If we want to understand the dynamics of changing social meaning potentials in connection with real time developments in language use we need to incorporate studies of metalinguistic attitudes. This is particularly the case in superdiverse societies (Vertovec 2007, Blommaert & Rampton 2011) where people have increased access to cultural and linguistic resources associated with a range of different speakers, places, norms, meanings, etc. In the research project Minority Children and Youth: Language, School, and Other Settings we have documented how such resources are used, negotiated and evaluated by young Copenhageners in their everyday life. Using a school in a heterogeneous neighbourhood in Copenhagen as our point of departure, our research team followed (and follows) several groups of children and adolescents in their lived life inside as well as outside the school. On the one hand we can follow developments in language use across different age groups. On the other hand we can observe how language and “languages” become constructed and conventionalized.

At the current stage in our project we have data on language attitudes from grade 0 (age 6), 2, 3, 8 and 9 (age 15). These data involve different groups of speakers on each grade level (except for the grades 8 and 9, which involve the same speakers followed over time). In our presentation we present the main results and discuss “developmental aspects” across the age groups. Furthermore, we compare the results with our findings concerning patterns of language use. Methodically, we discuss what consequences our findings may have for studies following the same people over longer stretches of time. Theoretically we argue that real time studies of language change need to take into consideration the total linguistic fact stressing the dialectic relationship between language form, practice and ideology (Silverstein 1985:220) in order to understand the dynamics between linguistic variation and social meaning making.

References