

## **Mediational means in written academic discourse: the construction and communication of knowledge in different disciplines**

Project in co-operation with the Department of Scandinavian Languages at Stockholm University and Chalmers University. Project members: Hans Strand (scientific leader), Mona Blåsjö, Christine Räisänen, Åsa Mäkitalo

### **Project summary**

The aim of this project is to study mediational means in written academic discourse. By mediational means we mean the linguistic and semiotic resources which the professional researcher uses when writing and doing research (e.g. presenting, discussing, evaluating etc.), i.e. when constructing and communicating knowledge within the discipline. The theoretical framework of the study is sociocultural theory according to Vygotsky, Wertsch and Scollon. The starting point of the study is that academic disciplines differ, and, accordingly, that mediational means are discipline specific. However, we also assume that the means represent a form of silent knowledge that the researcher possesses, i.e. the means are an important part of the researcher's genre knowledge. It is therefore important to uncover these means. By doing so we should achieve a better understanding of the role of language in the process of knowledge production and construction as well as a better understanding of how we could convey this silent genre knowledge to our students. Five different disciplines from three faculties will be studied, viz. mechanical engineering (focus: technical design) and building management within the faculty of technology, Scandinavian languages and media and communication studies within the humanities, and law studies within the faculty of law. The methods used will be interviews and discourse analysis.