

# Koromu (PNG) *tare* ‘hurt/pain’ sensations in verbal and nominal constructions

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**Abstract:** This paper examines words and constructions that Koromu speakers in Papua New Guinea (PNG) use to talk about *tare* ‘hurt/pain’ and other painful sensations. It also reflects on links to cultural and environmental influences in daily life, key life events, environmental knowledge and traditional health care. Terms such as *warike* ‘be/feel bad’, *tare* ‘hurts/pains’, *perere* ‘hurts: stings, cuts, burns’, and *kaho* ‘aches: burns, pierces’ are used in different constructions with varying emphases. These constructions are among the most typologically interesting in Koromu grammar. Related to but distinct from constructions found in other Papuan languages they include experiencer object constructions, serial verb constructions with the grammaticized valency-increasing verb *here/he* ‘PUT’, and nominal constructions with, or without, prominent noun phrase marking.

**Keywords:** semantics and ethnopragmatics of pain, experiencer object constructions, serial verb constructions with valency-increasing verbs, prominent noun phrase marking, Papuan languages

## 1. Introduction

Koromu (Kesawai) is one of the many languages spoken in the middle Ramu Valley, Madang Province, Papua New Guinea. In a land of linguistic diversity Koromu is one of the 29-31 Rai Coast languages (Z’graggen 1975, 1980, Ross 2000) in the Madang language subgroup of the Trans New Guinea (TNG) family. There are approximately 100 Madang languages (Pawley 2006:1) amongst over 400 TNG languages (Pawley 2005: 67). The TNG languages are part of a cluster of approximately 700-800 languages between Timor and the Solomon Islands that are not Austronesian languages. Although these non-Austronesian languages are not a genealogical unit they are often referred to as Papuan languages (cf. Pawley 2005, Ross 2005).

The language data in this paper comes from narrative, procedural accounts, conversation, and other genres collected while living in a Koromu village in 1975-76, 1978-80 and 1986, during fieldwork in 2000, 2004 for my MA and PhD research, and during short field visits in 2010 and

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2012. In the early years in Koromu my understanding of the language of ‘pain’ was enhanced as I observed and participated in local life, kept language and ethnographic records, and provided medical and community aid.

To describe bodily symptoms of discomfort, hurt, or pain Koromu speakers use terms such as *warike* ‘be/feel bad’, *tare* ‘hurts/pains’, *perere* ‘hurts: stings, cuts, burns’, *kaho* ‘aches: burns, pierces’, *hetakeri* ‘pounds/pumps’, *kututu* ‘throbs’, *mamaru* ‘pains (in head)’, and *nere* ‘itch’. In this paper I examine *warike*, *tare*, *perere*, and *kaho* in verbal and nominal constructions that are amongst the most typologically interesting structures in Koromu grammar. These constructions include impersonal experiencer object verbal constructions, serial verb constructions with grammaticized verbs, and nominal constructions with, or without, prominent noun phrase marking. These terms and the constructions in which they occur also throw light on cultural and environmental influences of daily life and work, as well as aspects of key life events, such as coming-of-age, and their accompanying rituals.

The subsequent sections of this paper include a background section on describing the meaning of hurt- and pain-like expressions, background notes on Koromu grammar, sections on the terms *warike* ‘be/feel bad’, *tare* ‘hurt/pain’, *perere* ‘hurt: sting/cut/burn’, and *kaho* ‘ache/throb (from heat or piercing)’, sections on cultural attitudes to *tare* ‘hurt/pain’ etc., and concluding remarks. Each of the Koromu terms are examined in the context of the grammatical constructions in which they occur (cf. Priestley 2008/2009 and forthcoming) and by highlighting their diverse components of meaning using explications expressed in exponents of the natural semantic metalanguage (Goddard and Wierzbicka 2002). The paper is based on a presentation given at the International Symposium on Happiness and Pain: Cross-Cultural and Cross-Linguistic Perspectives, Australian National University (September 28-29, 2012).

## **2. Describing the meaning of hurt-like and pain-like expressions**

“Pain is a largely subjective experience and one which is difficult to convey to others, and relies significantly on language to be communicated” (Strong *et al.* 2009: 86). In medical contexts there are a number of approaches to the challenge involved in describing pain. In some cases patients are asked to evaluate their pain on a scale from 1 to 10. However, this can be difficult and where comparison is needed, different people and different cultures may evaluate pain at different levels. Medical practitioners also sometimes use questionnaires such as Melzack’s McGill Pain

Questionnaire (1975). While attempts have been made to translate questionnaires of this type into other languages, translation of the language-specific concepts involved is difficult and can result in miscommunication (Ketovuori and Pöntinen 1981: 252). Kyung-Joo Yoon reports on her personal difficulties with this in Australia where she found herself having to describe pain in English after always having described it in Korean. “The categorization of physical pains and aches is language-specific. One cannot necessarily find the same category of pain in different languages” (Yoon 2007: 119). As Wierzbicka (2014: 127) puts it “different ways of thinking about pain, linked with different languages and cultures, colour the way people of different linguistic and cultural backgrounds speak about and express their pain... .”

Studies of this semantic domain by linguists and/or anthropologists include those by Fabrega and Tyma (1976*a* and *b*) on English, Thai and Japanese, Lascaratou (2008) on Greek, Patharakorn (2010) on Thai, and Wierzbicka (2014) on English, Pitjantjatjara/Yankunyjatjara, French, Polish and Russian. Wierzbicka presents a helpful set of questions for finding out about people’s feelings of pain using simple words and the English verb ‘hurt’. All of these studies highlight diversity of meanings related to ‘pain’/‘hurt’ and point to core characteristics of this semantic domain. These characteristics include questions of whether there are physical and/or psychological applications, identifiable locations (internally, externally or both), causes, intensity, and temporal factors (i.e. when something happened, duration etc.). In this paper, guided by Koromu data in context and the general characteristics of the domain, exponents of the natural semantic metalanguage primes are used to propose the components of meaning for each term. Exponents of the primes have been found in a cross-section of languages from major language families around the world (see Goddard and Wierzbicka 2014 for lists of these) and the author has found exponents in Tok Pisin and Koromu also. For a list of the proposed English, Tok Pisin and Koromu exponents see Appendix 1.

### **3. Background on Koromu grammar**

Verbal clauses in Koromu consist minimally of an inflected verb. With transitive verbs there is an obligatory subject person-number suffix. This suffix is a portmanteau morph marked for both subject and future or non-future tense. Since non-future is the default tense the glosses used here simply indicate person and number. If the object has an animate referent it is represented by an object suffix, unless the object is third person singular in which case there is no object suffix.

Time at the moment of speaking, or earlier on the same day, can be indicated by a present tense suffix *-re/-r*, as in example (1) below, a statement made just after the event described. (For a detailed description of Koromu verbal morphosyntax see Priestley 2002*a*, 2008/2009, and forthcoming.)

- (1) *Usu ti-se-r-a.*  
pig got-O1s-PRES-3s<sup>2</sup>  
“The pig got me.” T6.5.20

Amongst the typologically interesting features in Koromu are experiencer object constructions commonly used to describe physical or psychological sensations/conditions (Priestley 2002*a, b*, 2008/2009, forthcoming) and serial verb constructions in which a main verb is followed by a grammaticized valency-changing verb (Priestley 2002*a*, 2008/2009: 357-373, forthcoming).<sup>3</sup> Experiencer object and serial verb constructions are an important area of study in Papuan languages. For other detailed descriptions of experiencer object constructions see Pawley *et al* on Kalam (2000) and Roberts on Amele (2001). Detailed descriptions of serial verb constructions in Kalam can be found in Lane 2007, Pawley and Lane 1998, and Pawley 2011. Words used to express hurt- and pain-like feelings in Koromu can occur as the verb in experiencer object constructions or the main verb in grammaticized serial verb constructions with the valency-increasing verb *here/he* ‘PUT’. In some cases words of the same form can occur as a noun in a subject noun phrase, which can be marked by prominent noun phrase marking, or as the head of an instrumental postpositional phrase.

Impersonal experiencer and serial verb constructions are introduced in more detail in (4) with the experiencer object verb *warike* ‘be/feel bad’. The nominal constructions are introduced in relevant sections.

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<sup>2</sup> **Abbreviations in the glosses:** BM Boundary Marking enclitic, DR Different Referent Realis, GEN Genitive, G/L Goal/Locative, HAB Habitual, IGEN Inanimate Genitive, IMP Imperative, INS Instrument, NEG Negative, O Object, p Plural, POSS Possessive, PRES Present tense-aspect suffix, PNP Prominent Noun Phrase, s Singular, SR Same Referent Close Succession.

**Abbreviations for sources:** D Databook, DICT Dictionary, T Text, VF Verb File.

**Conventions:** a hyphen (-) indicates a morpheme break, = indicates a clitic, **and** a verb gloss in capitals indicates a grammaticized verb, e.g. *here* PUT

<sup>3</sup> Constructions with *here/he* PUT can be phasal/valency-increasing constructions as perfective aspect is sometimes indicated. However, with constructions expressing *tare* and related sensations the valency-increasing sense is used.

#### 4. *Warike* ‘feel bad’

The morphosyntax, semantics and cultural importance of experiencer object constructions and of serial verb constructions with grammaticized verbs are introduced here with the verb *warike* ‘be/feel bad’.<sup>4</sup>

In an experiencer object construction *warike* can be inflected by an object suffix that refers to the experiencer and a subject suffix that has an impersonal, dummy referent. These constructions are commonly used to express what one ‘feels’. In example (2) the verbs *warike* ‘feel bad’ and *sepa* ‘feel ill’ both occur in this type of construction (Priestley 2008/2009: 403-423/forthcoming). There is no exact way of translating these expressions into English. This is illustrated in the gloss for (2) where I give the natural English translation and then an alternative translation with the experiencer as the object. This difficulty is one of the reasons it’s valuable to propose explications that are reductive paraphrases expressed in the simplest possible terms.

- (2) *Sepa-se-r-a. U te, warike-se-r-a.*  
ill-O1s-PRES-3s that INS be/feel.bad-O1s-PRES-3s  
“I feel ill. Because of that, I feel something bad.”  
“Illness affects me. Because of that, something feels bad to me.” T1.15.9

Koromu experiencer object constructions such as these indicate that the experiencer is not in control of the feeling. This is not an uncommon concept cross-linguistically. For example, in Russian the experiencer is in the dative case, i.e. ‘to me it’s cold’ (Wierzbicka 1999: 303-304) and in English we can say *it feels bad to me*. However, in English speakers commonly use the subject to refer to the experiencer, as in *I feel bad*. In Koromu there is an emphasis on something/someone causing the experiencer to feel something bad. For example, historically, and in some cases today, illnesses and other types of suffering are attributed to sorcery or other third party influences.

In impersonal experiencer object constructions there may be an adjunct locus NP, such as *oru* ‘insides’, that represents a part of the body that is affected. It also represents ‘feel’. The following

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<sup>4</sup> There is a related adjective *warikau* ‘bad’.

example (3) can be used to refer to a general internal physical discomfort, e.g. indigestion, or to psychological distress (cf. Priestley 2002*b*: 250).

- (3) *Oru mai warike-se-r-a*  
insides P1s be/feel.bad-O1s-PRES-3s

“I feel something bad/it’s bad to me in my insides.” D7.46a.5

Although some experiencer object constructions represent involuntary or uncontrolled processes the match between the syntax and semantics is not always clear-cut. Thus in Priestley 2008/2009 and forthcoming*a* I propose a number of subcategories of this type of construction (see also Pawley 2000: 157 on Kalam). One complex area is the matter of the referent of the subject suffix. Many of the tests for subject-hood are not possible with these constructions. However, there are tests that indicate that the body part NPs are adjuncts rather than subjects. For example, these NPs cannot be expanded into full NPs and in most cases the negative particle *tai* occurs before, rather than after, the noun so that the NP is closer to the verb. In contrast in other verbal clauses the negative particle is closer to the verb. Furthermore, in some constructions, for example with *perere* ‘hurts: stings’ (see section 6), there is a stimulus NP as well as a locus NP. In this case the stimulus NP acts as the subject NP. A more detailed description is given in Priestley 2008/2009 (pp. 416-420) and forthcoming*a*.

Using semantic primes, explication [A] represents the meaning of an impersonal experiential construction with *warike* ‘be/feel bad’. Since expressions about feeling bad or about painful sensations are often in the first person this explication and the others in this paper are based on a first person singular experiencer.

[A] [*oru mai*] *warike-se-r-a* ‘I feel something bad (in my insides)’

- a. something is happening to me
- b. because of this, I feel something bad
- c. I feel like someone can feel when it is like this:  
    something bad is happening inside this someone’s body  
    this someone feels something bad inside the body because of this
- d. I don’t want this

Basically this expression can be summed up as ‘I feel something bad (in my insides).’ However, the full explication presents a number of key elements. The first component ‘something is happening to me’ is the basic frame for experiencer object constructions. The second component sums up the evaluative content, i.e. whether the construction refers to a feeling that is good, bad, not good and so on. The third to fifth components show that this feeling can be physical or psychological.

The verb *warike* ‘bad’ can also occur in a grammaticized serial verb construction with the valency-increasing serial verb *here* PUT, as in example (4). In this case the valency increase means that the subject suffix refers to an agent (Priestley 2008/2009: 362-365).

- (4) ...*warike he-seka-pe, u-e.*  
       bad PUT-O1p-SR do-3p

“... (they) caused us harm, they did.” (lit. “They did bad to us.”) T5.23.34

In terms of semantic primes the core component of this grammaticized serial verb construction can be expressed as ‘someone does something bad to someone else’.

### 5. *Tare*: ‘hurt/pain’

The word *tare* ‘hurt’ can be used to represent a physical feeling that lasts for either a short or a long time. As a verb it can occur in an impersonal experiencer object construction where the experiencer is indicated by the object suffix, as in (5).

- (5) *Tare-ne-r-a*  
       hurt-O2s-PRES-3s  
       “It’s hurting you.” Dict71

In these constructions an object NP is optional (6).

- (6) (I) *tare-se-r-a!*  
 1s hurt-O1s-PRES-3s  
 “(I), it’s hurting me!” D1.160.1

Fabrega and Tyma (1976b: 328-329) suggested that representation of a feeling with a verb implies “a condition which is conceived as active and dynamic”, something that is happening directly. While *tare* ‘hurt’ is a dynamic process here, as in English *It hurts!*” (Wierzbicka 2014: 138, 140, 154), there is not an agentive subject. However, there is reference to a process happening to part of someone’s body. Thus Koromu constructions of this type can include a locus NP that identifies the internal or external body part or condition as in example (7).

- (7) *Ahare tare-r-a*  
 ear hurt-PRES-3s  
 “It’s hurting her ear.” D1.8.23 (NB. There is no object suffix for O3s)

The component ‘something bad happened to this part of the body a short time before’ is an essential component in the explication for English ‘hurt’ (Wierzbicka 2014: 140). In Koromu the internal or external cause of *tare* can be expressed in an earlier clause as in (8). In this example the initial clause has a final suffix indicating a different referent following (DR) in the next clause.

- (8) *Ehi aone-r-i-te ehi tare-ne-r-a. Toho t-ae.*  
 leg bend-PRES-2s-DR leg hurt-O1s-PRES-3s stretch GET-IMP2s  
 “You’re bending the leg, and it hurts you, in the leg. Stretch it (i.e. Try stretching it).”  
 D8.11.8

Although the feeling of *tare* ‘hurt’ can last for some time like ‘ache’ (cf. Wierzbicka 2014: 140), and although the immediately preceding cause of this feeling may only be mentioned earlier in the discourse, translations with English ‘hurt’ seem to work better than ‘ache’ or ‘pain’. This reflects the fact that the experiencer object construction with *tare* can refer to a short experience. Also a preceding cause can be identified within the discourse context as in (9).

(9) *Ehi mei tare-se-r-a=mo.* *Rusia!*

leg P1s hurt-O1s-PRES-3s=BM Ruth

“Ruth. It’s hurting my leg!” (Telling someone to stop hurting you.) D1.3.18

When giving medical aid in Koromu villages I often heard people use this construction when describing their pain. Of all the constructions discussed here it has the most general application. Although people didn’t make a fuss about feeling *tare* they found ways to relieve it if they could. An example is (10) a comment from a patient who came to the aid post for help.

(10) *Weri tare-s-a-te ka-r-i.*

ulcer hurt-O1s-3s -DR come-PRES-1s

“The ulcer, it hurt me so I came.” D3.121.9

In an experiencer object construction with *tare* ‘hurt’ it is appropriate to say that ‘I don’t want this’ is a component of the basic meaning. Then in order to indicate that something hurts a great deal, the adverb *arenepate* can be added to the clause (11). For this reason in a basic explication of *tare* ‘hurt’ it is not necessary to say that someone feels ‘very bad’.

(11) *Wapi mei arenepate tare-se-r-a=mo.*

hand POSS1s greatly hurt-O1s-PRES-3s=BM

“My hand it hurts me a lot/greatly.” D7.67.3

The use of an impersonal experiencer object construction suggests an initial framing component that includes the concept ‘something is happening to someone’. This indicates that the event is something beyond the person’s control. With *tare* it is something happening to a part of the body at a particular time. The following explication is proposed for *tare* on the basis of these factors. . The complexity of writing explications and the need for further extensive checking in the field are illustrated here. For example, although *metake mai* with *warikesera* literally means ‘my body feels bad’ this phrase is most commonly used to say that you don’t want to do something so it is not a very natural statement when it incorporates ‘part of the body’. Thus while

the proposed explications illustrate the possibilities they are at this stage tentative, particularly in Tok Pisin and Koromu.

[B] English version of the explication for *tare-se-r-a*

- a. something is happening to me
- b. something bad is happening to a part of my body at this time
- c. (because something bad happened to it a short time before)
- d. I feel something bad in this part of my body, because of this
- e. I don't want this

[BB<sup>1</sup>] Tok Pisin version of the explication for *tare-se-r-a*.

- a. samtin i kamap long mi
- b. samtin nogut i kamap long wanpela hap long bodi bilong mi long dispela taim
- c. (long samtin nogut i kamap long dispela liklik taim bipo)
- d. mi pilim samtin nogut long dispela hap long bodi, long dispela
- e. mi no laikim dispela

[BB<sup>2</sup>] Koromu version of the explication for *tare-se-r-a*.

- a. na i ahare aire-se-r-a=mo
- b. na warikau metake pa=mai aire-se-r-a=mo, asao pa, apu morei
- c. (surumapa mo pa na warikau aire-s-a=mo, u sei)
- d. mo asao pate, metake=mai warike-se-r-a, u seipa
- e. maikoho-se-r-a=mo

The verb *tare* 'hurt' can also be used in an active verbal context where the referent of the subject NP is an agentive participant who causes *tare* 'hurt'. In this case the object suffix indicates the person on whose behalf the action is done (cf. Priestley 2008/2009: 113-117, forthcoming *a*). The expression in (12) below is something like English "I've slaved myself to the bone for you" (implying that you don't seem to appreciate it).

(12) *Wene here-pe te-nu-pu-r-i=mo.*  
food cook-SR give-O2s-HAB-PRES-1s=BM

*Wapi tare-nu-pu-r-i=mo.*  
hand hurt-O2s-HAB-PRES-1s=BM

“I cook and give to you and because of this I hurt my hand for you.” (lit. “I cook and give to you. I hurt my hand for you,” ‘because of this’ is implied).

An explication for this agentive type of construction is given in [C].

[C] *Tare* with an agentive subject

- a. I do something
- b. (because of this, something good happens to you)
- c. when I do this I do something to a part of my body at the same time
- d. because of this I feel something bad in this part of my body
- e. I feel something bad because of this

The verb *tare* ‘hurt’ can also occur in a serial verb construction as a main verb combined with the valency-increasing verb *here* PUT. For example see (13) where the body part NP *wapi* ‘hand’ is the subject (cf. Priestley forthcoming *b* on body parts including *wapi* ‘hand/arm’).

(13) *Wene here-pe wapi tare he-se-r-a.*  
food cook-SR hand hurt PUT-O1s-PRES-3s  
“I cook and my hand hurts me.”

When *tare* combines with *here* ‘PUT’ in this context an explication such as [D] can be given.

[D] *Wapi tare he-se-r-a*

- a. I do something
- b. when I do this, part of my body does something at the same time
- c. I feel *tare* in this part of my body because of this

*Tare* ‘hurt/pain’ can be used as a noun. An intense, destructive feeling is expressed when *tare* is an NP subject of a serial verb construction that combines *warike* ‘be bad’ with the grammaticized valency-increasing verb *here/he* PUT. In this context *tare*, glossed as ‘pain’, is the cause of something bad happening to someone,(14). Prominent noun phrase marking with *tare* confirms that it is a subject NP (Priestley 2008/2009: 466-473, forthcoming).

- (14) *Tare =te warike he-se-r-a.*  
 pain =PNP be.bad PUT-O1s-PRES-3s  
 “The pain was very bad to me.” D11.10.6

An explication for this construction is given in [E].

[E] *Tare warike he-se-r-a*

- a. *tare* is doing something bad to me now
- b. I feel something very bad in a part of my body because of this
- c. I can’t not think like this at this time: “I don’t want this”

The noun *tare* ‘hurt/pain’ can also be the object of the verb *si* ‘give (to a first person recipient)’. The example in (15) is a translation of the words of one of the prisoners crucified with Jesus, recorded in the gospel of Luke.

- (15) *Sono meiahete pao tare arene si-seka-r-e=mo.*  
 GEN1p wrongdoing IGEN pain big give -O1p-PRES-3p=BM  
 “They give us great pain for our wrongdoing.” Za4, Luke 23: 41

## 6. *Perere* ‘hurt: sting/cut/burn’

*Perere* is another verb that describes a type of hurt or pain. It can occur as the verb in an experiencer object construction with a suffix indicating the object experiencer, as in (16). In English the nearest equivalent meanings are verbs like sting, cut, and burn.

(16) *Perere-se-r-a.*

hurt: sting-O1s-PRES-3s

“It hurts/stings me.” D1.116.6

*Perere* is one of a group of verbs that can occur in experiencer object constructions with both a stimulus NP and a body part/locus NP (Priestley 2008/2009: 415-416, forthcoming *a*). When both of these NPs occur the stimulus NP cross-references the subject suffix of the verb. With *perere* the physical identifiable locus is generally a part of the body that has a surface that can be affected by some outside stimulus or effector, for example *tama* ‘mouth’, *mete* ‘skin’, *kamaho* ‘shoulder’ or *ehi* ‘leg’ (17).

(17) *Were=te kamaho perere-se-r-a.*

sun=PNP shoulder hurt: sting-O1s-PRES-3s

“The sun hurts/stings shoulders.” (...the stinging sensation of sunburn). D7.68.6

A current or prior event triggers the negative bodily feeling (cf. English *hurt* and *sore* in Wierzbicka 2014: 140). In example (18) the stimulus or effector is named in the first clause with an active verb construction.

(18) *Kirihi mete pa ho ho-se-r-a. U te perere-se-r-a.*

ant skin G/L bite PUT-O1s-PRES-3s that INS hurt: sting-O1s-PRES-3s

“Ants bit my skin. That hurts/stings me.” VF *perere*

Examples of effectors are ginger (in the mouth), insects, medicine or water (on a cut), knives and the sun (when it causes sunburn). In some cases the stimulus is indicated by an NP with the postposition *te* ‘instrumental’. For example there is an instrument in the initial clause of (19).

(19) *Tike werane te wapi ton te-r-i-te perere-se-r-a=mo.*

knife small INS hand cut GET-PRES-1s-DR hurt: sting-O1s-PRES-3s

“I cut my hand with a knife and ‘it’ stings me.” (personal experience, VF *perere*.)

Examples show that the event which causes *perere* is recent and of fairly short duration. It has a damaging effect that is fairly intense. Sometimes there is a visible mark or redness of the flesh. The feeling of *perere* can be very severe in the case of large or deep wounds (cuts, bites, burns). But although it is an intense feeling, that people don't normally want, it is not necessarily 'very bad' since examples include mild sunburn, small cuts and small insect bites. For this reason the explication does not need to include 'it feels very bad'.

As with English *pain* and Koromu *warike*, *perere* can be used for both physical and psychological sensations as illustrated in (20).

- (20) *Tamaite=te perere-se-r-a=mo.*  
 man=PNP hurt: sting-O1s-PRES-3s  
 "The man stings me." (This implies that his angry words sting.) VF *perere*

In (21) the psychological sense is associated with a locus NP, *kame* 'the liver'. The locus NP can occur before the negative particle in this type of experiencer object construction. Here, although the object is the experiencer, there is a specific subject *u sakine* 'that talk'.

- (21) *U sakine kame tai pere-seka-r-a=mo.*  
 that talk liver NEG sting-O1p-PRES-3s=BM  
 "That talk did not sting/pierce their livers/hearts." (...so they didn't believe it.) Za5 Luke 24:11

Because *perere* can refer to a psychological sense, explication [F] includes the component 'like something can feel when something bad is happening to part of this someone's body' (cf. Wierzbicka's pain-like model, 2014: 154).

[F] *Perere-se-r-a*

- a. something bad is happening to me
- b. I feel something bad because of this
- c. I feel like someone can feel when it is like this:

something bad happened to a part of this someone's body a short time before  
 (because of this, this part of this someone's body is not like it was before)  
 this someone feels something bad in this part of the body because of this

d. I don't want this

To express a very severe feeling the noun *perere* 'stinging pain' can occur as subject NP in the serial verb construction with the verb *warike* 'be/feel bad' combined with the valency-increasing verb *here/he* PUT (22). In this context the 'prominent noun phrase' enclitic confirms that *perere* is a subject noun phrase. An increased effect on the object is also indicated (Priestley 2008/2009: 357-374, forthcoming).

- (22) *Perere=te warike he-se-r-a.*  
 stinging.pain=PNP be/feel.bad PUT-O1s-PRES-3s  
 "The stinging pain caused me to feel (very) bad." D11.10.6

The explication for this agentive verbal expression with *perere* as a subject NP is given in [G].

[G] *Perere=te warike hesera.*

- a. *perere* is doing something bad to me now  
 b. I feel something very bad because of this  
 c. I feel like someone can feel when it is like this:  
 something bad is happening to a part of this someone's body  
 (because of this, this part of this someone's body is not like it was before)  
 this someone feels something bad in this part of the body because of this  
 d. I can't not think like this at this time: "I don't want this"

### 7. *Kaho* 'hurt: ache from heat or splinter'

The verb *kaho* is used to express a physical feeling of some duration. It can be used to describe feelings of pain based on being hot from being close to a fire or being out in the sun for a long time. It is a more persistent feeling than the sharp prickles of sun, or the initial pain of a cut, represented by *perere*. Since *kaho* includes this durational component I have chosen to use

English *ache* for the gloss in examples such as (23) (cf. Wierzbicka 2014: 140). However, this is not exactly the meaning and the whole construction is not translated easily with ‘ache’.

- (23) *Were =te mete kaho-se-r-a.*  
 sun =PNP skin ache-O1s-PRES-3s  
 “The sun is hurting/aching my skin.” VF *kaho*

*Kaho* can be used to refer to the steady ongoing pain from a splinter or thorn in part of the body (24).

- (24) *Sahai=te oro ho-se-r-a. U te kaho-se-r-a.*  
 thorn=PNP pierce PUT-O1s-PRES-3s that INS ache: pierce-O1s-PRES-3s  
 “A thorn pierced me. That causes me an ache (With that I ache).” VF *kaho*

The locus NP may refer to a body part, such as *mete* ‘skin’ or *ehi* ‘leg’, but it can also refer to the whole body. For example, in (25) a mother is telling her child that she can’t hold him on her lap because her body aches after a long day working in the sun.

- (25) *Mete kaho-se-r-a.*  
 skin ache-O1s-PRES-3s  
 “(My) body is aching.” VF *kaho*

Whether the situation is having too much sun, being too close to the fire, working a long time or having a splinter, there are unifying components in the meaning. An event occurred at some time before the present. It may have been a short or long time before the moment of speaking but the resultant feeling lasts for some time [H].

[H] *Kaho-se-r-a*

- a. something is happening to me
- b. something happened to a part of my body at some time before
- c. I feel something bad in this part of my body for some time because of this

d. I don't want this

The form *kaho* can be used as a subject noun phrase with a complex predicate consisting of the verb *warike* 'be/feel bad' combined with the valency-increasing verb *here/he* PUT (26). The valency-increasing verb allows for a subject and also indicates an increased effect on the object (Priestley 2008/2009: 372-373, forthcoming). As a result this expression expresses an intense feeling of *kaho*.

- (26) *Kaho(=te) warike he-se-r-a.*  
ache(=PNP) be/feel.bad PUT-O1s-PRES-3s  
"The burning ache is very bad to me/is messing me up." D11.9.11

This intense feeling is explicated in [I].

- [I] *Kaho(=te) warike he-se-r-a.*
- a. *kaho* is doing something bad to a part of my body at this time
  - b. because something happened to me some time before
  - c. I feel something very bad in this part of my body for some time
  - d. I can't not think like this at this time: "I don't want this"

## 8. Cultural attitudes to 'pain'

The Koromu words in the semantic domain of pain indicate cultural and environmental influences. In daily life and work physical pain occurs in connection with everyday tasks of gardening, hunting, cooking, building, and so on. Psychological pain can occur in relationships with other people. However, while people generally don't want to experience these kinds of pain there are contexts where it is seen as part of something good.

The positive value of pain is evident in traditional medicine. The verb *perere* 'hurts: stings' and the noun *perere* 'pain: sting' are related in form to the noun *pere* 'stinging nettle' (*laportea decumana*, *laportea interrupta*). This plant is a common counter-irritant in PNG (Priestley 2012, 2013a). Its use in Koromu is illustrated in example (27). After a python had constricted him, the protagonist had returned home and was laid to rest on a bed of *pere* 'stinging nettles'.

(27) ..*pere*    *hoko te-pe,*    *pere tauri*    *ene her-e-te,*  
 nettle    pick get-SR    nettle on.top    lay    PUT-3pl-DR

*sepa*    *arene*    *ene ne*    *t-a-te...*  
 illness    big    lay    STAY    END-3s-DR

“...they picked stinging nettle, lay him on top and he lay with a big illness...” T1.14.17

The importance of pain in health care was also evident when I was involved in giving medical treatment in Koromu and other nearby villages. Antibiotic treatment by injection was much more popular than treatment with tablets as it involved a painful piercing of the skin. Men, in particular, seemed to see the experience of having an injection as a show of stamina and endurance. Although I used techniques for reducing the pain they readied themselves for the event as though it would be very painful. They often brought someone with them to witness the injection and to support them in the experience, perhaps mirroring the support they gave to each other in coming of age rites. Women generally took having an injection more casually but also stoically. In either case adults were eager to have injections even before they saw the results. (Children found it more difficult, but see discussion below.) The use of pain in health care suggests a cultural script as follows [J].

[J] Tentative cultural script for the use of pain in health care

- a. [at many times people think like this:]
- b. when something bad is happening to someone's body, this someone feels something bad
- c. it is good if this someone feels something else at this time
- d. it is good if this something feels bad
- e. at some time after this, this someone feels something good
- f. people think this is good

There are also experiences of pain in key stages of life and their accompanying rituals. Traditionally, coming of age was connected with painful experiences. Some of these painful experiences were built into stages of the initiation rituals that young men shared with their fellow

age-mates. The ability to endure experiences that included pain, such as the letting of blood, was a valuable part of becoming an adult (cf. Priestley 2013*b*). Admiration for people who can endure pain extended to respect for leprosy sufferers who could pick hot food out of the fire.<sup>5</sup> Two of the examples in this paper come from texts about participants who suffered major injuries. These participants simply reported what had happened without any comment on the pain. Other narratives show that it is acceptable for people to laugh at someone experiencing a less painful accident such as falling in a rocky river (T1.13:14-18). These cultural attitudes suggest a cultural script for the ability to endure pain [K].

[K] Tentative cultural script for the ability to experience and endure pain

- a. [many people think like this:]
- b. sometimes someone feels something bad in part of their body
- c. it is good if this someone does not say many things about this
- d. people think this is good

## 9. Concluding remarks

There are many different stimuli in everyday life that can cause or contribute to experiences of pain. Koromu experiencer object constructions allow for impersonal subjects and for specifying stimuli as instruments or effectors of pain. Some of the stimuli that cause pain in Koromu are key elements in the environment that people are exposed to in their everyday life, while hunting, gardening, or gathering food and while building homes, fences, and gardens using local, natural materials. Examples of these environmental factors include the sun, splinters from plants, and tools used for everyday tasks.

Other causes of pain and suffering that affect the body, particularly internal body parts, are associated in traditional Koromu culture with the work of unknown third parties, for example sorcerers. Whatever the effector or instrument causing pain might be, experiencer object constructions express the basic component ‘something is happening to me’.

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<sup>5</sup> Sadly, people who could do this did so because they felt no pain. As a result they were in danger of damaging their hands without the benefit of pain to warn them (cf. Brand and Yancy 1997).

Examination of the various terms for expressing pain, in different verbal and nominal constructions, indicate that the feelings of *tare* ‘hurt/pain’, *perere* ‘hurt: sting, cut, burn’, *kaho* ‘ache’, and *warike* ‘be/feel bad’ can be evaluated according to a range of core factors, including cause, instrument, temporal factors like duration, intensity, the location in the body, and whether there are physical and/or psychological applications. Variations in the components of meanings for different terms, and for the same root in different constructions, can be captured in semantic explications and compared. This diversity can also then be compared with diverse ways of talking about pain in other languages. A study of the terms used in natural discourse and everyday usage also helps to shed light on key cultural scripts that reflect a positive attitude to the ability to endure and benefit from some types of *tare* ‘hurt/pain’.

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## Appendix 1: Exponents of semantic primes in English, Tok Pisin, Koromu

• Primes exist as the meanings of lexical units (not at the level of lexemes). • Exponents may be words, bound morphemes, or phrasemes. They can be formally complex. • Exponents can have language-specific combinatorial variants (allolexes, indicated with ~). • There may be polysemy, e.g. Koromu: *nupu* ‘all, many’, *mene* ‘be, live...’ • Each prime has well-specified syntactic (combinatorial) properties. • Primes combine, sometimes with semantic molecules [m] (explicated elsewhere) in explications

\* NB. Koromu A LONG TIME BEFORE = SU:RUMAPA, A LONG TIME AFTER = EPO:NO

ENGLISH	TOK PISIN	KOROMU (provisional)	
I, YOU, SOMEONE, SOMETHING~THING, PEOPLE, BODY	MI, YU, WANPELA, SAMTING, MANMERI, BODI	I, NE, ATO, NA, HENATAMAITE (AHAROPU), METE~METAKE	substantives
KIND, PART	KAIN, HAP	TOMTOM (MA-), MO~ASAO~-NE	relational substantives
THIS, THE SAME, OTHER~ELSE	DISPELA, WANKAIN, NARAPELA	MO, ATEREI <sub>2</sub> , TOMO	determiners
ONE, TWO, SOME, ALL, MUCH~MANY, LITTLE~FEW	WANPELA, TUPELA, SAMPELA, OLGETA, PLANTI, LIKLIK	ATEREI <sub>1</sub> , AERE, ASA~ATO PATE, NUPU <sub>1</sub> , NUPU <sub>2</sub> , WERAI	quantifiers
GOOD, BAD	GUTPELA, NOGUT	ETAMAU, WARIKAU	evaluators
BIG, SMALL	BIPELA, LIKLIK	ARENE, WERAKAHUNO	descriptors
THINK, KNOW, WANT, NOT WANT, FEEL, SEE, HEAR	TINGTING, SAVE, LAIK, NO LAIK~LES BEL~PILIM, LUKIM, HARIM	U <sub>1</sub> ~URUNU, SIPAMU, URUNU~-APESI, MAIKOHU, ORU~URUNU, WERE,ESERE	mental predicates
SAY, WORDS, TRUE	TOK <sub>1</sub> , TOK <sub>2</sub> , TRU	U <sub>2</sub> ~SA, SAKINE, ITINI	speech
DO, HAPPEN, MOVE, TOUCH	WOKIM, KAMAP, I GO, I PAS	HARU, AIRI, MOTOMOTO, MOTO	action, events, movement, contact
BE (SOMEWHERE), THERE IS, BE (SOMEONE/SOMETHING), HAVE (SOMETHING)~BE SOMEONE’S	I STAP, I STAP, I, I GAT	MENE, MENE, MENE MENE~-NE*	location, existence, specification, possession
LIVE, DIE	I STAP (LAIP), DAI	ENE~MENE <sub>2</sub> , EME	life death
WHEN~TIME, NOW, BEFORE, AFTER, A LONG TIME, A SHORT TIME, FOR SOME TIME, MOMENT	WANEM TAIM~TAIM, NAU, BIPO, BIHAIN, LONGTAIM TRU, LIKLIK TAIM, LONGTAIM LIKLIK, ?WANPELA TAIM	ENAPU~OTO ~SA, APU, SURUMAPA, EONO, -APAIE,* SUHUPE,* OTO ATOPATE, APU MOREI	time
WHERE~PLACE, HERE, ABOVE, BELOW, FAR, NEAR, SIDE, INSIDE	WE~PLES, HIA, ANTAP, DAUNBILO, LONGWE, KLOSTU, SAIT, INSAIT	ANI(PA)~SA, MO PA, NAUMPA, WARISESA, AIAKE, WAIMESA, MESA, ORU PA	space
NOT, MAYBE, CAN, BECAUSE, IF	NO, ATING, INAP, LONG DISPELA, SAPOS	IA~TAI, TAUMO, NAUTO, U SEIPA, UO	logical concepts
VERY, MORE	TUMAS, MOA	HEREKANI, APAI	intensifier, augmentor
LIKE	OLSEM	UAPU~AIAU	similarity