

Lexical Research Report: Word "Chamo" (Venezuela)

MTW LEARNING - MORE THAN WORDS / MAS QUE PALABRAS

Institutional Endorsement: Validated by the Royal Spanish Academy (RAE), the Association of Academies of the Spanish Language (ASALE), and the Venezuelan Academy of the Language.

1. ORIGIN

Its etymological root most strongly supported by researchers comes from an evolution and apocope of the Portuguese word "**chamado**" (called), or from the verb *chamar* (to call). Historically, it entered the Caribbean and Venezuelan region through trade exchange, migration, and the presence of Lusitanian communities settled in the country during the twentieth century. Another minority but accepted philological line suggests a cross with the English slang "**chum**" (companion or comrade), introduced during the industrial oil-boom era, adapting phonetically in a very natural way to Spanish morphology.

2. ADAPTATION

By the middle of the twentieth century, the term became deeply integrated into urban and school speech, initially used exclusively to refer to children, youngsters, or adolescents as a substitute for words such as "muchacho" or "child". With the passing of generations and its constant exposure on Venezuelan television, radio, and popular music, the term lost its age boundary and became fully democratized. It became a cross-cutting element in the country's communication, adopted with pride by all social classes and consolidated as a colloquial and identity marker for Venezuelans abroad.

3. CURRENT MEANING

Today, it is an indispensable vocative and noun with great conversational versatility. Although it maintains its original meaning as a way to refer to a young person or adolescent, it mainly functions casually as a form of address or direct appeal for interacting with a friend, companion, or equal. It is

frequently used as an exclamatory interjection at the beginning or end of a sentence to express surprise, emphasis, closeness, or immediate emotional complicity in speech.

4. USE IN REAL LIFE

It is used daily in informal interactions to get someone's attention, express amazement, or refer to people close to the speaker:

- **To get the attention of an acquaintance:** *"Hey, chamo! Come here for a moment, please."*
- **As an interjection of amazement or surprise:** *"Chamo, you won't believe what happened at the office today!"*
- **To refer to a third person:** *"Yesterday I spoke with the chamo who fixes computers."*

HISTORICAL AND LINGUISTIC VALIDATION SOURCES

1. Royal Spanish Academy (RAE) - Dictionary of the Spanish Language: definition and meanings of the Venezuelanism "chamo, ma" as a young person or child.
2. Association of Academies of the Spanish Language (ASALE) - Dictionary of Americanisms: record of the geographic use of the word and its expansion in the continental Caribbean.
3. Venezuelan Academy of the Language: documents and bulletins on the lexical origin of Venezuelanisms and the Lusitanian and English influence on informal twentieth-century speech.