

A study of emerging terminology in molecular genetics with the aid of internet databases

Solymosi Mária

SZTE Idegennyelvi Központ

msolymosi@freemail.hu

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The introduction of a molecular approach in the life-sciences has resulted in a continuing revolutionary change in the terminology involved, which can only be compared to that in informatics. These developments in molecular genetic terminology have been triggered by the new phenomena that are constantly being discovered in this field. The present paper examines the occurrence of such new terminology and the process whereby certain expressions and concepts become widespread in the scientific community. The high level of development in informational technology allows a comprehensive study of this topic. Nevertheless, a search through the history of published terminology in scientific journals by traditional methods would be long-lasting and cumbersome. Accordingly, in this study an internet-available genetic glossary has been utilized to select the most up-to-date terms. These new terms were examined by using a database to detect their frequencies. This method helped reveal the first use and spreading of such genetic nomenclature. Further, a citation index search was carried out to identify those references which furnished significant information about the scientific importance of the terms in question. A retrospective citation search led to the first publication in which the term was applied. This paper aims to introduce a method based on informational technology in order to reveal tendencies in the rapidly developing terminology of molecular genetics, which might be relevant in other fields of sciences.