Page, Barton, Unger, Zappavigna 2014, p.5). Social Media has a lot of genres. The information that participants send and receive may differ from one platform to another. The quantity and quality of information on Twitter is different to that on Facebook. That applies to every Social Platform, for example, Instagram, Tumblr, YouTube. The purpose of Social Media is to post and share specific or general moments of your life within the public world of these networks. Those messages can be thoughts of the day that the user might want to share.

There are three interactions according to Herrings classification (2007), one to one, one to many, and many to many. These interactions can be applied to any Social Platform, for instance, one to one communication can be achieved by the Direct Message on Twitter, or personal message on Facebook. The one to many or many to many can be seen on Facebook groups depending on the applied settings, or on the walls of Twitter. Twitter, for instance, gives the option to its users to choose whether their tweets can be seen by everyone or only be their followers.   In the next paragraphs, I will explain why Twitter is an effective platform in which data can be collected easily.

Twitter is a microblogging site which started in 2005 and became more popular during 2009. This Social Network, like many others, allows its users to follow other people and have access to their profiles (Zappavigna 2012). You can follow anyone without them following you back but you are still able to see the activity of the one that you follow. With twitter accounts, the users can write, or more precisely tweet, by having a limited amount of words in their text box of characters and symbols (140 characters). Every user can send a message to the other, known as Direct Message, where only those two people can contribute to the conversation - this is the so called- one to one communication. In the beginning, Twitter was mainly famous in the United States, after some time however, it became famous world-wide. In this platform, anyone is able to find tweets which range from the personal life of users to

serious problems that happen around the world. It is also easy for the rest of us to search for specific information anytime we look for it at a specific time (Zappavigna 2012).

Facebook was my first option as a platform for research, though I found it more difficult to retrieve my data from this famous platform. The first barrier that I found was that in order to see posts on people's timeline, I needed to be friends with them and the request needed to be accepted by both sides. Even then, when I was able to see others people timeline, most of the posts included pictures and links. As a consequence, the text was related to the links and I could not mention the text without the link. Another important difference that made me decide which Social Platform to use was that through Facebook it is quite difficult to retrieve past data of individuals. In comparison to this, Twitter with the advanced search tool makes this information accessible to people who want to research information from previous years.

One of the platforms that I started researching but I found difficult to proceed with was Instagram. As is well known, Instagram is the platform where all the posts are pictures followed sometimes by a small text which is more like a caption. A number of words were not that broad in order to be worth being researched and that is when I understood that I would not investigate this specific platform.

The characteristics of Twitter helped me apply my research by providing easy access to much more material of an individual through the cause of a number of years. As mentioned in the last two paragraphs, Facebook and Instagram were inconvenient to work with. Even though a lot of Social Platforms exist, I truly believe that I chose the one that is better suited for this kind of research. In addition, the data is already given to the followers, so special permission in order to access personal data does not apply on Social Platforms like Twitter.

2.2 Choice of person providing Data

The choice of the person that I retrieved all my data from needed to be selected according to some characteristics. One of the very first things that I checked while I was making my choice was the date that the individual joined Twitter. I searched for individuals who had been using Twitter for at least 5 years in order to be able to investigate whether their language changed. Secondly, I needed to find a person that had an active Twitter account. The frequency and number of tweets were an important characteristic to my choice as I needed to be able to have as much data as I wanted. Moreover, another significant factor was popularity. According to how famous a person is and when their fame began, was something that needed to be considered. Age was one of the characteristics that made it easier for me to

limit my research. A person around 15-25 years old was suitable, as the phenomenon of language that I wanted to research, is mostly used within this age range of users. To be more precise and according to a research, adolescents are often the ones that use Word Adaptions more frequently and systematic (Cingel and Sundar 2012). The gender did not play a vital role so it did not make a difference whether I chose a woman or a man. Looking more closely at the language matters, the individual should have had English as a native language, as the research would be based in English. A non-native person would have been a problem because no matter how good would know the language, some problems on the fully acquire of the language would appear. For example it is a common thing for someone who knows English as a second language, to get influenced by the native one.

The person that I found more suitable based on the above characteristics is Gabrielle Hanna. She is famous in the world of Social Media because of her show on YouTube, The Gabbie Show. She became famous because of the funny videos she posts on YouTube. Twitter for her works as a way of gaining more followers and fame. The frequency of her posts is around 4 to 5 updates during the day. As a native speaker of American English, the data is more valid. To have a more spherical opinion about the individual that I chose to research, I also checked her account on Facebook and YouTube. This helped me understand whether she is famous on just one platform like YouTube or whether her fans follow her on every possible account on Social Media. She began using Twitter in 2010 and she started updating her account more often during 2011. After her success on YouTube, day by day she posted more than two times per day and as a consequence her popularity increased. By choosing a person like her it is easy to see how her use of language, regarding abbreviations, changed during 2011 until 2016.

2.3 Organizing the Data

The first steps of my research were to look for my data through Facebook, Instagram and Twitter and try to understand which Social Network platform was suitable for my thesis. Eventually, as I mentioned in the previous section, I concluded to work only on Twitter as the access to data through tweets was provided more easily. The broad range of data and accounts helped me be more selective in what kind of person I wanted to focus on for my research. After concluding on what type of social users I was going to base my whole research on, I started collecting my data.

I went through Gabrielle's posts from 2016 until 2011 on Twitter and I tried to understand

what type of language she is using online. I looked at all her tweets one by one. From the beginning I realized that within most of her posts, abbreviations were used the most. Taking a closer look, though, words that were cut or homophonous ones were also used a lot. After some general observations through scanning her account, I copied all her tweets that included these phenomena into an Excel file. The Excel file is formed with 4 columns for every category. Date of the Tweet, the entire Tweet sentence, the word that I am interested in and the orthographic way of the word in Standard English. For example, if the word was abbreviated like '*OMG'*, I wrote down the full version of the word, *Oh My God*.

Importantly, if one of her Tweets contained more than one abbreviation for every category, I pasted the same Tweet in all categories. I included all the forms of the same word, and put the plural and singular word in separate cells. This was an essential thing to do as every abbreviated form, either plural or singular, had a different written form.

After finishing the excel document, I compared the data I took from her account. I focused firstly on the amount of data, and how many phenomena like Phrase Abbreviations, One Word Abbreviations and Homophonous Words she used during these 6 years. Following that, I analyzed every year separately so as to see how frequently she used one of these three categories mentioned before. Finally, I took a close look at which words were used the most and which the least. The formation of tables and charts played a vital role in my research as they made it possible for me to be more organized and write my thoughts and conclusions more clearly in the end. For every time period, I formed a table with the total amount of every word. Afterward, I formed a table for every year, and every word separately. In the last table, the frequency of the words was shown in a detailed way, year by year. In order to be able to write my conclusions, I created charts, comparing my data. To be more precise, for the phrase category I compared the words that had a high frequency during the year. The same method was applied to the other two categories: the one-word abbreviations and the Homophonous words. For the One Word abbreviations, I added a column that indicated what part of speech the words are. With this column I formed a table regarding the frequency of nouns, verbs, conjunctions etc.

After counting the overall numbers from the categories and the words separately, I counted all her tweets from 2011 to 2016 and then I summed them up. With this method I was able to calculate the total amount in percentages. To be more precise, for every category I found the amount of each word and each year according to the overall number of tweets. I formed

charts that provided data out of 100. With these kinds of charts, the results are clearer and more accurate as depending on the total tweets, the total amount of words has the same scale.

The final step was to put those charts next to each other in order to be compared more easily. The Phrase Abbreviations were compared with One Word Abbreviations and Homophonous Words, one after the other. Then I compared the Homophonous words with One Word Abbreviations. Last but not least, I chose the most important facts from the three categories and used them in my conclusion as overall assumptions.

After dealing with numbers and frequencies, the second part of my research included some background search on the individual I choose. Through her Tweets I found out more about herself, and what she did in her life. As a consequence, I was able, through the years to figure out what made her change her writing language according to the tables that I made before. The frequency of the words according to every year and her life event was compared.

Concluding, I tried to match my findings with literature and strengthen my arguments with reasons why people use Word Adaptions more often nowadays and what factors accelerate this process.

The Data

3.1 The Life Events of Gabriel Hanna

The person that I took my data from for my research is Gabrielle Jeanette Hanna. She is a 25 year old woman from Pennsylvania, United States. She studied Psychology and Communications at the University of Pittsburgh in 2009 for 3 years and then graduated with minor in Economics.[1]

On 2011, she was in charge of promoting and hosting various events for the University. Her knowledge about the use of Social Media started from back then. Gabrielle continue to work in another company as a PR and Marketing assistant in 2012.[2] This opportunity helped her to understand the way Social Media works and apply them later on for her publicity.

She began to make vines after her studies (2013). 'Vines' is an entertainment network where people are able to upload short videos that last up to 6 seconds.[3] Her videos became popular because of the sarcastic and funny ways in which she represented them. For this reason, Gabrielle became a web video star who created her own channel on YouTube called The Gabbie Show. Gabrielle used Twitter as a way to gain more popularity by sharing her Vines and YouTube videos. This is a strategy that a lot of individuals use in order to increase their popularity by sharing the same video through different Social Network platforms. More followers on Twitter mean that the videos that the individual shares are good enough to make her stand out from the crowd. Followers are going to share the videos again and again, and that is why Gabrielle is gaining popularity on Twitter. As a holder of a degree in Economics and Communications during 2013, she worked in a company as a campaign manager and marketing specialist.

She started making videos on YouTube two years ago (2014) and nowadays she uploads videos every week. The main subject of her vines and videos is about her experiences in life like failed relationships, and funny stories that she shares in a special and sarcastic way. Since February 2014 she posted 187 videos on YouTube and the total amount

[1] Baba, V. (2016). *Gabrielle Hanna bio, wiki , married, height*. *Dodoodad*. Retrieved 10 October 2016, from http://dodoodad.com/gabrielle-hanna-biography/

[2] Hanna, G.(2016). Retrieved 20 October 2016, from https://www.linkedin.com/in/gabrielle-hanna-98b73270

[3] (2016). *Blog.vine.co*. Retrieved 15 October 2016, from http://blog.vine.co/

of her subscribers has reached 2,677,719.[4] She is an ordinary girl and maybe that is where her success lies - everything she says and does is not far from everyone's reality

When she started gaining success and popularity, in 2014 she went to Los Angeles and promoted her career. As she was more active in her Social Networks accounts like Twitter and Facebook, the public on the internet noticed her talent. She promoted herself and after a few months she got her reward. YouTube gave Gabrielle the Silver Play Button. This is a policy of YouTube, to reward the video creators for their effort and the amount of work they did. When reaching more than 100,000 subscribers, YouTube gives this award to the YouTubers so they can continue the good work that ensures them publicity.[5]

Now she is definitely a Social Media star mostly known in the United States. She was nominated for a Teen Choice Award in two categories in 2016. This ceremony takes place every year to celebrate the achievements that people have in various categories like, Sports, Music, Fashion and Internet. In this case Gabrielle was nominated for the two following subcategories of Internet, Choice Web Star and Female and Choice Viner.[6] Voters of this ceremony are 13 to 19 years old and they can vote through different Social Platforms. The person who gets the most likes and shares is the winner of the ceremony for each category.

Apart from her channel on YouTube, she is active on other Social Network platforms, for instance Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat. As I mentioned before all these Social Platforms, are the ones which helped her gain popularity by being active on each account every day, and sharing her videos. As a result of this, she focuses on different target groups from 13 to 25 years old. Those individuals are the ones that will post and repost her videos and tweets, for the simple reason that they are aware of how important popularity is for these kinds of Social Media people.

In sum, Gabrielle Hanna is a famous figure in the world of Social Networks through her YouTube channel called The Gabbie Show. She is loved by many people and this can be seen from the amount of her subscribers on YouTube. As a person of the web she is connected to various Social Platforms. Twitter as her main Social Platform after YouTube, she strengthens

[4] *The Gabbie Show*. (2016). *YouTube*. Retrieved 1 December 2016, from https://www.youtube.com/user/TheGabbieShow

[5] (2016). *YouTube Creator Hub*. Retrieved 16 October 2016, from https://www.youtube.com/yt/creators/rewards.html?noapp=1

[6] Mendez, M. (2016). *"The Gabbie Show" Is Nominated For 2 Teen Choice Awards! - CelebMix. CelebMix*. Retrieved 10 October 2016, from http://celebmix.com/gabbie-show-nominated-2-teen-choice-awards/

her popularity day by day through daily or even hourly posts in her 'Wall'.

Timeline of Gabrielle Hanna

2009 - Started University

2010 - Join Twitter

2011 - University Campus representative

2012 – PR and Marketing Assistant

2013 - Graduated from University

2013 - Campaign Manager

2014 - Became Viner on YouTube

2014 - Moved to Los Angeles

2015 - Received Silver Play Button from YouTube (100.000 Subscribers)

2016 - Moved to Los Angeles

2016 - Nominated for two Teen Choice Awards

3.2 Total Numbers and Percentages

In this section I will provide the total number of Gabrielle's Tweets during the years. It is really important for my data collection to know the whole amount of the individuals Tweets. My results are more accurate when I can see the difference between the data I retrieved from her account depending on the total amount of Tweets. At this point it will be crucial to mention that from 2011 until 2015 I counted her Tweets one by one from January to December. In 2016 I was able to number her Tweets until September, that makes it just ¾ of the year. This should be clarified as the percentages play a significant role in the next section, where every number makes a big difference.

Table 1 : Total amount of Tweets per year

Year	Total Amount of Tweets
2011	1180
2012	1480
2013	860
2014	1510
2015	1720
2016	730
Total	*7480*

As can be seen from the Table 1, of these 6 years, the overall trend is upward with a decline in the year 2013. For 2016 the percentage is also mentioned in the previous paragraph. The year with the most tweets is 2015, which is just 3% higher than 2014. It is obvious from the chart, that in 2013 the trend plummets while there was uplift in 2015. To sum up, the general trend has some changes, both downwards or upwards, during the years. The progressive character of the chart is what makes it interesting and worth studying.

3.3 Phrase Abbreviations

3.3.1: Total Phrase Abbreviations

In this section I used capital letters for the Abbreviated Phrases to show that every letter stands for a word (see Table 2 below). In the tweets of Gabrielle, I found that she uses capitals mostly in this category and especially for the words '*OMG*', '*LMAO*' and '*LOL*'. This does not mean that she did not also use them in small letters. According to the results I took from her tweets, most of the time she uses capitals for no particular reason. There are cases though, that when she wanted to indicate something important the use of capitals is a must.

Table 2: Total Frequency and meaning of Abbreviated Phrase.

Phrase Abbreviations	Meaning	Total Frequency
OMG	Oh My God	78
LOL	Laugh Out Loud	71
LMAO	Laugh My Ass Out	56
IDK	I Don't Know	19
RN	Right Now	13
LMFAO	Laugh My Fucking Ass Out	12
AF	As Fuck	10
TF	The Fuck	10
ILY	I Love You	9
JK	Just Kidding	8
WTF	What The Fuck	8
BTW	By The Way	6
ILYSM	I Love You So Much	5
RT	Re Tweet	5
YOLO	You Only Live Once	4
IDEK	I Don't Even Know	3
IRL	In Real Life	3
LMK	Let Me Know	3
TBH	To Be Honest	3
TSA	Transportation Security Agency	3
DM	Direct Message	2
DTF	Down To Fuck	2
GDI	God Damn Independent	2
IDC	I Don't Care	2
LY	Love You	2
OMFG	Oh My Fucking God	2
S/O	Shout Out	2
SMDH	Shaking My Damn Head	2
TY	Thank You	2
TYSM	Thank You So Much	2

Phrase Abbreviations	Meaning	Total Frequency
AKA	Also Known As	1
ASAP	As Soon As Possible	1
ASL	American Sign Language	1
BB	Bye Bye	1
BBS	Be Back So	1
BFF	Best Friends Forever	1
BRB	Be Right Back	1
DMV	DC, Maryland, Virginia	1
FR	For Real	1
IDFK	I Don't Fucking Know	1
IDFWU	I Don't Fuck With You	1
IDT	I Don't Think	1
LYS	Lower Your Standards	1
NP	No problem	1
OMF	Oh My Fuck	1
PST	Prime Snap Time	1
ROFLING	Rolling On The Floor Laughing	1
STFU	Shut The Fuck Up	1
TBT	Throw Back Thursday	1
TFM	Total Frat Move.	1
TSA	Take Scissors Away	1
TSM	Thanks So Much	1
TTYTM	Talk To You Tomorrow Maybe	1
WMD	Weapon of Mass Destruction	1
YO	Year Old	1
Total Amount:		*374*
Percentage from total amount of Tweets:		*5.9%*

According to the data given above, she uses Phrase Abbreviations 374 times in total. The total percentage of Phrase Abbreviations is 5.9%. From all the 55 different types of Phrase Abbreviations that were found in her account, only a few stand out. From 2011 until 2016 she used the word '*OMG*' 78 (1.8%) times, and that makes it the highest number. Right after '*OMG*', '*LOL*' is second with the amount of 71 (0.95%) entries. '*LMAO*' is also used on a frequent basis as she wrote it 56 (0.75%) times. The rest of the abbreviated phrases are less frequent over the years. To be more exact 35 abbreviated phrases were used 1 to 2 times, 9 different phrases were written 3 to 6 times. The frequency of 8 abbreviated phrases was 8 to 20 times, with only '*IDK*' (*I Don't Know*) to be the highest with 19 (0.25%) times. Only the three mentioned phrases are the most frequent with over 50 entries.

3.3.2 Total Phrase Abbreviations Per Year

Table 3: Yearly frequencies for Phrase Abbreviations.

Phrase Abbreviations	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
OMG	4	10	9	17	32	7
LOL	1	18	6	14	24	7
LMAO	3	0	4	16	27	7
IDK	4	0	1	3	9	2
RN	0	0	0	2	8	3
LMFAO	0	0	0	5	6	1
AF	0	0	0	0	7	3
TF	0	0	0	1	5	4
ILY	0	0	1	1	6	1
JK	0	1	0	2	2	3
WTF	0	0	3	2	2	1
BTW	0	0	0	2	2	2
ILYSM	0	0	0	3	1	1
RT	0	0	0	2	3	0
YOLO	0	1	2	0	1	0
IDEK	0	1	0	0	2	0
IRL	0	0	0	1	1	1
LMK	0	0	0	0	1	2
TBH	0	0	0	1	1	1
TSA	0	1	1	0	1	0
DM	0	0	0	1	1	0
DTF	1	0	0	0	1	0
GDI	1	1	0	0	0	0
IDC	0	0	0	0	1	1
LY	0	0	0	1	1	0
OMFG	0	1	0	0	0	1
S/O	0	0	1	1	0	0
SMDH	0	0	0	1	1	0
TY	0	0	0	0	1	1
TYSM	0	0	0	0	1	1
AKA	1	0	0	0	0	0
ASAP	0	0	0	0	0	1

Phrase Abbreviations	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
ASL	0	0	0	0	1	0
BB	0	0	0	0	1	0
BBS	0	0	0	0	1	0
BFF	0	0	1	0	0	0
BRB	0	0	0	1	0	0
DMV	0	0	0	0	0	1
FR	0	0	0	0	1	0
IDFK	0	0	0	0	1	0
IDFWU	0	0	0	0	1	0
IDT	0	0	0	0	1	0
LYS	0	0	0	0	0	1
NP	0	0	0	0	0	1
OMF	0	0	0	0	1	0
PST	0	0	0	0	1	0
ROFLING	1	0	0	0	0	0
STFU	0	0	0	1	0	0
TBT	0	0	0	1	0	0
TFM	1	0	0	0	0	0
TSA	0	0	0	0	0	1
TSM	0	1	0	0	0	0
TTYTM	0	0	0	0	0	1
WMD	1	0	0	0	0	0
YO	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total Amount	*18*	*35*	*29*	*79*	*157*	*57*
Percentage from total amount of Tweets:	*1.5%*	*2.4%*	*3.4%*	*5.2%*	*9.1%*	*7.8%*

Taking a closer look at Table 3, every year separately is different as the frequencies change (see chart 2, section 3.7). The year that Phrase Abbreviations reached a peak is 2015 with 157 (9.1%) entries. 2014 has almost half the entries (5.2%) of the ones in 2015. The rest of the years have in total more or less the same numerical conclusion, with 2011 having the least entries, 18 (1.5%) to be more precise.

Apart from the total amount of numbers, it is important and interesting to see which words were the most frequent during the years. Firstly starting with the most popular word, 'OMG' (see Chart 3, section 3.7) in 2015 it was written 32 (1.8%) times and only 4 (0.3%) in 2011. 'LOL' (see Chart 4, section 3.7) which is also one of the most frequent words, in 2015 was written 24 (1.4%) times while in 2014 the total amount was 10 (0.9%) times less. The abbreviated word 'LMAO' in 2015 (see Chart 5, section 3.7) was used 27 (1.6%) times, that makes it 3 (1.4%) times more than 'LOL' in the same year. Taking a closer look at the given percentages of total amount per year, 2015 has the highest amount. It is worth noting that in the year 2013, she only tweeted 29 times in total and in 2012 just 35 times. Comparing her total tweets per year, 2013 has a higher percentage of Phrase Abbreviated Words than 2012 with 3.4% and 2.4% respectively.

3.3.3 Summary-Discussion

As can be seen from the tables, there are a lot of words of which their use was limited to one time only. To be more precise 25 words including, '*ASAP*', '*TFM*' and '*TSM*' were used just once during the given time period.

Overall 2015 was the year with the most abbreviations while 2011 was the least popular one with just 18 entries. The total amount of abbreviations depends on how many times she tweeted in total during the years. The frequency of how many times she used these type of phrases can be verified with the percentages of the total tweets. In that case the conclusions of all these results are accurate.

3.4 One Word Abbreviations

3.4.1 Total One Word Abbreviations

Table 4: Total frequency and meaning of One Word Abbreviations.

One Word Abbreviation	Meaning	Category	Total Frequency
Bc	Because	Conjunction	63
W	With	Conjunction	40
Ppl	People	Noun	18
Tho	Though	Conjunction	13
Bae	Babe	Noun	9
Ig	Instagram	Noun	9
Rly	Really	Adverb	8
Pic	Pictures	Noun	6
Pics	Pictures	Noun	6
Plz	Please	Interjection	6
Yr	Year	Noun	6
Thx	Thanks	Interjection	5
Alrdy	Already	Adverb	4
Bd	Birthday	Noun	4
App	Application	Noun	3
Baes	Babes	Noun	3
Convos	Conversations	Noun	3
Fav	Favourite	Adjective	3
Vid	Video	Noun	3
W/O	Without	Conjunction	3
Fam	Family	Noun	2
Favs	Favourites	Noun	2
Fb	Facebook	Noun	2
Nvm	Nevermind	Interjection	2
Nvr	Never	Adverb	2
Tl	Timeline	Noun	2
Vom	Vomit	Verb	2
Yday	Yesterday	Noun	2
Ad	Advertisement	Noun	1
Celeb	Celebrity	Noun	1
Def	Definitely	Adverb	1

One Word Abbreviation	Meaning	Category	Total Frequency
Frenz	Friends	Noun	1
Fvs	Favourites	Noun	1
Insta	Instagram	Noun	1
Lil	Little	Adverb	1
Mil	Million	Noun	1
Obv	Obvious	Adjective	1
Prob	Problem	Noun	1
Probs	Problems	Noun	1
Probz	Problems	Noun	1
Sec	Second	Noun	1
Sesly	Seriously	Adverb	1
Sr	Sorry	Adjective	1
Srsly	Seriously	Adverb	1
Sub	Subscribe	Verb	1
Sumthng	Something	Pronoun	1
Thru	Through	Adverb	1
Tht	That	Determiner	1
Tomo	Tomorrow	Adverb	1
V	Very	Adverb	1
Vs	Versus	Preposition	1
Yd	Yesterday	Adverb	1
Yt	Youtube	Noun	1
K	Okey	Interjection	1
Bf	Boyfriend	Noun	1
Gf	Girlfriend	Noun	1
Total amount:			*260*
Percentage from total amount of Tweets:			*4.1%*

The second category that I decided to research deals with One Word Abbreviations. Taking a closer look at Table 4, the individual used these One Word Abbreviations from 2011 until 2016, 260 times in total, including 56 different types of them. The percentage from all of her Tweets is 4.1%.

According to table 3, the abbreviated word that the used significantly high was '*Bc*' (*Because*) with 63 (0.8%) entries. The letter '*W*', is used to represent *With* and as can be seen from the tables, it is the second most used word in her tweets, with 40 (0.5%) entries in total. Looking more closely at the details, 28 words were used just once during 2011 and 2016. Exactly half of the words were used 2 to 3 times. The last distinction between the frequencies would be that only 10 words had the frequency of 3 to 13 times. Last but not least, the word '*Ppl*' (*People*) is the third most popular word in this table, in all these years it was used just 18 (0.2%) times.

It is significant to state that a lot of words exist in their singular and plural form: for instance '*Bae*' and '*Baes*' (*Babe* and *Babes*), 'Pic' and 'Pics' (*Picture* and *Pictures*), '*Fav*', '*Fvs*' and '*Favs*' (*Favorite*, *Favorites* and *Favorites*), '*Prob*' and '*Probs*' (*Problem* and *Problems*). I counted every form separately as a different form of the word.

3.4.2 Total One Word Abbreviations Per Year

Table 5: Yearly frequencies for One Word Abbreviations.

One Word Abbreviations	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Bc	2	2	9	3	27	20
W	0	0	0	13	18	9
Ppl	2	2	0	3	7	4
Tho	0	0	1	6	6	0
Bae	0	0	0	1	8	0
Ig	0	0	0	4	3	2
Rly	0	0	0	0	2	6
Pic	0	0	1	2	2	1
Pics	1	0	0	1	3	1
Plz	0	0	0	0	2	4
Yr	0	5	1	0	0	0
Thx	0	0	0	0	2	3
Alrdy	0	0	0	0	2	2
Bd	0	0	0	0	0	4
App	0	0	0	1	0	2
Baes	0	0	0	0	3	0
Convos	0	0	0	3	0	1
Fav	0	0	0	0	3	0
Vid	0	0	0	0	2	1
W/O	0	1	0	0	0	2
Fam	0	0	0	0	0	2
Favs	0	0	0	0	2	0
Fb	1	0	1	0	0	0
Nvm	0	0	0	0	1	1
Nvr	0	0	0	0	0	2
Tl	0	0	1	1	0	0
Vom	2	0	0	0	0	0
Yday	0	0	0	1	1	0
Ad	0	0	0	0	1	0
Celeb	0	0	0	0	0	1
Def	0	1	0	0	0	0
Frenz	0	0	0	0	0	1

One Word Abbreviations	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Fvs	0	0	0	0	1	0
Insta	0	0	0	1	0	0
Lil	0	0	0	0	1	0
Mil	0	0	0	0	0	1
Obv	0	0	0	0	0	1
Prob	0	0	0	0	0	1
Probs	0	0	0	1	0	0
Probz	1	0	0	0	0	0
Sec	0	0	0	0	1	0
Sesly	0	0	0	0	1	0
Sr	0	0	0	0	1	0
Srsly	0	1	0	0	0	0
Sub	0	0	0	0	0	1
Sumthng	0	0	0	0	0	1
Thru	0	0	1	0	0	0
Tht	0	0	0	0	1	0
Tomo	0	0	0	0	0	1
V	0	0	0	0	1	6
Vs	0	0	1	0	0	0
Yd	0	0	0	0	0	1
Yt	0	0	0	1	0	0
K	0	0	0	0	0	1
Bf	0	0	0	0	1	0
Gf	0	0	0	1	0	0
Total Amount	*9*	*12*	*16*	*43*	*103*	*83*
Percentage from total amount of Tweets:	*0.8%*	*0.8%*	*1.9%*	*2.8%*	*6%*	*11.3%*

Every year separately has indicated interesting results as seen in Table 5. An overall conclusion would be that in 2015, these abbreviations reached 103 (6%) entries, while in 2016 they dropped to 83 (11.3%). In this case the percentages show something different, because the measurements were made regarding the total tweets per year. For instance, the year 2015 she tweeted more times than 2016, and so the percentage changes. The amount of the One Word Abbreviations though remains the same. The year 2014, had almost half the entries with the ones of 2016. Being more precise in the years 2011, 2012 and 2013 the amount of abbreviations were mildly used, 9 (0.8%), 12 (0.8%) and 16 (1.9%) times respectively (See chart 6, section 3.7).

Regarding the abbreviated words, it is interesting to have a better look at their frequency throughout the years. *Because* got abbreviated into '*Bc*' and in 2015 was written 27 (1.6%) times while during 2016 just 20 (2.7%) times until September (see chart 7, section 3.7). During the rest of the years, the amount was not so frequent, just under 10 times in total. The word *With* is used with the abbreviated form of '*W*' (see chart 8, section 3.7). In the year 2015 this word was used double the amount of times than in 2016 with 18 (1%) and 9 (1.2%) times respectively. Among the popular words, the abbreviation of *People* ('*Ppl*') had a significant rise (see chart 9, section 3.7). As seen before, 2015 had the most entries while in 2013 the word '*Ppl*' was not used at all. Keeping track of the percentages of the years, according to all of the individuals' tweets, 2016 is the year with the most used One Word Abbreviations. Taking into consideration that for the year 2016, the data was only collected until September and the rest 1/3 was not included.

Table 6: Total frequency for each Category.

Category	Total Frequency
Noun	29
Adverb	11
Conjunction	4
Adjective	3
Interjection	3
Verb	2
Determiner	1
Preposition	1
Pronoun	1

Table 6 indicates the different parts of speech that were used by the individual, and formed abbreviations. An interesting observation would be that even though the individual tends to abbreviate more nouns than anything else, according to Table 4 the two most frequent words belong to the category of conjunctions. Only 4 words that were abbreviated were conjunctions, and 2 of them belong to the majority. Adverbs are used in total 11 times, and they are more popular than the rest of the other parts of speech. As can be seen from the above table the rest of the it were not that popular to abbreviate, like verbs and prepositions.

3.4.3 Summary-Discussion

The above tables helped me in my research in order to observe and collect my data so that conclusions can be made. The amount of One Word Abbreviations is high but not all of the words are frequently used. It is obvious that many words were used just once or twice during the given period of 6 years. Those are isolated insistences of words of which their popularity is not that significant. The fact that she uses them however, is what make it more interesting. Gabrielle abbreviates any possible word because it is faster for her to write that way. It does not matter to her which words she is abbreviating as long she does it.

3.5 Homophonous Words

3.5.1 Total Homophonous Words
Table 7: Frequency and meaning of Homophonous Words.

Homophonous Words	Meaning	Total Frequency
U	You	77
Ur	Your	22
R	Are	8
B	Be	4
Y	Why	2
Urs	Yours	1
Yno	Why No	1
Total		*115*
Percentage from total amount of Tweets:		*1.8%*

A third category that it is worth researching is the words that are based on homophony: the words that are written down as they sound. Through her tweets I found only 7 types of such words. The percentage of all of the individuals' Tweets is 1.8%. To be more precise, the letter '*U*' (*You*) was used 77 (1%) times, '*Ur*' (*Your*) 22 (0.3%) times and '*R*' (*Are*) 8 (0.1%) times. The rest of the words had in total less than 4 entries in her tweets during the years (see chart 10, section 3.7).

3.5.2 Total Homophonous Words Per Year

Table 8: Yearly frequencies for Homophonous Words

Homophonous Words	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
U	0	10	12	12	37	6
Ur	3	0	0	0	0	19
R	0	0	0	0	0	8
B	0	0	0	0	0	4
Y	0	0	0	0	1	1
Urs	0	0	0	0	0	1
Yno	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total Amount	*3*	*10*	*12*	*12*	*38*	*40*
Percentage from total amount of Tweets:	*0.2%*	*0.7%*	*1.4%*	*0.8%*	*2.2%*	*5.5%*

The majority was found in the year 2016 with a slight difference to 2015, Homophonous Words were used 40 (5.5%) and 38 (2.2%) times respectively. With the same amount of 12, were the years 2013 (1.4%) and 2014 (0.8%).

In 2015 she wrote the word '*U*' (*You*) 37 (2.1%) times and that makes it the highest number of all the years for just one word (see chart 11, section 3.7). The word '*R*' (*Are*) in 2016 saw an important increase while during the previous years it was steadily on 0 times (see chart 12, section 3.7). The same phenomenon happened to the words '*B*' (Be), '*Urs*' (*Yours*), and '*Yno*' (*Why No*). The most frequent word of 2016 is the word '*Ur*' (*Your*) (see chart 13, section 3.7) and the least frequent are the words '*Urs*' (*Yours*), '*Yno*' (*Why No*) and '*Y*' (*Why*) with just one entry. The year with almost zero times was 2011, with 3 posts that included Homophonous Words.

3.5.3 Summary- Discussion

At this point it is important to mention that even though the amount of Homophonous words is less during 2011, it depends on how frequently she tweeted in 2011 in general. This also applies to the other categories, but the difference in the category of Homophones Words is clearer. The percentages from the total amount of tweets in both Table 7 and 8, indicate a rise during the year with a downward trend in the year 2014. The year 2016 has the highest percentage of total tweets that contained Homophonous Words with 5.5% and even though the total amount in 2015 was high also, the total percentage of Homophonous Words according to the total tweets dropped to 2.2%.

3.6 Comparison

In this section I will express my observations about the three categories. I will look for differences and similarities regarding the frequency and the percentages.

The category with the majority of posts is the one that includes Phrase Abbreviations. It is clearly seen from the charts and tables that this phenomenon is more frequent, especially in the years 2015 and 2014, starting with the highest. Second is the category of One Word Abbreviations. Similar to the previous category, the years in which they were used the most were 2016, 2015 and 2014, with a high peak in 2016. Finally, the Homophonous Words were used the least as the individual started using them in 2015 and has continued until now (see Chart 14, section 3.7).

According to the data I retrieved from her account, both categories of phrase and one-word abbreviations have a slight difference in their frequency. Comparing the three categories, the individual uses the One Word Abbreviations more frequently in the year 2015. The results indicate that even though in total the Phrase Abbreviation*s* are the majority, the One Word Abbreviations reached a high peak during 2014 and 2015. 2015, was the year with the most used Phrase Abbreviations while in the One Word Abbreviations, the amount and frequency was not that significant (See charts 15-20, section 3.7).
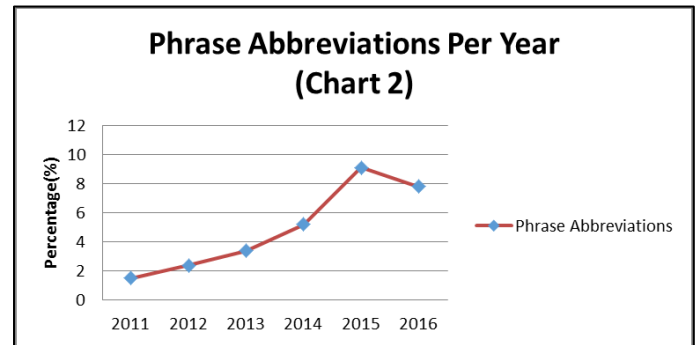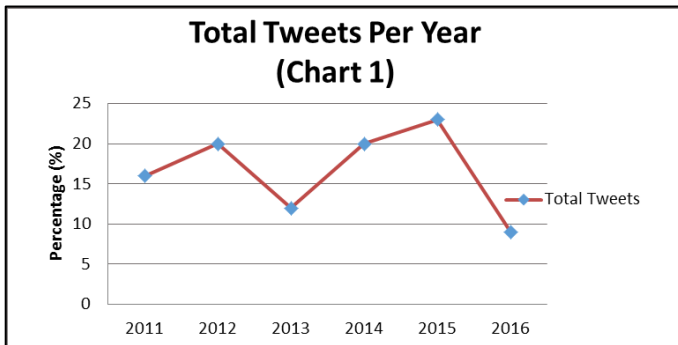
In many cases the individual used all the three categories in one tweet, and in others not even once. As an overall observation, it could be said that according to what she wanted to say she used the abbreviated forms.
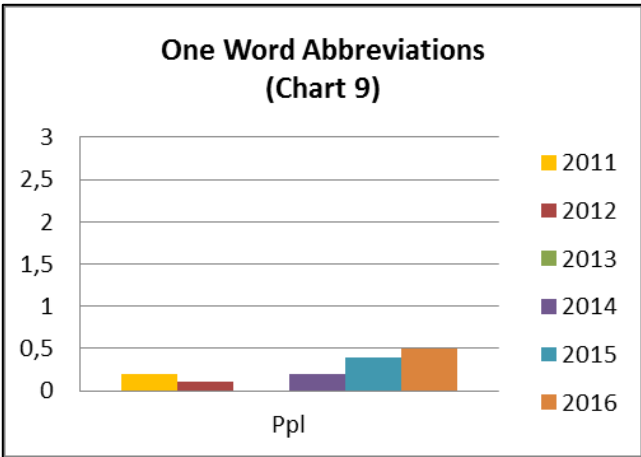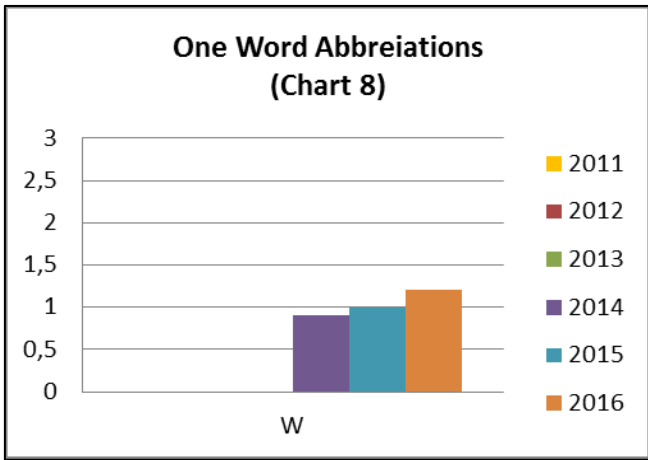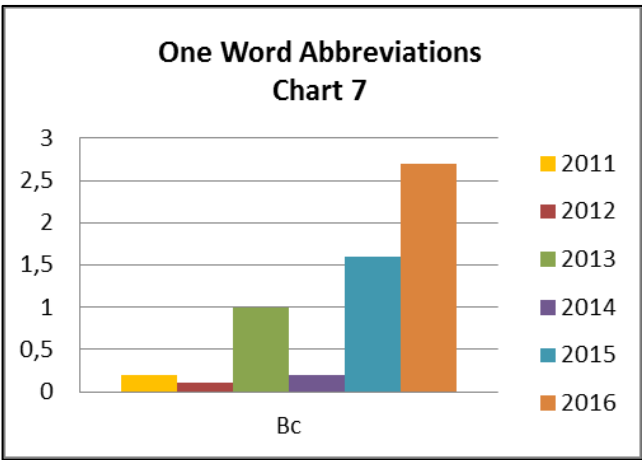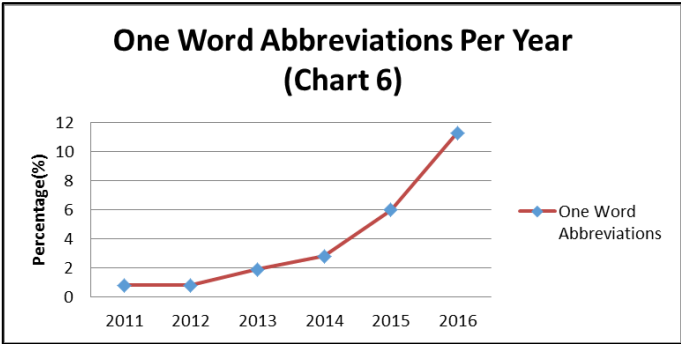
If we take a closer look at the given words, for every category there are just a few words that are repeated over and over again. Despite the fact that she is using many One Word Abbreviations, only a few of them are popular in her online texts.
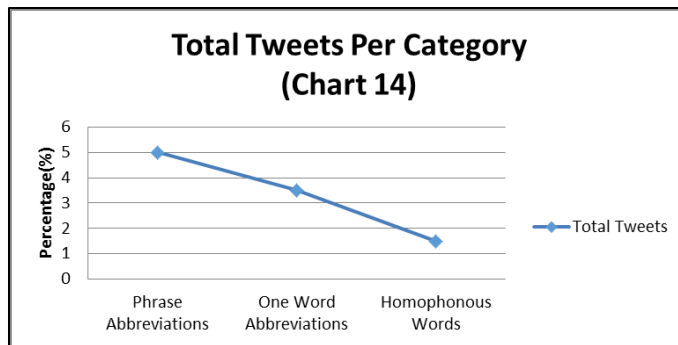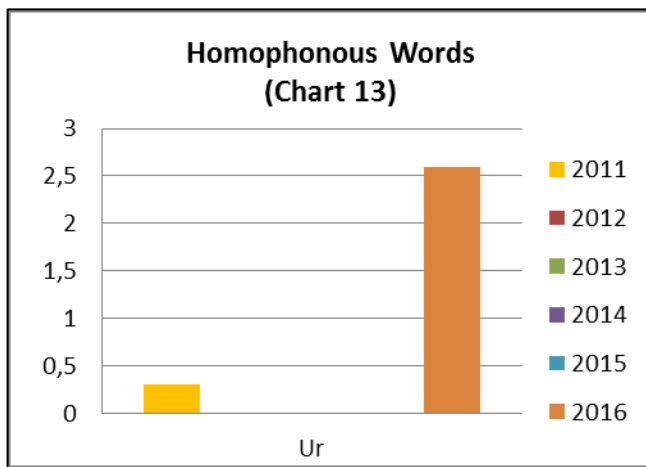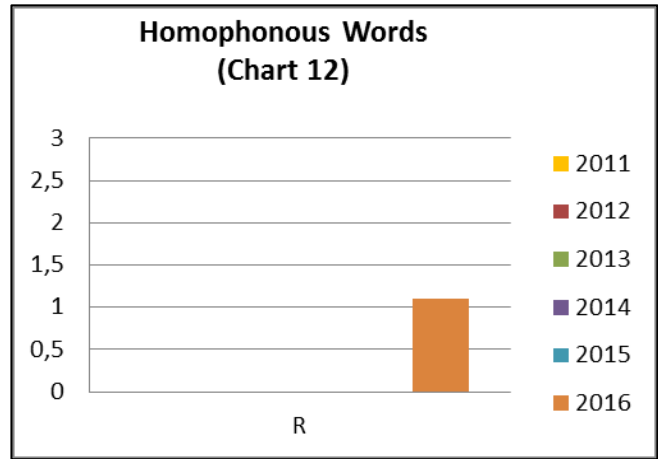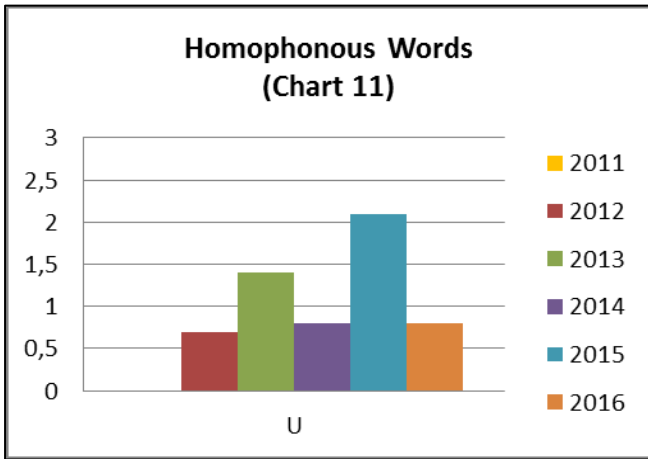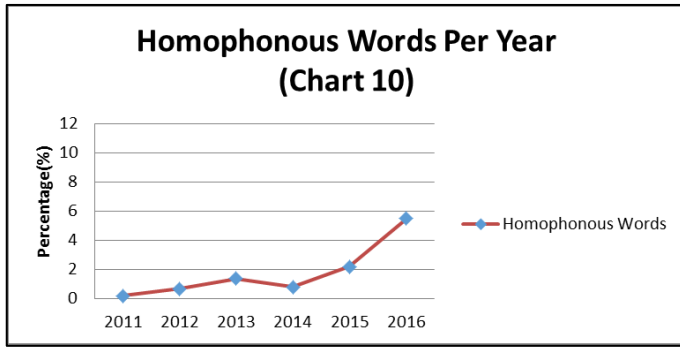
In the years 2011 and 2012, the individual barely used Word Adaptions. The charts that indicate the percentage for every year for each category can clearly state that. Most of the times for this period of time the line is dropped to zero (See Chart 2, 6 & 10, section 3.7). In the next chapter of this thesis I will try to explain why this happened according to what I found in this chapter.
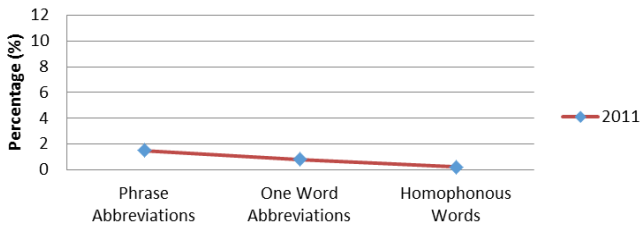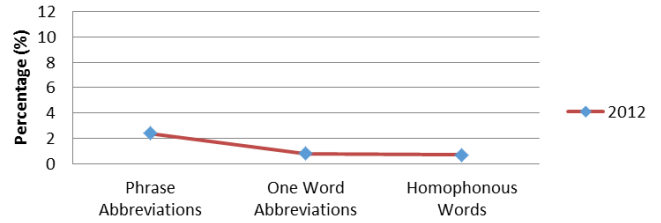
3.7 Charts

(All numbers are out of 100(%))

Total Tweets Per Year (Chart 1)

Phrase Abbreviations Per Year (Chart 2)

Phrase Abbreviations (Chart 3) — OMG

Phrase Abbreviations (Chart 4) — LOL

Phrase Abbreviations (Chart 5) — LMAO

33

One Word Abbreviations Per Year (Chart 6)

Percentage(%)

One Word Abbreviations

One Word Abbreviations Chart 7

2011
2012
2013
2014
2015
2016

Bc

One Word Abbreiations (Chart 8)

2011
2012
2013
2014
2015
2016

W

One Word Abbreviations (Chart 9)

2011
2012
2013
2014
2015
2016

Ppl

Homophonous Words Per Year
(Chart 10)

Homophonous Words
(Chart 11)

Homophonous Words
(Chart 12)

Homophonous Words
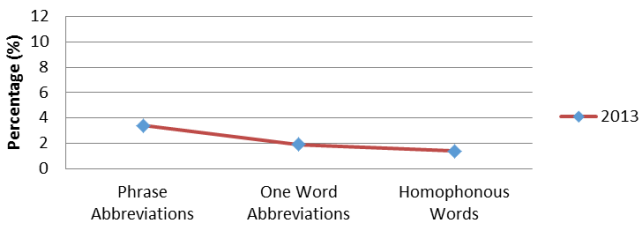## (Chart 13)

Total Tweets Per Category
(Chart 14)

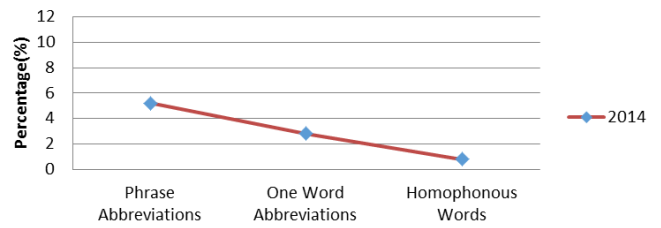**Year 2011
(Chart 15)**

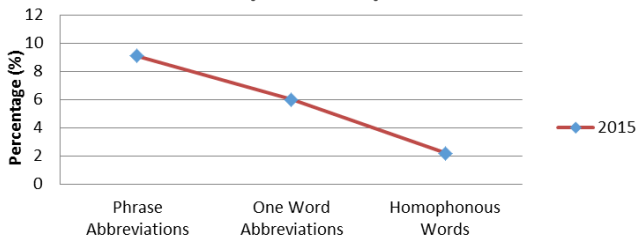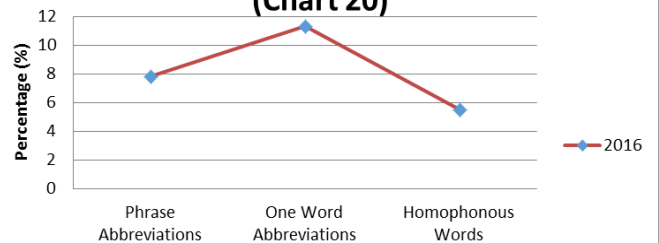**Year 2012
(Chart 16)**

**Year 2013
(Chart 17)**

**Year 2014
(Chart 18)**

**Year 2015
(Chart 19)**

**Year 2016
(Chart 20)**

Analysis

4.1 Data Analysis

In this chapter, I will explain my observations during the collection of my data according to the results I found in the previous chapter. I will concentrate on any differences and similarities regarding the frequency and use of the language. I will include my first assumptions when I was doing my research and what changed during my analysis. An important point that I will try to answer, is if the individual's language attitude changed during the years due the gaining of popularity. At what point did popularity and recognition make Gabrielle Hanna use Word Adaptions more frequently? Did this method of online writing language have an effect on peoples writing skills? I will try to give an answer to these questions according to what I found while doing my research.

The overall point of my analysis is a more linguistic examination of the formation of words. Dealing with content of Gabrielle Hanna's tweets did not concern me in depth. I only used her Tweets to retrieve particular aspects of her language. Nevertheless going through her account and reading the tweets in order to find my researching material, I was able to make some observations in general about her.

According to the given data that I retrieved from her account, Gabrielle is using a lot of Word Adaptions, for the need of this thesis I named them Phrase Abbreviations, One Word Abbreviations and Homophonous Words. This is a phenomenon that seems to be really popular in the world of Internet. More and more people are using it, especially young people (Schwartz, Eichstaedt, Kern, Dziurzynski, Ramones, Agrawal & Ungar 2013, p. 9). Some may think that they just made a typographic mistake, but the creation of all these abbreviated words is a special phenomenon that can be seen at any post in Social Networks. However, the frequency that users utilize abbreviations depend on various factors.

Some significant factors are, the young (15-25) age of users, the popularity they have and their influence to the public. Coming back to Gabrielle, she completes these criteria, as she is a young woman with a lot of influence to her fans.

Taking into consideration the type of videos she makes, and the attitude of her tweets, it is clearly understood that the target group she wants to aim for are people around 15-25 year old. Therefore, she adapts her language so it would be more familiar, converging to the target group she is referring to by using Word Adaptions online.

4.2 First Thoughts

During my first steps of research I believed that the group of Word Adaptions that was going to be more frequently seen on the year 2016 was Phrase Abbreviations. I assumed that because of the linguistic trends I had observed on the internet, and based and what I usually do, the Phrase Abbreviations is a more recurrent phenomenon. When Gabrielle became famous in the Internet World, her language changed, and as the sentences became bigger she reduce the amount of words. She did this though not with Phrase Abbreviations but with One Word abbreviations. It became used more frequently during 2016, as she shortened the words by leaving the vowels out. That was something that I did not expect to happen. Phrase Abbreviations, even though they were all over her tweets during the six years I was researching, in 2016 she stopped using them with the same frequency she was doing before.

Another phenomenon that I thought that I would find in her tweets, was the abbreviated hash tags (#). As a twitter user myself, I use hash tags that are abbreviated, most of the times are phrases (ex. #TBT: Throw Back Thursday, #GM: Good Morning). In her account, Gabrielle used more text than hash tags, and as a consequence of this I found zero abbreviations on this. Her tweets are related to her videos on YouTube and on personal statements. By the time she mentions something through a hash tag, it is not abbreviated at all.

Lastly, I would like to refer to my general findings and what I thought I was going to discover through them. Looking back six years (2011-2016) in Gabrielle's account and trying to see the changes that happened during those years until now, made me think that I could predict her future writing methods. Word Adaptions was what interested me the most. However, this was not possible to be done, as this period of time of six years was too short to be investigated. Being able to predict future linguistic trends was impossible

Even though I found some differences in her tweets and the way she wrote during the years, this was not enough to show what might happen in the upcoming years. The question of whether Gabrielle is to use these Word Adaptions in her future online language, in more or less the same frequency, will remain unanswered.

Overall, my expectations about Gabrielle tweets and language ended up to be quite different from what expected. The amount of Word Adaptions she used in her tweets, even though it was quite frequent, in the end was less than I expected it to be. This of course does not mean that the results I ended up with not worth discrediting, on the contrary, new aspects came up that I never thought about, and more interesting conclusions are made.

4.3 Language, the heart of Internet

Without a doubt, language and especially writing language is what helps internet to function. With the use of internet in daily base, it opened the horizons of people around the world to come together and communicate. Social Networks, as the central element of this thesis, play a vital role in the formation of language. A marked feature of the online language is the abbreviations and acronyms (Crystal 2006). This method of online writing is not something that is only restricted to my researched demographic of 16-25, but it is a well spread phenomenon. There are people that do not agree with this new formation of language, but as society is evolving rapidly, the same happens with language. The rapid progression of modern societies is characterized by the acceleration of short-hand writing. When the moto for a lot of people is ''Time is Money'', they mirror this linguistically by communicating to each other in short consistent and understood ways.

This moto is definitely not the only explanation of why people use Word Adaptions in their online writing. If we take a closer look at Twitter, users have the ability to express their thought in a text box with a limitation of 140 words (Page, Barton, Unger & Zappavigna 2014). This restriction automatically triggers the users to eliminate the amount of characters that they are using. Words tend to get abbreviated and shorted, in other words they are facing the phenomenon of Word Adaptions. Everything will be written online and be understood but several words will become abbreviated and altered so they can fit their message in the text box of Twitter.

As a consequence of the above factors, language got into this loop through Social Networks where the ideal post is characterized by brevity and overall convenience. When no one is paying attention to the detail of the beauty of language, communication will be the only purpose of why people will be using language.

4.4 Gabrielle Hanna's online writing

Looking closer at the results of chapter 3 and taking into consideration the above facts, Gabrielle's tweets went various changes through the years. The first outstanding fact is that Phrase Abbreviations where used most until 2015, from that point and after the majority of abbreviations were the ones that were forming just one word. Especially in 2016, the percentage of use is almost double compared to 2015. It seems that she lost her interest in writing Phrase Abbreviations. This is probably due to the ''trend'' for abbreviate phrases going out of fashion and shortening words is a more ''in'' and modern method. Her language

may change because she follows the new trends of online society. This is a method that people of Social Network use in general, especially when they are adolescents. They are aware of how other people use language online and try to imitate. This is a controversial thing as the one influences the other. It is not just famous people that influence their followers, the opposite happens also.

The Homophonous Words for instance, were not used in any extensive way before 2015. They became more frequent during 2016. With this fact it is obvious that this new trend is used the last two years. Gabrielle could use Homophonous Words at any point during the six years of research, as the words 'You' and 'Your' are used in daily basis and they can easily be adapted with 'U' and 'Ur' respectively. The overall assumption is that, language changes in the needs of evolving societies. Especially in the online world of Social Media, where the vast majority of people influence one another, without even realizing it. The need of being included in society plays a significant role in this case. Adapting your language, or even modifying it, can happen in the way people, in particularly online. Abbreviations like *'U'*, *'R'* and *'W/O'* were used before the online language, that does not make them look as new words of the online writing world. They are just used more frequently. It is obvious an informal way of writing, but that does not mean that they were not used before. They may seem 'new' because now it became a trend and a way to write faster or brief. It is a representation of informal writing as the internet influenced the change from standard writing language (Baron 2008, p. 176).

 While researching Gabrielle's tweets I found out something that deals with the capitalization of the words. The use of capitals has been affected in her tweets. It was almost nonexistence. The only moment that the individual used capitals was when she was abbreviating phrases and using capitals with initial letter of the word. She also used it in people's names, but not always. The tendency to write in lower case is almost an online linguistic norm and comes from the fact that in the online world, capitals give the intention that the person who writes in capital is angry, or implies that the user behind the keyboard is shouting (Crystal 2006, p. 92). Gabrielle is one of the many that uses this type of structural change in her tweets. For a lot of people including Gabrielle there is no need for capitalization when the significance of Social Media is writing with little judgment from and between her followers. Understanding what others have to say in the simplest way is what really matters while texting or tweeting online.

Moreover, another aspect that triggered my interest during this procedure was the total amount of tweets regarding the percentages of different linguistic use. By looking at the total amount of Phrase Abbreviations, One Word Abbreviations and Homophonous Words, is was evident that there was varying frequency in the use of different online linguistic techniques. Phrase abbreviations appeared to be more dominant in her tweets. When calculating the total numbers, the results showed that One Word Abbreviations gained ground in the year 2016 increasing a lot more in its used compared to Phrase Abbreviations. This might of happened because it is more accessible to Gabrielle to abbreviate just one word than an entire phrase. Furthermore the year 2013, the percentage of the use of Word Adaptions showed a rise comparing with previous years. The total amount of her tweets were half as less, taking into consideration that the other years reached most that 1000 tweets. The frequency of the Word Adaptions did not change, but the reduction of her tweets made the percentages rise.

Apart from numbers and percentages, Gabrielle in the category of One Word Abbreviations showed an interest in conjunctions. In particular, the fact I found really interesting was that even though the majority of the One Word Abbreviations that she uses are nouns, the two most constant are conjunctions. This happens because the two words that are more dominant than others ('*Bc'* for *Because* and '*W'* for *With*), are more common words that are used in daily by every individual.

4.5 Influence from Social Networks

Social Networks are part of people's lives more than ever. Posting, tweeting, and chatting is inevitable in these modern societies. People are always online, some of them are just getting informed without getting influenced by the new trends, but the majority of people follow are getting influenced without any filters in the information they receive. Nowadays it has become a powerful tool for people in which others can contribute and interact together. Social Networks interact to society as a powerful source of communication. Users have the possibility to put into practice their communicative and social skills (Seargeant & Tagg 2014). Language, as the center of interest in this paper, differs from person to person. Every user influences and get influenced back. As a matter of fact, people of the online world find it easier spread some language elements of their online language to other users. Users are getting bombed with a lot of posts from other people that have specific ways of expression in their online language, like Word Adaptions. As a consequence of this, people with each other, without realizing they copy and they imitate what other people express (Cingel & Sundar

2012). This unconscious procedure can lead to the formation of an online identity. A way that social identity is being formed is through the language people use, and especially write on the internet. Words, language and discourse, give an identity for the people. With what people see on every day posts, they are able to filter out and understand the difference between the users regarding their social identity (Vazquez 2011).

Every individual can write online either with either word and/or structural adaptions or without. It is a personal choice how users formulate their way of online writing. Even when getting influenced by others after scrolling up and down on Social Networks, the formation of a homogeneous social identity is likely to be formed by the incorporation of similar linguistic features in ones typing.

4.6 The rules of Word Adaptions

Word Adaptions at the start seemed to me that they were used in an abstract way, that they had no rules while people where creating them. Once I gathered all the data from Gabrielle Hanna and organized the Word Adaptions in the three categories of Phrase Abbreviations, One Word Abbreviations and Homophonous Words, I identified the bigger picture. The three categories have some rules that are applied consciously or unconsciously in the words. Phrase Abbreviations tend to capitalize the initial letter of every word of the formed phrase. For instance the phrase 'be right back', will get abbreviated in the form BRB. This is a really common method. For One Word Abbreviations the rule that I found in most of the cases is the loss of the vowel. The word is mostly constituted with consonants of the word so remains understood, yet brief. For example, the word ''People'' changes to the form *''Ppl''*. There are cases that at least one vowel is kept. One of those instances are the word 'Really' and 'Babes' that got abbreviated into *'Rly'* and *'Baes'* respectively. For the Homophonous category the only observation with reference to any rules is the fact that all the words that I found are written the same way they sound. The third category deals with phonology, as the words, and at many cases, the letters sound the same with some other words. An example for the Homophonous Words is the 'R' and *'Y'* that stand for *'Are'* and *'Why'* respectively.

These observations helped me to understand that everything has a system and a method. Nothing is randomly arranged in online language. Even though that at the beginning they look odd, I can conclude that the online lexicon has rules and guidelines. The common element between those categories is the brevity and overall convenience.

4.7 Yesterday's change is Todays norm

There are many articles about the relation of text messaging and English grammar, one of them is the paper of Cingel and Sundar (2012). They state that current and future generations may use these Word Adaptions in their daily life and it will become something normal and acceptable for them. This is also the reason why educators are concerned at what extend the Word Adaptions will influence the understanding of Standard English of adolescents. At the same paper this influence of texting to Standard English was examined. They found out that grammar in text messages does not change, the only thing that is different is the use of Word Adaptions which this has nothing to do with the Standard English grammar. Something that got discovered in the same research, is the matter of how adolescents can get rid of these Word Adaptions in school. The answer to this is that students find it difficult to switch from texting to the traditional pencil writing in the standardized form.

The so called 'online language' will become something normal as the generations passes. This is something that already happens according to the above research. The *'OMG' (Oh My God)* and *'U' (You)* may be established in the school environment and if we look in a more extreme perspective in dictionaries. It is quite early to see these changes on language now, but in a few years and with the proper research, such conclusions will be easier to make.

Word Adaptions are being utilized by a lot of users to save space and time. Modern language methods should not be overused, because they bring us to the result of losing the standard way of how a language should look like. Fast writing has become more and more popular and powerful these days. Instant messages, tweets and posts give access to write just the outline of what people want to say to the others. The convenience of fast texting by using all these types of word and structure adaptions will mean writing in a minimized yet informal way.

The chances of a meaningful analysis are diminishing with the convenience of fast texting (Baron 2008, p.231). The question then should not be why people are using fast writing but what impact it will have on their long-term education.

Conclusion

5.1 Discussion

In the last chapter of this thesis I express my overall conclusions and thoughts about the online language on Social Networks. All these results that were formed during my research on the chosen individual played a significant role to answer the questions I had in the introduction of my thesis.

It is clear that Phrase Abbreviations, One Word Abbreviations, and Homophonous Words are all over the web. Especially in a Social Platform like Twitter where you are allowed to express yourself in just 140 characters. The text box that twitter provides, on the one side is inspiring people to write a creative thought by leading the way with the phrase 'What's happening?', though on the other hand, it gives a word limitation. This strategy in a way, forces people to write as short and brief as possible, but for the meaning to remain the same. Users of this and other platforms started using abbreviations as it was easy for them to communicate in a convenient way. During the years some formations of words were used more than others, and some words became more popular than others. This was also discussed in the Analysis where even though Phrase Abbreviations had the highest numbers between the three categories, One Word Abbreviations were the ones that during 2016 were used the most. Again, different factors influence the choice of the individual's language. Age and popularity are two of the main aspects regarding the use of Abbreviations and words that are shortened. The element of age deals with the tendency for young people to find ''cool'' ways of using language, especially during the past decade. The younger the person that is using the web, the easier it is to be influenced by other people. It is an obvious thing to happen as adolescents are more prone to adapt to new things in their language. Especially so when teenagers enter Social Platforms and search for popular people to follow which inevitably leads to them being influenced by these celebrities.

Language as a tool of communication can be researched in a multi-faceted way. In this thesis, only written speech was researched and specifically, Word Adaptions. Oral speech is equally important and how it is influenced through Social Networks. How people write or rather how they write online, influences oral speech. Will the abbreviations that were found in the online platforms become part of speech eventually? I believe most people who use the Abbreviated Phrase *OMG* (*Oh My God*), also used it while speaking. Is this a frequent phenomenon? In order to have valid results, research in speech and written language from the same individuals should be made.

Apart from speech, an interesting question about online Word Adaptions, is if they found a place in the Standard English Dictionary. We have seen during this thesis research that these words are not new, but they are used in a different way (Abbreviation form, limitation of vowels). In order to be able to research this, researchers will need to go back several years and see if any words were already included in the Standard Dictionary. This research will help us understand and predict what might happen with abbreviated and shortened words in the future. Will they be established in the dictionary and function like any other word in our daily life? Or were they just a trend that over the years will fade away?

All these questions can only be answered through specific research. The data that can be retrieved both online and offline language, spoken or written, can give valid results which can be analyzed in order to make more accurate conclusions.

5.2 Recommendations

This research lays the groundwork for future studies. First it would be worth to examine, to what extend this online language affects oral speech. Do people get influenced orally by the way they write on the online platforms? Are these Word Adaptions going to be added in the Standard English Dictionary? Is it a way of writing that Social Networks need? All these questions are worth studying as this topic affects all of us that utilize language. Users of Social Networks should be researched not just in the way they write on the Social Platforms but also how they speak in their normal life. This future study will show outstanding results regarding language use. The promising results will show whether or not online language affects speech and if these words that are famous among Social Networks made their way to be established in the dictionary. This research will have to cover a long period in order for the results to be accurate. Moreover, an interesting topic of research could be of people whose native language is not English but use English constantly when it comes to Social Networks. Do these people use Word adaptions? If so are there any differences in the formation of those words compared to the ones of the native English speakers? During the upcoming years such work will have significant outcomes on how language and orthography is changing to adapt to the needs of society, and especially the online one.
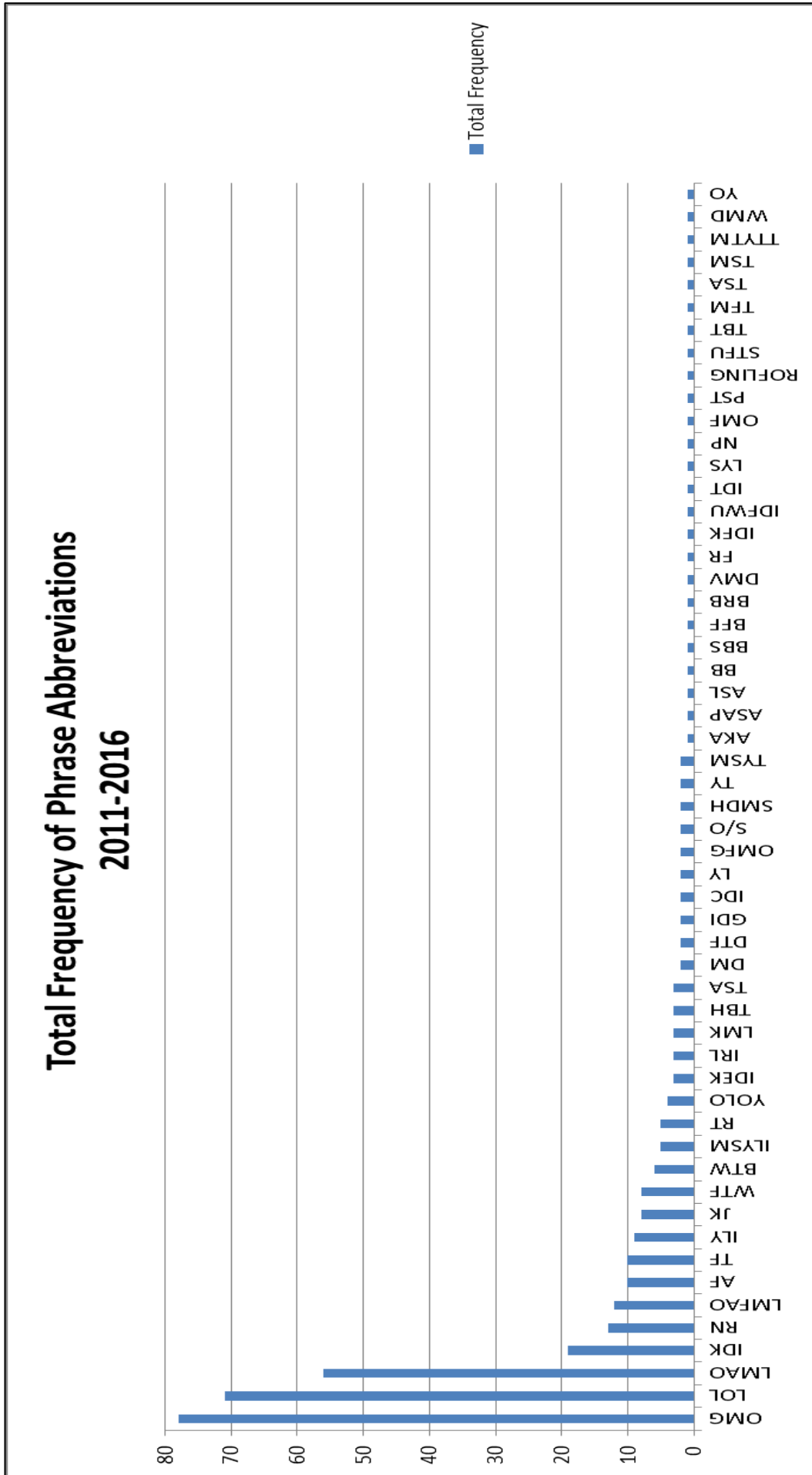
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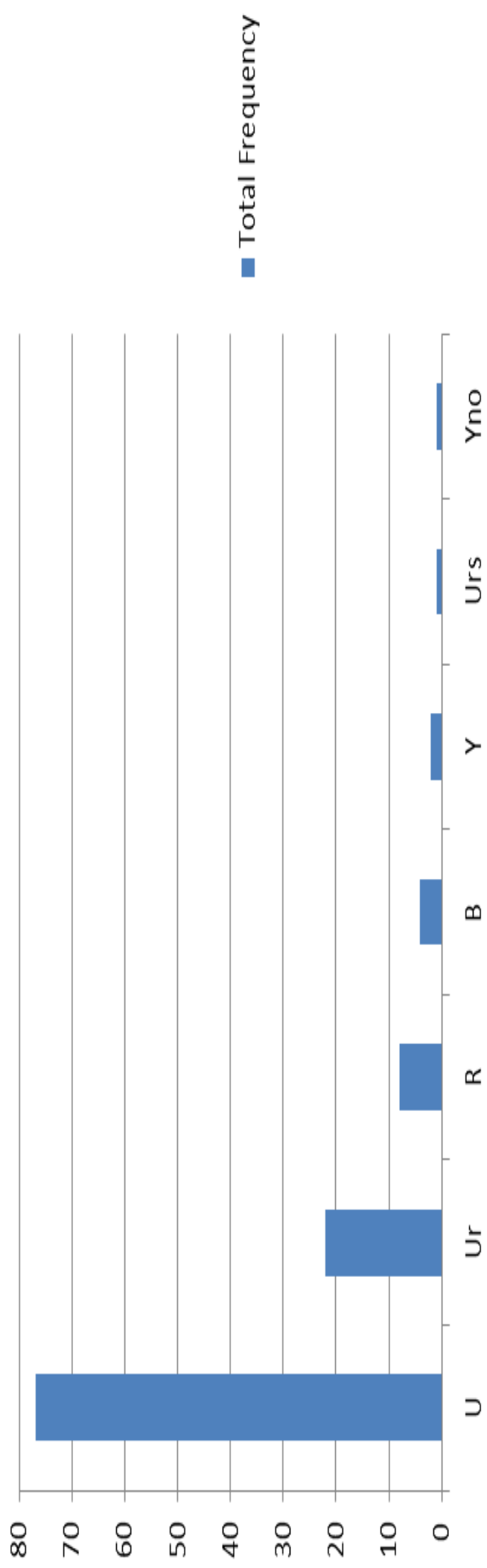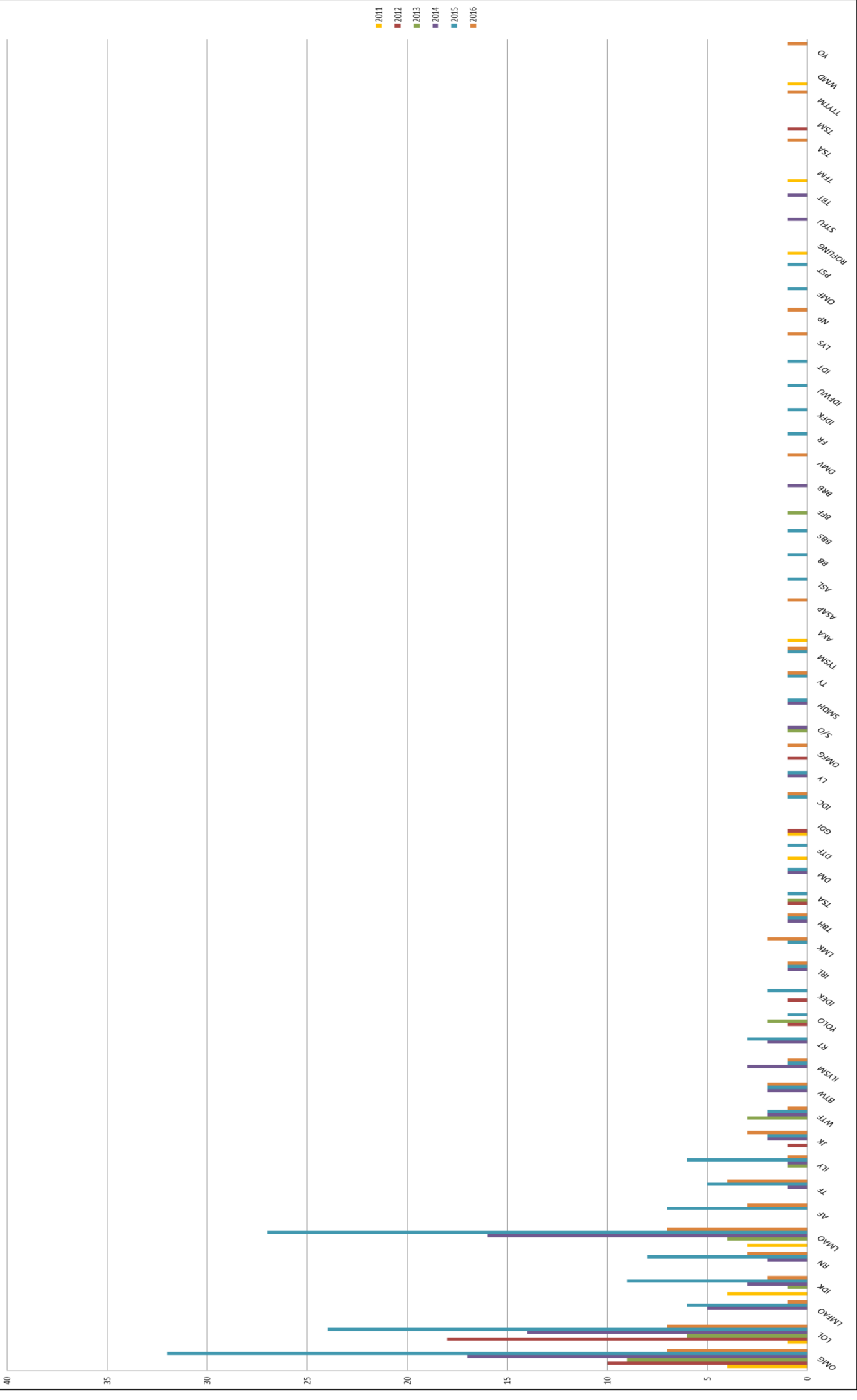
Appendix

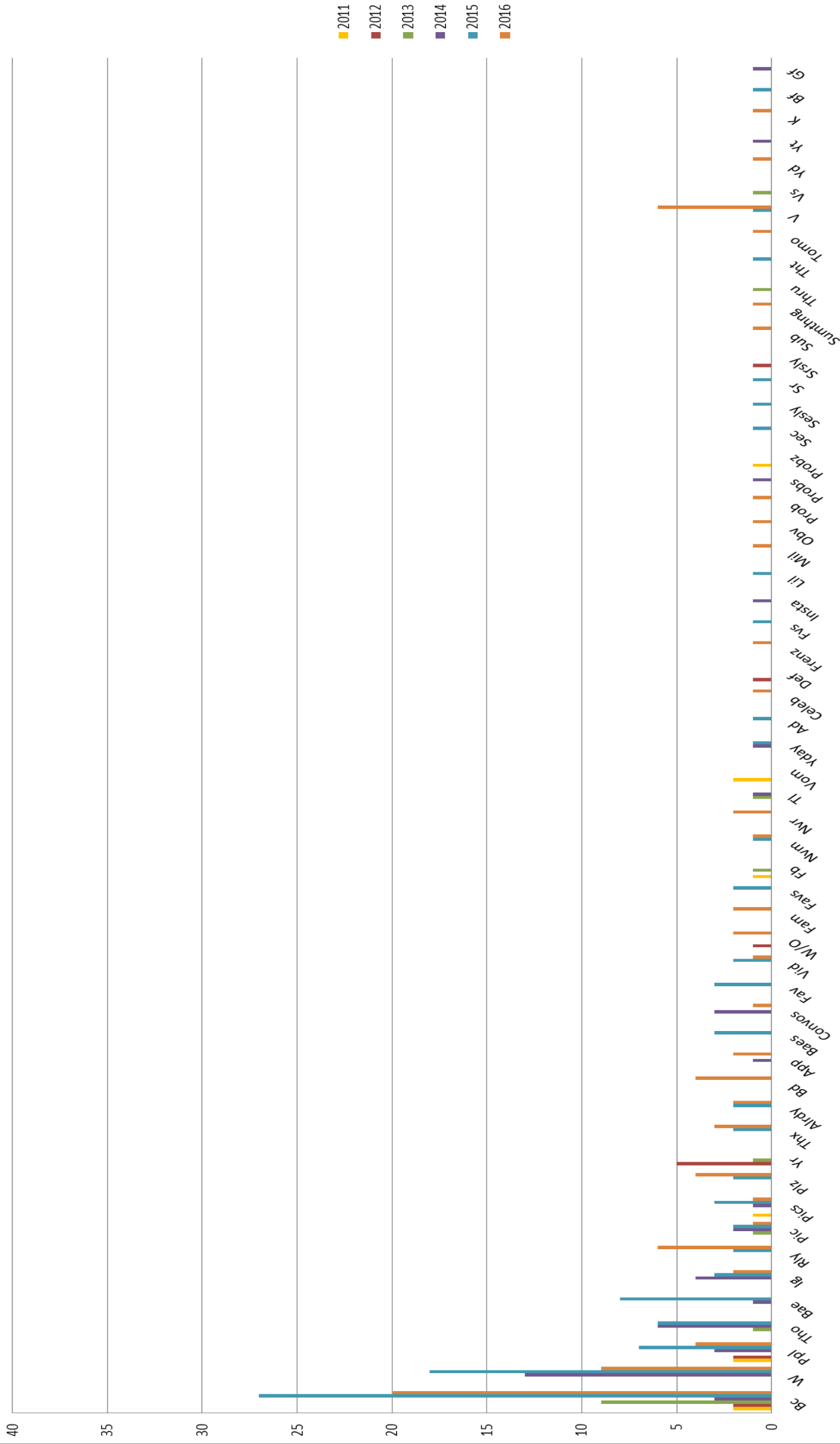Total Frequency of Phrase Abbreviations 2011-2016

Total Frequency of One Word Abbreviations 2011-2016

Total Frequency

Abbreviation	Frequency
Bc	62
W	40
Ppl	18
Tho	13
Bae	9
Ig	9
Rly	9
Pic	8
Pics	8
Plz	8
Yr	8
Thx	7
Alrdy	6
Bd	6
App	5
Baes	5
Convos	5
Fav	5
Vid	5
W/O	5
Fam	4
Favs	4
Fb	4
Nvm	4
Nvr	4
Tl	4
Vom	4
Yday	4
Ad	2
Celeb	2
Def	2
Frenz	2
Fvs	2
Insta	2
Lil	2
Mil	2
Obv	2
Prob	2
Probs	2
Probz	2
Sec	2
Sesly	2
Sr	2
Srsly	2
Sub	2
Sumthng	2
Thru	2
Tht	2
Tomo	2
V	2
Vs	2
Yd	2
Yt	2
K	2
Bf	2
Gf	2

Total Frequency of Homophonous Words 2011-2016

Frequency of Phrase Abbreviations Per Year

Frequeny of One Word Abbreviations Per Year

Legend: 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016

Frequency of Homophonous Words Per Year