

## **Language and Knowledge in the Modern Society**

**Marie-Louise Sandén**

**Abstract.** Language is not only our most important means for presenting ideas, values, and norms. It also shapes the way individuals view the world. Knowledge as a concept is positively loaded. Politicians are talking of the importance of knowledge and an idea that knowledge puts things into motion. In the industrial society most people were occupied in manipulating things compared to in the post-industrial society where people instead are manipulating meanings. In the changing society of today scientists are describing a shift from redistribution to recognition. Mass media are then important in selecting, associating, manipulating, and diffusing symbols. Those with sound language capacity have an advantage in 'world making' and also in formulating clichés that might manipulate people's mind and destroy what Habermas calls 'emancipatory' knowledge. Then it might be of importance to analyse linguistic clichés – also inside social science – and ask who are the persons having the language capacity to define the world we are living in?