

## Words with [š] in the Sandoval dictionary: The interjections ¡(A)chix!, ¡(H)ux!, and ¡Xo!

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Sandoval records several interjections that are pronounced with the alveopalatal fricative [š]. Two also occur with the simple dental or apical fricative pronunciation [s] as well. Two have other uses or additional derived forms. All are still in common usage.

### ¡Achix!

The first to be discussed is perhaps the most common. There appear to be several variant forms, all used to exclaim about something disagreeable and at least one to silence someone. In the Sandoval entries that record the variants it is obvious that there is overlap of meaning and usage, even though no one entry is complete. It is also obvious that [š] is in phonological alternation with [s] in these forms, as elsewhere. Interestingly, according to Sandoval's entries, the word carries penultimate stress in the two-syllable, palatoalveolar versions. All other compilers write it with an accent on the last syllable.

¡ACHIX!, interj.= "¡Achís!" "¡Charás!"

¡ACHIS!, interj. = Sirve para indicar que hay algo desagradable, sucio, y qué provoca náuseas, ¡Che!, en Costa Rica

"¡CHIX!, interj. = "¡Chis!"

¡CHARÁS!, interj, = "¡Achís!".

¡CHARÁS, LA MIERDA!, fr. interj. = "¡Achix!" "¡Achís, la mierda!".

¡CHIS!, interj. = ¡ Quieto! "¡Chis, niño! No brinques ni corras tanto".

Note that there is an independent entry for the non-interjection form, *achix*, identified as a noun.

ACHIX, m. = Cosa despreciable, de ningún valor, "Tu reloj es un "achix".

Batres Jáuregui does not include most of these forms. He does, however, document *charás* as an 'interjección muy baja y vulgar, que solo se escucha entre la hez del pueblo.' Of the post-Sandoval dictionaries, only Rubio includes *charás*.

Expresión de desdén, de aceptación de un reto: "--¿Podés hacer tal cosa?"  
"-- ¡Charás!"

Armas cites both *¡Achix!* and *¡Achis!*, as well as the shortened forms *¡Chix!* and *¡Chis!*. Interestingly, he provides full definitions only for the [s] forms, defining the ones with palatal pronunciations only in terms of the others. This practice may suggest that the palatal pronunciation was losing ground by mid-century. Of course, it may also represent some sort of preference by Armas for the more standard sound where the two are in competition. His definitions and examples for *¡Achis!* and *¡Chis!* are as follows:

Expresión de asco o desprecio. ¡Achís! ¡Me ha emporcado el zapato!

- Cuentan que jacinto es tu novio.
- ¡Achís! Ni que estuviera loca.

Expresión de asco.

- ¡Chis! Aquí hay un animal muerto.

Rubio includes both pronunciations and marks them both as vulgar. Again, like Armas, Rubio defines only *¡Achísh!* (in Rubio's orthography) in detail, while *¡Achíx!* is defined only with reference to the other word. Rubio more extended definition suggests that the meaning may have expanded. At any rate, it applies to a wider range of contexts than suggested by either Armas or Sandoval.

Expresión de asco o desprecio; de admiración en broma; de desdén para aceptar un reto cualquiera.

However, Morales Pellecer includes only the [s] version, which he defines it as an 'expresión de desprecio o repugnancia.' Likewise, the 22nd edition of the *Diccionario de la Real Academia Española* (DRAE) includes the shortened [s] version, *chis*, as a Guatemalanism 'para indicar que hay algo sucio.'

In my own inquiries I have found people who accept *¡Chix!* only as a baby language interjection to stop a child from touching something inappropriately or *¡Ah, chix!* to mean that something is no good. However, for those persons, neither of the forms *¡Achíx!* and *¡Achx!* is in current use.

### **iXo!**

The second interjection with [š] documented by Sandoval is *iXo!*, an expression that seems to have begun strictly as a word used to halt an animal. A comparison of dictionary entries over time clearly shows that the pragmatic force of this form has become stronger as it has been applied to people. It is currently considered an extremely strong and rude way to tell someone to be quiet, and is seldom heard in polite company.

Sandoval, however, offers an assortment of contexts showing how the semantic extension from animal to person may have occurred via the use of animal epithets as insults. The presentation is non-judgmental, lending support to the idea that the word has become stronger since mid-century.

*iXO!* = Interjección empleada para parar la bestia de carga o la recua. *Xo* se usa también con los adjetivos *cabrón* y *baboso* o con las frases *hijo de la chingada*, *hijo de la gran puta*, etc.

*iXO, ANIMAL!* = Frase empleada para indicar u obligar a una persona a que haga silencio, que no siga hablando.

*iXO, BABOSA!* = "*¡Xo, baboso!*", con la diferencia del género.

*iXO, BABOSO!* = "*¡Xo animal!*"

*iXO, CABRÓN!* = "*iXo, animal!*" "*iXo, baboso!*"

¡XO, CABRONA! = "¡Xo; cabrón!" con la diferencia del género,

¡XO, HIJO DE LA CHINGADA! = "¡Xo, baboso!"

¡XO, HIJO DE LA GRAN PUTA = "¡Xo, baboso!"

Batres Jáuregui does not mention this form. Armas has *¡Sho!* 'Orden grosea de callar' with the following examples:

- Papá, tú eres injusto con mamá.
- ¡Sho! ¡No te metas en lo que no te importa!

Rubio calls it an 'interjección que sirve para ordenar el silencio' but adds 'acompañado de otra y otras palabras significa admiración: *¡Sho* contestación la que le dio! Morales Pellecer calls it a 'vocablo vulgar para acallar a alguien.' It is now widely considered extremely vulgar and is always accompanied by a strong voice tone as well.

The DRAE has an entry for so that reads 'para hacer que se paren o detengan las caballerías.' The correspondence of definition with the earliest recorded definition in Guatemalan Spanish suggests that *xo* may be the same form with a retained archaic pronunciation. It is nowhere documented with the simple [s] pronunciation in Guatemala, but rather shows the common regularization pattern and alternation of [š] with [ch].

## ¡Hux!

The final [š] interjection is *¡Hux!*, another form used with animals. Sandoval records the form with and without the initial orthographic h, which presumably has no sound and is merely an orthographic convention with certain vowel-initial roots. His basic entries are the following:

¡Hux! interj. = Sirve a los arrieros para animar y aún para parar a su recua.

¡Ux!, interj. = Voz usada por los arrieros, ya para detener o parar su recua que va caminando, ya para que ésta comience a andar o para animarla en su marcha.

Rubio includes an apparently related entry – *¡ushshsht!* – that shows the fundamentally non-linguistic nature of the form. Rubio offers two slightly different interpretations.

Interjección como ¡vaya! Ella dice: "me veo Linda!" y le responden ¡ushshsht! ||  
Interjección como ¿y qué? El es pobre y dice: "¡Quiero come caviar!" Y quien le escuche dice: ¡ushshsht!

What is most interesting about this form is its apparent relationship to a series of derived forms that demonstrate how basically paralinguistic, often onomatopoeic, forms with only a tangential linguistic role within the language can take on the characteristics of regular morphemes and begin to enter into the derivational and inflectional systems. The situation with *¡Hux!* and its relatives is discussed in the essays on *mix* and its derivations. [LINK]