

Papers of the Linguistic Society of Belgium

17 | 2023

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URL: <https://sites.uclouvain.be/bkl-cbl/en/journals/papers-of-the-lsb/volume-17-2023/van-hulle-enghels/>

Electronic reference:

Van Hulle, Sven & Enghels, Renata. (2023). From “throwing rocks” to “starting to cry”. The grammaticalization of Spanish throw verbs into inchoative auxiliaries. In Marie Steffens & Thomas Hoelbeek (eds.), *Papers of the Linguistic Society of Belgium* [online] 17, 1-15. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.61430/FMWR9351>

From “throwing rocks” to “starting to cry”. The grammaticalization of Spanish throw verbs into inchoative auxiliaries.

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The inchoative construction expresses the onset of an event and is very productive in Peninsular Spanish. This study zooms in on the grammaticalization of throw verbs (*arrojar*, *echar*, *lanzar* and *tirar*) as auxiliaries in the inchoative construction and analyzes why this category is such a productive source for the inchoative aspect. It claims that the semantic domains of ‘throwing’ and ‘the start of an event’ are cross-linguistically related and that the grammaticalization process constitutes a case of metaphorical extension. The paper argues that the pathway towards the inchoative schema consists of five stages: (1) transitive use, (2) pronominal use denoting concrete movement, (3) pronominal use denoting abstract movement, (4) combine with an infinitive (bridging context) and (5) the inchoative use. *Echar* was the first throw verb to take on the inchoative aspect, in the 13th century, after which other near-synonymous verbs were attracted to the inchoative schema.

1. Introduction

The inchoative construction expresses the onset of an event and has become strikingly productive in Peninsular Spanish, unlike other Romance languages. More specifically, the understudied construction exhibits a high level of productivity in the auxiliary slot (Enghels and Van Hulle 2018). A wide gamut of verbs, from various semantic fields, can function as inchoative auxiliary.¹ These include, among others, change of state verbs (*Rompió a llorar*; lit. “(s)he broke to cry”), put verbs (*Se mete a escribir*; lit. (s)he puts himself / herself to write”) and

¹ We use the term ‘auxiliary’ to refer to the verb that, followed by the preposition *a* and by an infinitive, conveys the inchoative aspect, namely the meaning of ‘to start to’. However, other studies adopt the notion of ‘semi-auxiliary’, to distinguish from full auxiliary verbs, such as *haber* (‘to have’) (Borillo 2005). We acknowledge that the inchoative verbs are not grammaticalized to the same extent as full auxiliary verbs, that can serve to express verbal tenses, for instance, but we hang on to the terminology of ‘auxiliary’. As will be shown throughout this paper, the inchoative verbs present varying degrees of grammaticalization, although none have ‘fully’ grammaticalized.

also throw verbs (*Se echó a reír*; lit. “(s)he threw himself / herself to laugh”) (Enghels and Van Hulle 2018). In a previous study (Van Hulle and Enghels 2021), we identified a set of 25 inchoative auxiliaries, which were divided into six semantic groups based on their original meaning (Table 1).²

superlexical inchoative verbs	put verbs	throw verbs	manual manipulation verbs	movement verbs	destruction verbs
comenzar (‘to start’)	meter (‘to put’)	arrojar (‘to throw’)	agarrar (‘to grasp’)	embarcar (‘to embark’)	arrancar (‘to tear loose’)
empezar (‘to start’)	poner (‘to put’)	echar(se) (‘to throw’)	liar (‘to bind / to tie up’)	zambullir (‘to immerse’)	romper (‘to break’)
iniciar (‘to initiate’)		lanzar (‘to launch’)	soltar (‘to let go’)	largar (‘to go away’)	estallar (‘to explode’)
principiar (‘to start’)		tirar (‘to throw / shoot’)		saltar (‘to jump’)	explotar (‘to explode’)
recomenzar (‘to restart’)					prorrumpir (‘to break loose’)
reempezar (‘to restart’)					reventar (‘to blow up’)

Table 1. Overview of the 25 inchoative auxiliaries per semantic group

This study zooms in on the grammaticalization of throw verbs as auxiliaries in the inchoative construction³, namely *arrojar*, *echar(se)*, *lanzar* and *tirar*.⁴

² This classification is derived from Levin’s (1993) lexical categorization of English verbs into semantic categories.

³ In this paper, instead of inchoative ‘periphrasis’, we use the more neutral term of inchoative ‘construction’. The concept of verbal periphrasis is indeed ambiguous and lacks a straightforward definition. Depending on the semantic and syntactic criteria one wants to highlight, a particular verbal structure can be defined as periphrasis. Therefore, one author would consider these structures as verbal periphrasis and another wouldn’t, depending on his or her point of view. This study will not take part in this theoretical debate, recurring to the terminology of inchoative ‘construction’.

⁴ Note that the variants with the four verbs are not equally frequent in modern Spanish. Data from CORPES XXI reveal that, as inchoative auxiliary, *echar(se)* clearly is the most frequent variant (with 752 tokens), followed by *lanzar* (167 tokens), *tirar* (14 tokens) and *arrojar* (2 tokens). However, this

In general, throw verbs are categorized as spatial expressions. Movement verbs, such as equivalents of ‘to go’, ‘to put’, and posture verbs, are known to be a productive source for grammatical functions in multiple languages. Similarly, the usage of throw verbs as inchoative auxiliaries can be considered a case of grammaticalization, whereby these verbs undergo partial semantic bleaching and take on the inchoative aspect (Bybee and Torres Cacoullos, 2009). Although they do not fully evolve into auxiliaries for a certain verbal tense, their usage in this context reflects their ongoing grammaticalization. To date, there have been no studies on the grammaticalization of throw verbs towards inchoative auxiliaries, with the exception of the case of *echar(se)*.⁵ It is widely known that *echar(se)* can be used as an auxiliary in inchoative periphrases (Fente Gómez, 1972; Gómez Torrego, 1988; García González, 1992; Fernández de Castro, 1999), as in *echar(se) a dormir / reír / llorar* (‘to start to sleep/laugh/cry’). However, from a semantic point of view, the meaning of ‘throwing’ is not clearly related to the inchoative aspect. Nevertheless, the analysis presented in this paper will demonstrate that the semantic extension from a throwing event to the inchoative aspect is quite natural. Therefore, it is not surprising that, following the example of *echar(se)*, other near-synonymous throw verbs are attracted to the inchoative schema, as in *arrojarse a nadar* (‘to start to swim’) and *lanzarse a conquistar* (‘to start to conquer’).

In other languages throw verbs can also express the start of an event (*to launch an event*, (Fr.) *se jeter dans la guerre* (‘to throw oneself in/ to start a war’), (It.) *lanciare una campagna* (‘to launch a campaign’), (Pt.) *deitar a correr* (‘to throw / start to run’)). Therefore, it can be assumed that cross-linguistically the semantics of throwing and the onset of an action are related. In concrete, the extension from ‘throwing’ towards the inchoative meaning can be defined as a case of metaphorical extension. Throw verbs refer to the sudden and sometimes unexpected physical displacement of an object towards a specific location or destination (*to throw a rock to the gate*). The interruption of the state of inertia of an object is at the basis of the metaphorical extension towards the inchoative use. This study aims to diachronically situate the different stages of this metaphorical extension. In order to map the diachronic evolution, we will empirically verify in the *Corpus Diacrónico del Español* (CORDE) and the corpus of *Diccionario*

study is not concerned with a quantitative comparison between the variants but is mostly interested in demonstrating how the original semantics of throwing has constituted a productive source for the expression of inchoative aspect, gradually attracting more verbs to the inchoative schema.

⁵ Indeed, many general (theoretical) studies on grammaticalization, such as Hopper and Traugott (2003), Bybee and Torres Cacoullos (2009) and Traugott and Trousdale (2010), and on the formation of auxiliaries, for instance Heine and Kuteva (2002), do not mention nor provide examples of (grammaticalized) throw verbs.

Histórico de la Lengua española (CDH) when the (first) inchoative use was observed, as well as the intermediate phases of its development.

The following research questions will be addressed. First, which throw verbs have been incorporated in the inchoative construction in Spanish? Second, how and when were these verbs integrated into the inchoative schema? For this analysis, special attention will be paid to which degree the verbs under analysis are grammaticalized and/or maintain their original semantic meaning. Section 2 focuses on the pathway that these throw verbs followed towards their incorporation in the inchoative construction. This section also delves into the specific grammaticalization process of each individual throw verb. Finally, section 3 summarizes the main insights and presents general conclusions with respect to the metaphorical extension.

2. The pathway towards the inchoative construction

Undoubtedly, *echar* played a dominant role in the creation of the abstract pathway *throw > start* due to its high frequency and versatile range of semantic and syntactic uses, including idiomatic expressions and the inchoative use. As a result, *echar(se)* is the most commonly used inchoative auxiliary among all the throw verbs. However, the inchoative use of the other throw verbs, such as *arrojar*, *lanzar*, and *tirar*, has not been confirmed in previous studies on verbal periphrases in Spanish. This section aims to shed light on how these three verbs gradually evolved from full lexical verbs to inchoative auxiliaries, following the example set by *echar*.

The verbs under analysis followed a similar pattern due to their similar semantic meaning and syntax. This evolution began with the transitive use of these verbs, where a (mostly human) subject acted as the agent and a direct object was thrown (*arrojar piedras*, meaning ‘to throw rocks’). This concrete movement use is defined as ‘to propel something with force through the air by a movement of the arm and hand towards something or somebody’ (Levin 1993:147). The destination to which the object is thrown can be implicit and not always mentioned.

In the next step, the verbs adopted a reflexive use, indicating that the subject throws him or herself towards something or somebody (*se lanzan en el río*, meaning ‘they launch themselves into the river’). In this case, the verbs generally convey the specific nuance of a violent, unexpected, sudden, or abrupt movement. Although this use can still be considered a concrete movement, it signifies a change in physical position for something or someone.

In the third step of this evolution, a more abstract noun phrase is added as a complement, describing an abstract destination such as an idea, adventure, thought, or knowledge. This phase marks an intermediate stage where the verb refers to an abstract movement, in which a human agent or subject throws him or herself towards an abstract place or event. For example, *se echa a luxuria* ‘(s)he throws him or herself into horniness’).

In the next phase, infinitives can also serve as complements, referring to an action or even the subject throws him or herself at, such as *se arroja a nadar* ‘(s)he throws him or herself to swim’), giving rise to the expression ‘the subject throws him or herself to do something’. This fourth step is a bridging context, as it is not always clear whether the verb still conveys its original meaning of throwing or already suggests the inchoative aspect.

Finally, in the last step, the throw verb undergoes a significant semantic shift, becoming semantically bleached to express the inchoative aspect (‘to start to do something’). For instance, *se lanzan a escribir* (‘they launch themselves to write’).

Table 2 gives an overview and summarizes the five steps of this evolution.

1	“to propel something with force through the air by a movement of the arm and hand towards something or somebody”	transitive use (original semantic meaning)	concrete movement
2	“to throw oneself (violently) towards something or somebody”	reflexive use	concrete movement
3	“to throw oneself (violently) towards an abstract place”	a noun phrase is added as complement	abstract movement
4	“to throw oneself to do something”	an infinitive is added as complement	bridging context
5	“to start to do something”	inchoative use	inchoative aspect

Table 2. The 5 phases of the pathway towards the inchoative use

In the following sections, we will illustrate this pathway by providing concrete examples for each auxiliary and reconstructing the evolution step by step.⁶

2.1. *The starting point*

The throw verbs being examined share the meaning of “to forcefully propel an object through the air with a movement of the arm and hand toward a person or thing”. This usage is always transitive and can be followed by a preposition and a noun phrase that refers to a concrete location. The following examples demonstrate this initial stage in the general pathway of each throw verb.

- (1) Et los de la cibdat que estavan por los muros & por las torres **echavan piedras** & maderos grandes sobre los griegos que a las puertas llegavan. (CORDE, Alfonso X, *General Estoria. Segunda parte*, 1275)
 ‘And those of the city who were (standing) on the walls and on the towers **threw rocks** and big logs upon the Greek who were arriving at the gates.’
- (2) & si los moros viniessen que les **tirasse piedras** quantas mas pudiesse. (CORDE, Anónimo, *Gran Conquista de Ultramar*, 1293)
 ‘And if the Moors came, that **he / she should throw as many rocks** at them as he / she could.’
- (3) Ellos vieron encima de la sierra los treinta jayanes **arrojando piedras** desde lo alto. (CORDE, Anónimo, *Polindo*, 1526)
 ‘They saw on top of the mountains the thirty Jayans **throwing rocks** from above.’
- (4) Con su gente comenzaron los del castillo a **lanzar piedras** contra ellos. (CORDE, Jerónimo Zurita, *Anales de la corona de Aragón*, 1562)
 ‘With their people, those from the castle started to **launch rocks** to them.’

⁶ These subsections integrate information provided by the following dictionaries:

- DLE: *Diccionario de la Lengua Española* (www.dle.rae.es)

- DUE: *Diccionario del Uso del Español* (Moliner 1999)

- DEA: *Diccionario del Español Actual* (Seco and Ramos 1999)

This semantic analysis does not pretend to offer a complete overview of the polysemy, nor of the syntax of the studied verbs, but focusses on the most relevant uses for the scope of this study.

The database of CORDE reveals that *echar* and *tirar* have been used since the 13th century, while *arrojar* and *lanzar* appeared in the 16th century. In these early examples, all the verbs express the concrete movement of a concrete object towards a concrete destination. In the second stage of the evolution, the verb still denotes the same type of movement, but the sudden change of state is applied to the agentive subject by the reflexive pronoun.

2.2. Stage 2: the reflexive use

In the second stage of the evolution, the verb denotes the same type of movement, but this time it is the agentive subject that undergoes the sudden change of state through the reflexive pronoun. The throw verbs are now always used pronominally and combine with a noun phrase that corresponds to a concrete destination, as illustrated by the following examples.

- (5) Quando le apareció el angel que le mandava escribir aquellas visiones, este Sant Juan **se echo a sus pies** e lo quiso aorar. (CORDE, Anónimo, *Castigos e documentos para bien vivir ordenados por el rey Sancho IV*, 1293)

‘When the angel appeared before him that ordered him to write these visions, this Saint Juan **threw himself at his feet** and he wanted to worship him.’

- (6) E [los señores] no **se tirararon a diestro** nin a siniestro. (CORDE, Anónimo, *Biblia ladinada*, 1396.)

‘And [the men] did not **throw themselves to the right** nor to the left.’

- (7) Y unos **se arrojavan a la agua**, y otros sacavan los barcos para se salvar en ellos. (CORDE, Diego Ortúñez de Calahorra, *Espejo de príncipes y caballeros*, 1555)

‘And some **threw themselves in the water**, and others took the boats to save themselves in them.’

- (8) Ella y sus hermanos y madre **se lanzaron en el río** y se ahogaron por poner en cobro su castidad. (CORDE, Juan Justiniano, *Instrucción de la mujer Cristiana*, 1528)

‘She and her siblings and mother **threw themselves in the river** and submerged themselves to recover their chastity.’

This second stage of the evolution of throw verbs involves the use of the reflexive pronoun to indicate that the human subject is throwing him or herself to a physical

place or destination, which still expresses concrete movement. This use of the verb with the reflexive pronoun is observed in *echar* from the 13th century onwards, followed by *tirar* in the 14th century, and *arrojar* and *lanzar* in the 16th century. Typically, this second stage occurs in the same century as the initial phase or shortly thereafter, as the two stages are semantically related and do not involve a significant change in meaning.

The consulted dictionaries indicate that most throw verbs can express this abrupt or sudden movement. For example, DUE explains that *arrojar* and *echar* can convey this meaning, as in *el perro se arrojó / echó sobre el ladrón / vagabundo* (“the dog threw itself on the crook / wanderer”). DEA specifies this use for *tirarse*, such as in *se tiró en paracaídas* (“(s)he launched himself / herself in a parachute”) and *tirarse en la cama* (“to throw oneself on the bed”).

This stage constitutes the second step towards the grammaticalization of the verbs into an inchoative aspectual verb. In the next phase, the throw verb acquires a figurative meaning and no longer denotes physical movement towards a concrete place but rather direction towards an abstract state of affairs.

2.3. Stage 3: metaphorical extension

The third step in the pathway towards the inchoative construction involves a metaphorical extension of the throw verb.⁷ In examples (9-12), the noun phrases refer to an abstract concept or state of affairs, indicating that the verb no longer expresses concrete movement. Syntactically, phase 3 is identical to phase 2, with the verb entering into the construction: ‘[subject] [se] [throw verb] [a] [noun phrase]’. However, the two phases are semantically very different. In phase 2, the verb retains its original meaning as a throw verb and implies physical movement, with the subject being literally thrown towards a physical place. In contrast, in stage 3, the verb does not express physical movement, and the noun phrase does not refer to a physical location. This metaphorical extension of the verb, from a concrete to an abstract location, is a crucial evolution towards the inchoative use.

- (9) El alma del mesquino **se echa a luxuria** & a forniçio se enbadurna en el su lixo. (CORDE, Anónimo, *Castigos*, 1293)

⁷ An attentive reviewer observed that the semantic evolution could also be defined in terms of metonymic inference because throw verbs already imply a change of state or situation, which gives rise to the beginning of new states or situations. We acknowledge that both interpretations are valid. However, in our view, the evolution can better be described in terms of metaphorical change, since there is a clear transference of a lexeme as a consequence of similarity of meaning between two domains, namely concrete and abstract movement.

‘The poor soul **throws itself at sinful desire** and stains itself with fornication in its own mud.’

- (10) Todo el pueblo **se tirava a su amor**.
(CORDE, Juan Fernández de Heredia, *Traducción de Vidas paralelas de Plutarco*, 1379 - 1384)

‘The entire village **threw itself at his love**.’

- (11) Mas el verdadero amador de Cristo y estudioso imitador de sus virtudes no **se arroja a las tales consolaciones**, ni busca dulzuras sensibles.

(CORDE, Fray Luis de Granada, *Traducción de la Imitación de Cristo de Kempis*, 1536)

‘But the true lover of Christ and the studious follower of his virtues does not **throw himself into that kind of consolations**, nor does he search sensitive sweets.’

- (12) Los cristianos **se lanzan a los misterios**, a la magia para encontrarla.
(CORDE, Francisco Navarro Villoslada, *Doña Blanca de Navarra*, 1846)

‘The Christians **throw themselves in the mysteries**, in the magic in order to find it.’

The first instance of *echar* in this stage can be traced back to the 13th century, with *tirar* following shortly after in the 14th century. *Arrojar* was not metaphorically used until the 16th century, which coincides with its allowance of pronominal uses. *Lanzar*'s metaphorical extension was only observed in the 18th century, making it a relatively latecomer compared to the other throw verbs. It is worth noting that, thus far, *echar* and *tirar* have evolved faster in their transition towards inchoative auxiliary, while *arrojar* and *lanzar* have progressed more slowly.

In these instances, it is evident that the throw verbs no longer pertain to a concrete transformation of an object's state, but rather signify an abstract concept, event, or state of affairs. For instance, in example (9), the soul of the covetous person is metaphorically depicted as ‘throwing’ itself into horniness, a deed that is deemed sinful. Similarly, in (10), *tirar* no longer conveys any physical movement towards a tangible location, but instead represents an abstract pursuit of love. Lastly, in (12), the phrase ‘throw themselves in’ refers to the Christian's involvement in mysteries and magic, and not to any physical act of throwing.

The incorporation of abstract noun phrases referring to movement with throw verbs provides the opportunity for the inclusion of infinitives. In phase 4, the

preposition *a* is no longer paired with an abstract noun phrase, but with an infinitive.

2.4. Stage 4: infinitival complements

During stage 4, the throw verb is combined with an infinitive, conveying the meaning of ‘to throw oneself to do something’. Typically, the infinitive used in this phase is a movement verb or a verb that is semantically related to throwing. As a result, this stage may produce ambiguous contexts, referred to as bridging contexts, where the exact meaning of the auxiliary is unclear. For instance, in examples (13-16), it is possible that the subjects are physically throwing themselves to do something. However, in stage 5, the auxiliary clearly indicates the inchoative aspect in a context that is no longer related to the notion of ‘throwing’, usually in combination with an infinitive.

- (13) E dixo Moisés a Arón que **se echasse a dormir** en aquel lecho.
(CORDE, Alfonso X, *General Estoria*, 1275).

‘And Moisen told Aron **to throw himself to sleep** in that bed.’

- (14) En los discipulos **se tira a erir** al Maestro.
(CORDE, Francisco Garau, *El sabio instruido de la Gracia*, 1693)

‘Among the pupils, he **throws himself to hurt** the Master.’

- (15) Un hombre **se arroja a nadar** en esse lago, entrando en el agua, anda sobre ella como un corcho sin hundirse.

(CORDE, Juan de Cárdenas, *Primera parte de los problemas y secretos maravillosos de las Indias*, 1591).

‘A man **throws himself to swim** in this lake, entering in the water, he walks over it like a cork without sinking.’

- (16) Bandidos son los que en nombre de una idea política o religiosa **se lanzan a correr** aventuras cada cuatro o cinco años.

(CORDE, Benito Pérez Galdós, *Doña Perfecta*, 1876)

‘Bandits are those who in name of a political or religious idea **launch themselves to go on** adventures every four or five years.’

Example (13) presents a clear instance of a bridging context where both the throw/movement and inchoative aspect can be interpreted. On one hand, it is possible to physically ‘throw oneself’ onto a bed to sleep, with the locative endpoint being indicated in the prepositional phrase *en aquel lecho*. Thus, in this

case, *echar* can be considered a full lexical throw verb. On the other hand, at the same time, one is also ‘launching’ oneself into the state of being asleep and/or the event of sleeping, which involves the inchoative meaning. Similarly, in (14), it is plausible that the disciple physically moved (himself) towards the Master to hurt him. Additionally, in (16), the exact meaning of *lanzar* is not straightforward. Do the bandits physically ‘launch’ themselves (the original semantic meaning of *lanzar*), or do they ‘start’ to run on an adventure, thus implying the inchoative interpretation? The context and the infinitive complement can aid in disambiguating the precise sense. In this case, the use of *correr* (‘to run’), which implies a concrete physical action, points to the use of *lanzar* as a full verb rather than an inchoative auxiliary. In the fifth and final stage, the throw verb sheds its original meaning and adopts the inchoative aspect.

2.5. Stage 5: the inchoative aspect

In the final stage of its evolution, the throw verb undergoes full grammaticalization and becomes semantically bleached towards the inchoative auxiliary, conveying the meaning of ‘to start to do something’. The following examples make it clear that the inchoative reading becomes evident, and physical movement can no longer be inferred. *Echar* was the first throw verb to adopt the inchoative aspect in the 13th century, followed by *arrojar*, which also quickly evolved to allow for the inchoative use in the 16th century. *Tirar* became an auxiliary in the 18th century, and finally, *lanzar* in the 19th century.

- (17) El peccador cae en desesperança & **se echa a fazer** todo mal.
(CORDE, Anónimo, *Castigos*, 1293)

‘The sinner falls into despair and **starts to do** bad things.’

- (18) La autoridad del nuncio, que de todas maneras **se tira a ensanchar**, como si en España no hubiera obispos.

(CORDE, Gregorio Mayans y Siscar, *Examen del concordato de 1737*, 1747)

‘The authority of the nuncio, that anyhow **starts to expand**, as if there were no bishops in Spain.’

- (19) En este debate señor Gaspar **se ha arrojado a decir** peor dellas de lo que debiera.

(CORDE, Juan Boscán, *Traducción de El cortesano de Baltasar de Castiglione*, 1534)

‘In this debate sir Gaspar **has started to say** worse of them than he should have.’

- (20) Sin el conocimiento y estudio de los admirables modelos de nuestra rica literatura **se lanzan a escribir** según la versión que más han leído. (CORDE, Andrés Bello, *Ejercicios populares de lengua castellana*, 1842)

‘Without the knowledge and study of the admirable models of our rich literature they **start to write** according to the version that they have read most.’

Table 3 summarizes the diachronic evolution of the four throw verbs in their pathway towards the inchoative construction. It shows when each phase occurred and since when they could be used as inchoative auxiliary, as well as how quickly each verb evolved.

	13th	14th	15th	16th	17th	18th	19th
 echar 	1, 2, 3, 4, 5						
 tirar 	1	2, 3			4	5	
 arrojar 			1, 2	3, 4, 5			
 lanzar 			1	2		3	4, 5

Table 3. The diachronic evolution of the throw verbs towards inchoative auxiliaries

The data presented in Table 3 indicates that *echar* was first observed in the 13th century and progressed through all five stages of development, becoming capable of serving as an inchoative auxiliary in the same century. This evidence suggests that *echar* played a dominant role in paving the way for other throw verbs to adopt the inchoative construction through analogical reasoning. Similarly, *tirar* was also in use since the 13th century and underwent phases two and three of development in the 14th century. However, *tirar* 's evolution stagnated until the 17th century, when it began combining with infinitives and finally expressing the inchoative aspect in the 18th century. By comparison, *arrojar* and *lanzar* are relatively late Spanish verbs, emerging in the 15th century. *Arrojar* evolved quickly, with all three subsequent stages observed in the 16th century. *Lanzar* gradually opened up, allowing for reflexive uses in the 16th century and metaphorical interpretations in

the 18th century, before ultimately becoming the last throw verb to acquire the inchoative aspect in the 19th century.

In summary, *echar* played a prominent role among throw verbs as an inchoative auxiliary since the 13th century, while *arrojar* was the second to adopt the inchoative schema in the 16th century. *Tirar* was also used since the 13th century, but its inchoative use was slow to emerge, only appearing in the 18th century. Finally, *lanzar* was the last throw verb to adopt the inchoative interpretation in the 19th century.

3. Conclusion

The findings of this study reveal a connection between the semantic domains of ‘throwing’ and the ‘start of an event’ in Spanish. The process of transitioning from the full lexical use of throw verbs towards their inchoative use is viewed as a form of metaphorical extension. The study demonstrates how the four Spanish throw verbs – *arrojar*, *echar*, *lanzar* and *tirar* – have gradually been drawn towards the inchoative construction.

In the starting point of the evolution of this abstract pathway towards the inchoative construction is the transitive use of the full lexical verb. In a second stage, the verb accepts a pronominal use in combination with the idea of movement towards a concrete place, conveying the meaning of ‘the subject moves him/herself towards a concrete location’. In a next phase, the verb combines with abstract places, concepts or events. Syntactically there is no difference between stage two and three. In the fourth and prefinal phase, the verb selects infinitival complements with the meaning of ‘to move him/herself to do something’. As explained in chapter two, this phase includes bridging contexts in which there is doubt between the locative and inchoative reading. In the fifth and final stage, the verb functions clearly as an auxiliary and expresses the inchoative aspect.

For each throw verb, we were able to determine the timing of the five distinct stages of evolution. *Echar* has played a leading role in this process and its evolution has been influential in attracting other closely related throw verbs to the inchoative construction. Empirical evidence shows that the progress of the throw verbs varied at their own pace.

In conclusion, this study has addressed several research gaps regarding verbal periphrases in Spanish. Firstly, it has shown that not only movement verbs but also throw verbs, as a subcategory of spatial expressions, can evolve into auxiliaries. Secondly, it has clarified which other throw verbs, besides *echar*, can express the inchoative aspect. Lastly, the study has posited that the evolution from the meaning

of throwing to the inchoative aspect constitutes a metaphorical extension, based on the central concept of breaking a state of inertia.

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