

## Chapter 10. Stable variation or change in progress? A sociolinguistic analysis of *pa(ra)* in the Spanish of Venezuela

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Sociolinguistic analyses of *pa(ra)* “for” have found that both linguistic and social factors play a significant role in speaker use of the reduced (*pa*’) and full (*para*) forms (e.g., Bentivoglio et al. 2005). However, no study to date has analyzed the extent to which production of these forms is most indicative of stable variation or a change in progress. The current study investigates 160 interviews conducted with speakers from Caracas, Venezuela and offers a comprehensive analysis of the variables of socioeconomic class, age, gender, and style in order to determine whether *pa(ra)* is best considered a stable variable or a change in progress in this speech community. Results indicate that the reduction of *para* lacks the hallmarks typical of linguistic change in progress.

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