In this paper I will present an analysis of recordings from one Romsdal family, from which family members have been recorded for dialectological purposes in a number of dialect surveys in the 1950s, 1970s and up to 2010. The family members are born between 1880 and 1998. The recordings can be analyzed as an example of real-time language change on a super-local level, representing five generations from one village, one farm and one family. The paper thus follows Labov’s suggestion that the best way to study language variation in the family is through analyses of language transmission (Labov 2001).

Two phonological variables will be examined in this paper: 1. (nn), with the three variants /n/, /p/ and /t/, as in “inni” (Eng. “inside” prep): /ɪn/, /ɪp/, /ɪt/ and 2. (øy/ei), with the variants {ei}/ɛi/, {ei}/æi/, {ei}/æi/ and {ei}/æi/, as in “heilt” (Eng. “complete”, adj. neut. sing.): /hɛːlt/, /hæːlt/, /hɛːlt/ og /hæːlt/, and {øy} /øy/, {øy}/ø/, {øy}/œ/, {øy}/æ/ and {øy}/æ/, as in „bløyte“ (Eng. “soak”, v.): /bøyːte/, /bøːte/, /bœːte/ and /bæːte/.

Hazen (2006) suggests that in a sociolinguistic context «the family may be seen as an intermediate grouping between the individual and the speech community» (Hazen 2006: 501). In this analysis the speech samples from family members from the 1970s and 2000s will be compared to same-age recordings and same-age speakers from the local speech community.

Finally I examine assumptions of language socialization in family and home as a driving force for language maintenance and non-change. In a language shift and language death perspective, the home and family is usually regarded as the primary arena for language maintenance and transmission, as in Joshua Fishman’s Graded Intergenerational Dislocation Scale (Fishman 1992: 286). My paper examines the relation between language transmission in the home on the one hand, and community language change on the other hand, in rural Romsdal, a non-endangered language area in which «successful» linguistic transmission of the traditional local variety ought to be the norm.

References