

A MITTAL PUBLICATION

DICTIONARY OF
NAGAMESE
LANGUAGE

Nagamese—English—Assamese



Bhim Kanta Boruah



BHIM KANTA BORUAH (b. 1951) M.A Ph.D is a renowned Professor of Dibrugarh University, a Scholar and a Linguist of international repute, who born at Palengi, Sivasagar, Assam. He has vast knowledge on language and culture of North East of the Republic of India and a pioneer in formulating language concepts in respect of North East India by giving two concepts- 1. Assamese language and 2. languages of Assam in his two books: **ASOMOR BHASA** (1990) and **ASOMIYA BHASA** (1997). Thereby he paved the way for study of the non Aryan languages in Assam specially of the languages of Tibeto-Chinese family . He has recorded his vast knowledge in more than two dozen of his valuable books published in English ,Assamese and Nagamese since 1985. He has signed as the first writer of Nagamese Grammar '**NAGAMIZ KOTHALAGA NIYOM**' (1985) and Nagamese Primer **BATSA PATH** (1988). He has also signed as the first writer of the **DICTIONARY OF NAGAMESE LANGUAGE** which was prepared after his long research and field work in different places of Nagaland.

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Nagamese is a commonly accepted lingua-franca in the multilingual hilly State Nagaland of the Republic of India, where more than a dozen of major Naga tribes and many more sub tribes resides with their distinct rich cultures and with different unintelligible Sino-Tibetan languages. Each tribe has its own mother tongue of Sino-Tibetan origin and use Nagamese, a language originated from Indo-Aryan stock, due to some sociolinguistic reasons, as the most widely accepted link language of the State. The language is originated due to prolonged historical relation with the Assamese speakers combining local dialects of Nagaland and is a preferred form of communication among all the Nagas and Nagas with others of North East India.

It is used as lingua-franca in schools, markets, hospitals, the Legislative Assembly and Churches by the people of Nagaland. **DICTIONARY OF NAGAMESE LANGUAGE** is trilingual in nature with the meanings of the languages Nagamese, English and Assamese. This is a first of its kind in the form of dictionary which shows pronunciation, grammatical categories, source of the word, composition of the word along with pictures wherever necessary. It has a long introduction which will give a picture as regards to the origin and development of Nagamese language and of the State.

The dictionary will be helpful to the researchers, common people of Nagaland and Assam and its bordering states in general and for the Nagamese Churches in particular. It will help in communicating other Indo-Aryan languages of the Republic and thereby creating national integration in general and inter- state relation in particular.

DICTIONARY OF NAGAMESE LANGUAGE

Nagamese—English—Assamese

BHIM KANTA BORUAH



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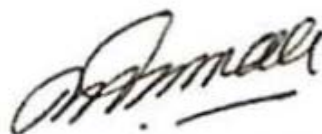
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PREFACE

Nagamese Dictionary is a result of strenuous work though of several years but latter on it was formally done under the auspices of the financial assistance of the UGC under Major Research Project. The words were collected from different places of Nagaland as well as from published vocabulary books on Nagamese and the Christen literatures written in Nagamese. This is a dictionary work first of its kind and therefore, it may have many omissions and commissions; the suggestion of the learned an readers and scholars will be gladly accepted and will be incorporated in the next edition. In the grater interest of inter-state relation and national integration this work was done. I think, a Dictionary never completes but it is always open for new additions and expansions.



BHIM KANTA BORUAH

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ABBREVIATION

adj.	-	Adjective
adv.	-	adverb
adv. cl	-	adverb clause
conj..	-	conjunction
def.	-	definitive
interj.	-	interjection
n.	-	Noun
pp.	-	Past participle
prep.	-	Preposition
pron.	-	Pronoun
v.	-	Verb
vi.	-	Verb intransitive
vt.	-	Verb transitive
intf	-	Intensifier
N.	-	Nagamese
E. As.	-	Early Assamese
Ar.	-	Arbi
Lw. As.	-	Lower Assamese
Bng.	-	Bengali
Skt.	-	Sanskrit
indcl.	-	Indeclinable
Pha.	-	pharchi
pl.	-	Plural
sing.	-	Singular
emph.	-	Emphatic
pleo	-	Pleonastic suffix
Bd.	-	Bodo
e.g.	-	for Example

nep.	-	Nepali
H.	-	Hindi

Entry System and its order in a word:

- (1) Nagamese Word
- (2) Pronunciation in italics within [.....]
- (3) Word analysis within { }
- (4) Grammatical Category in *Italics* short form
- (5) Source within (.....)
- (6) English Meaning
- (7) Assamese Meaning
- (8) Nagamese sentences in Italics wherever

necessary.

TRANSLITERATION IN CASE OF ASSAMESE WORDS

Assamese	Roman
অ	a
অ'	ə
আ	ā
ই	i
ই'	ī
উ	u
উ'	ū
ঋ	r̄
ঋ'	e
ঌ	ε
ঌ'	ai
ও	o
ও'	ou
ক	k
খ	kh
গ	g
ঘ	gh

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Assamese

Roman

ল	l
ৱ	w
হ	h
শ	sh
ষ	ṣ
স	s
ড়	ḍh
ঢ	ṛh
য	y
ং	ng
ঃ	ḥ
ক্ষ	Kṣ
°	gya

VOWELS AND CONSONANTS IN NAGAMESE

Vowels

- i 'i' as in english word 'is' and Assamese word ইট (itā)
meaning brick
- e 'e' as in english word 'tell' and Assamese word মেল (mɛl)
meaning open
- u 'u' as in english word 'full' and Assamese word উট (uṭ)
meaning camel
- o 'o' as in english word 'mode' and Assamese word ক'ত
(kot) meaning where
- a 'a' as 'u' in english word 'cut' and Assamese word হাত
(hat) meaning hand

Diphthongs (vowel join)

- ao as in Nagamese word 'lao' gourd
- ai as in Nagamese word 'thai' place, 'nai' nothing
- ia as in Nagamese word 'zolkia' chilli
- iu as in Nagamese word 'ghiu' ghee
- ui as in Nagamese word 'zui' fire
- ou as in Nagamese word 'moumakhi' bee, 'akou' again
- oi as in Nagamese word 'mokoi' maize, 'moila' stool

Consonants

- k as in Nagamese word 'kukur' dog

kh	as in Nagamese word	'khal' canal
g	as in Nagamese word	'gal' cheek
gh	as in Nagamese word	'baghor' of tiger
t	as in Nagamese word	'tukra' piece
th	as in Nagamese word	'thal' dish
d	as in Nagamese word	'dukh' pain
dh	as in Nagamese word	'dhal' shield
p	as in Nagamese word	'puk' insect
ph	as in Nagamese word	'phale' towards
f	as in Nagamese word	'fojir' morning
b	as in Nagamese word	'buk' carry
bh	as in Nagamese word	'bhuk' hunger
s	as in Nagamese word	'sal' skin
j	as in Nagamese word	'jadu' magic
z	as in Nagamese word	'zuk' leech
c/ch	as in Nagamese word	'cokra'/chokra, boy
h	as in Nagamese word	'hal' plough
m	as in Nagamese word	'mur' my
n	as in Nagamese word	'banor' monkey
ng	as in Nagamese word	'khong' anger
l	as in Nagamese word	'luk' a plural marker
r	as in Nagamese word	'ruk' to stop
w	as in Nagamese word	'khawa' eating
y	as in Nagamese word	'khay' eat

Collection of Nagamese words

Nagamese words are collected mainly from the field of Nagaland through personal visit. Christian Hymnal Books in Nagamese, Nagamese Bible Book, Dhoanyabad Gana, Nagamese Tele films CD, Nagamese Songs CD etc. were taken into account while collecting the words. Moreover, the words meaning books English-Hindi Naga-Assamese Tenyidie written by Menuokhrielie Sekhose and Nagamese into Anglo-Hindi

Ao and Tenyidie written by Dharani Boruah is taken into account while collecting the words. The spelling system is adopted mainly on the basis of pronunciation and the order of letters followed as per English language. In case of English word no change is made in the entry word and the pronunciation is shown separately by the side of the word within brackets.

INTRODUCTION

The racial group of the Nagas is one of the Mongolian groups; evidently, they have mixed feature. Though some writers¹ refer that they are found in Assam, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Tripura, Mizoram, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, Burma, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Sikkim, Nepal, Tibet, Himachal Pradesh and Kashmir of the Himalayan tracts, yet they are mainly concentrated in Nagaland with their identification term Naga.

The origin of the word Naga is obscure.² There are different theories regarding the origin of the word Naga. Capt. J. Butler prefers to derive the term Naga either from the Bengali word “nangta”, or the Hindustani word “nanga” which means naked ‘crude’, ‘barbarous’. Few other scholars explained it as a derivative of “nâg” meaning ‘snake’. The etymology of naga or naga may be explained in another way. Sanskrit “naga” means ‘hill’, and naga with the suffix-â, which means ‘definiteness’ or ‘the dwellers’ or ‘live in’ indicates the hill dwellers. But Verrier Elwin³, Peal⁴ and Hutton⁵ have suggested another notable theory; according to their explanation Naga is a derivative form of “nok” which means ‘people’ or ‘man’, They identify themselves as “nok” (man). It is observed that the different tribes settled in this North Eastern region

of India also identify themselves in a similar way like the Nagas. The Garos call themselves Ao chik (hill man), Mande (the man), or Ao chik mande⁶; the Mizos as Mizo⁷ (Mi =man, zo=hill) the Karbis as Arleng⁸ (Arleng = man), the Singphos as Singpho (Singpho=man); the Bodos as Boro¹⁰ (Boro= man). The tendency is that each tribe considered the members of his own race alone to be human. This tendency is found more or less among all the tribesmen of India.

It is a difficult problem to say the exact time of the settlement of the Nagas in Nagaland. "Recorded history does not tell us much about the origin of the tribesmen in Nagaland; who they were and whence they came. To say something about their early history is more of guesswork than a fact of chronicle."¹¹ There are few interesting stories regarding the first entrance of the Nagas to Nagaland. Accordingly, Lothas selected the place due to the availability of crags which were to be extracted in connection with their megalithic erections. The Rengmas came here in search of metals while Angami came in search of terrace fields. There is a popular belief among the Nagas on this matter that their forefathers came to Nagaland in search of plumes for the purpose of ornamentation and decoration.¹²

It was December 1, 1963. The day was a red letter day. It was not only remarkable and memorable for Assam or Nagaland but for the whole of India. In that very day, inaugurating the sixteenth state of India i.e. Nagaland, President Dr. Sarvapalli

Radhakrishnan¹³ said, “Let all past rancour and misunderstanding be forgotten and let a new chapter of progress, prosperity and goodwill be written on a page which begins today.” Formerly this administrative unit was known as the Naga Hills and Tuensang Area (NHTA) since 1st December, 1957 and it was renamed as Nagaland on 18th February 1961 as the first step towards constitution of a full fledged state. On this day, an Executive Council consisting of five members with the Chief Executive Councilor as its chairman and an interim body of 42 members was constituted. This Executive Council functioned as a ‘De-Facto’ council of ministers for Nagaland in the discharge of their responsibilities and the interim body functioned as De-Facto Legislature. The five man Executive Council was sworn in on the 16th March, 1961, at the Raj Bhavan in Shillong. The union government introduced a bill sometime in August, 1962, incorporating certain special provisions stating inter-alia that the Governor of Assam will also be the Governor for Nagaland and that the jurisdiction of the Assam High court would continue. Besides the governor would have special responsibility for the maintenance of law and order during the transitional period or so long as disturbances continue in the state, it was stated in this bill that no act or law passed by the union parliament affecting the following subject shall have legal force in Nagaland unless these are specifically made applicable to the state by a majority of voted in the state Legislative assembly –

1. Religious or social practices

2. Customary Naga laws and procedures
3. Civil and criminal justice in so far as this concern decision according to the Naga customary law. The existing laws relating to administration of civil and criminal justice as provided in the rules for the administration of justice and police in the Naga hills districts shall continue to be in force.
4. The ownership and transfer of land and its property.

Geographically, the present state Nagaland appears as a part within the state of Assam and formerly, it was within Assam for all political purposes. It comprises an area of 16,579 sq. km, mainly consisting of rugged mountainous terrain. According to Nagaland Government, the population¹⁴ (Table 1-3) in the state is comprised of about 19,88,636 at Zero hour of March 1, 2001

Table 1: District Wise* Areas, Population & Density 2001 and 2011 (Provisional)						
			2001 (P)		2011 (P)	
	State/ District	Area in Sq. km.	Population	Density. Per sq. Km	Population	Density Per. sq. Km
	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Nagaland	16,579	19,88,636	120	1,980,602	119
1.	Kohima	3114	31,14,366	101	365,017	117
2.	Dimapur	927	3,08,382	333	379,769	410
3.	Phek	2026	1,48,246	73	163,294	81
4.	Mokokchung	1615	2,27,230	141	193,171	120
5.	Zunheboto	1255	1,54,909	123	141,014	112
6.	Wokha	1628	1,61,098	99	166,239	102
7.	Tuensang	4228	4,14,801	98	321,427	76
8.	Mon	1786	2,59,604	145	250,671	140

Source: Statistical hand book of Nagaland, 2004, 2011.

* Three more districts Longleng, Peren and Kiphire are added presently.

	<i>State/District</i>	<i>Total population</i>			<i>Decennial Growth Rates (percentage)</i>	
		<i>1991</i>	<i>2001 (P)1</i>	<i>2011</i>	<i>981-91</i>	<i>1991-01</i>
		<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>
	Nagaland	12,09,546	19,88,636	1,980,602	56.08	64.41
1.	Kohima	3,87,581	3,14,366	365,1017	54.97	49.96
2.	Dimapur	-	3,08,382	379,769	-	73.30
3.	Phek	1,02,156	1,48,246	163,294	44.66	45.12
4.	Mokokchung	1,58,374	2,27,230	193,171	52.00	43.48
5.	Wokha	82,612	1,61,098	166,239	43.47	95.01
6.	Zunheboto	96,218	1,54,909	141,014	57.32	61.00
7.	Tuensang	2,32,906	4,14,801	321,427	52.89	78.10
8.	Mon	1,49,699	2,59,604	250,671	89.64	73.42

Source: Statistical Hand Book of Nagaland, 2004, 2011.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Person</i>		<i>Decadel Variation</i>		<i>% Decadel Variation</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>		<i>3</i>		<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>
1901	101,550		-		-	51,473	50,077
1911	149,038	+	47,488	+	46.76	74,796	74,242
1921	158,801	+	9,763	+	6.55	79,738	79,063
1931	178,844	+	20,043	+	12.62	89,536	89,308
1941	189,641	+	10,797	+	6.04	93,831	95,810
*1951	212,975	+	2,334	+	12.30	106,551	106,424
*1961	369,200	+	156,225	+	73.35	191,027	178,173
1971	516,449	+	147,249	+	39.88	276,084	240,365
1981	774,930	+	258,481	+	50.05	415,910	359,020
1991	1,209,546	+	434,616	+	56.08	641,282	568,264
2001(P)	1,990,036	+	780,490	+	64.53	1,047,141	942,895
2011 (P)	1980602(P)	-	9434	-	0.47	1,025,707	954,895

Source: Statistical Hand Book of Nagaland, 2011.

out of which 10,41,686 are males and 94,6,950 are females and thereby making an overall growth rate of 64.41% during the decade for 1991-2001. During the decade of 1931-1941 it was

Table 4: District-wise Population Literate Population aged 7 aged and above and Literacy Rate in Nagaland, 2011 Census (P)											
State/District	Total population			Literate Population			Literacy rate (Percentage)				
	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Nagaland	1,980,602	1,025,707	954,895	1,357,579	731,796	625,783	80.11	83.29	76.69		
1	270,063	140,118	129,945	200,180	108,781	91,399	85.58	89.28	81.56		
2	379,769	198,163	181,606	282,088	152,327	129,761	85.44	88.07	82.54		
3	163,294	83,684	79,610	107,427	58,587	48,840	79.13	84.53	73.50		
4	193,171	100,229	92,942	160,453	84,166	76,287	92.68	93.55	91.74		
5	166,239	84,429	81,810	128,394	67,396	60,998	87.60	90.53	84.58		
6	141,014	71,169	69,845	104,294	54,105	50,189	86.26	88.86	83.61		
7	196,801	101,977	94,824	119,293	64,426	54,867	73.70	76.76	70.40		
8	250,671	132,062	118,609	119,496	67,170	52,326	56.60	60.38	52.39		
9	94,954	49,530	45,424	62,991	35,000	27,991	79.00	83.96	73.57		
10	74,033	37,758	36,275	42,445	23,290	19,155	71.10	76.54	65.44		
11	50,593	26,588	24,005	30,518	16,548	13,970	73.10	75.60	70.35		

Source: Statistical hand book of Nagaland, 2011.

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>District</i>	<i>Town</i>	<i>Person</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>
1	Kohima	Kohima	270,063	63,748	59,401
2	Dimapur	Dimapur	379,769	103,662	93,615
3	Phek	Phek	163,294	13,230	11,375
4	Mokokchung	Mokokchung	193,171	29,701	25,953
5	Wokha	Wokha	166,239	18,128	16,857
6	Zunheboto	Zunheboto	141,014	14,407	13,198
7	Tuensang	Tuensang	196,801	19,492	17,349
8	Mon	Mon	250,671	18,489	16,229
9	Peren	Peren	94,954	7,706	7,095
10	Kiphire	Kiphire	74,033	8,555	7,942
11	Longleng	Longleng	50,593	3,994	3,615
Total Nagaland		Urban Areas	1,600,833	309,049	272,629

Source: Statistical hand book of Nagaland, 2011.

6.04% which has gone up to 56.08% in 1981 and 64.41% during 1992-2001. (Economic Survey, Nagaland 2001-2002 Govt. of Nagaland, Kohima.)

Nagaland is divided into eleven districts¹⁵ : Kohima, Mokokchung, Tuensang, Wokha, Zunheboto, Phek, Mon, Dimapur, Peren, Longleng and Kiphire. The physique of the state of Nagaland lies between 25°60 and 27°40 latitude north of equator and between the longitudinal lines 93°20 E and 95°15 E. The state is bounded by Assam in the North and West by Myanmar and Arunachal Pradesh in the East and Manipur in the South and runs more or less to the left bank of the great river Brahmaputra. The topography is very severe full of hilly ranges which break into a wide chaos of spurs and ridges. The altitude varies between 194 meters and 3048 meters. Most of the thousand and odd

villages stands at 1 to 2000 meters high as it is very typical of the Nagas to build their houses on the hill top and at higher elevations. The highest peak in the state, Saramati in Tuensang district is 3840 meters high.¹⁶ The state is drained by a number of rivers streams and rivulets. Dhansiri, Doyang, Dikhu and Tizu are four main rivers of these. Dhansiri, Doyang and Dikhu flows towards west and merges out with the river Brahmaputra of Assam while Tizu river flows in the easterly and south easterly direction to join the river Irawady in Myanmar.

The total literacy rate in Nagaland is 80.11% in 2011 as against the literacy rate 67.11% in 2001. The highest rate is recorded in Mokokchung district at 92.68% and lowest in Mon district at 56.60%. The district wise literacy rate is given in table 6 and table 7

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>District</i>	<i>2001 (Provisional)</i>	<i>2011 (Provisional)</i>
1.	Mon	42.25	56.60
2.	Tuensang	51.30	73.70
3.	Mokokchung	84.27	92.68
4.	Zunheboto	69.73	86.26
5.	Wokha	81.28	87.60
6.	Dimapur	78.15	85.44
7.	Kohima	74.28	85.58
8.	Phek	71.35	79.13
9.	Kiphire	Data not available	71.10
10	Peren	Data not available	79.00
11	longleng	Data not available	73.10
	Nagaland	67.11	80.11

Source: Economic Survey, 2001-2002, Nagaland, based on Census of India, Series 13, paper 2.

	State/District	Total population	Literate Population		
			Person	Male	Female
	1	2	3	4	5
	Nagaland	1,980,602	1,357,579	731,796	625,783
1.	Kohima	270,063	200,180	108,781	91,399
2.	Dimapur	379,769	282,088	152,327	126,761
3.	Phek	163,294	107,427	58,587	48,840
4.	Mokokchung	193,171	160,453	84,166	76,287
5.	Wokha	166,239	128,394	67,396	60,998
6.	Zunheboto	141,014	104,294	54,105	50,189
7.	Tuensang	196,801	119,293	64,426	54,867
8.	Mon	250,671	119,496	67,170	52,326
9	Peren	94,954	62,991	35,000	27,991
10	Kiphire	74,033	42,445	23,290	19,155
11	longleng	50,593	30,518	16,548	13,970

Source: Statistical hand book of Nagaland, 2011.

Nagaland is predominantly a tribal state with their distinctive dialects and rich cultural heritage. The major groups of Naga tribes in Nagaland¹⁷ are-Konyak, Ao, Sema, Lotha, Angami, Chakhesang, Phom, Rengma, Chang, Sangtam, Yimchunger, Khiamniungan, Kuki, Pochury and Zeliang and other minor groups. Comparatively, Konyaks are more numerous than the Aos. Each of them has their own tongues which vary widely from one language to another. Dr. Grierson has divided the Naga languages into five sub-groups as follows:¹⁸

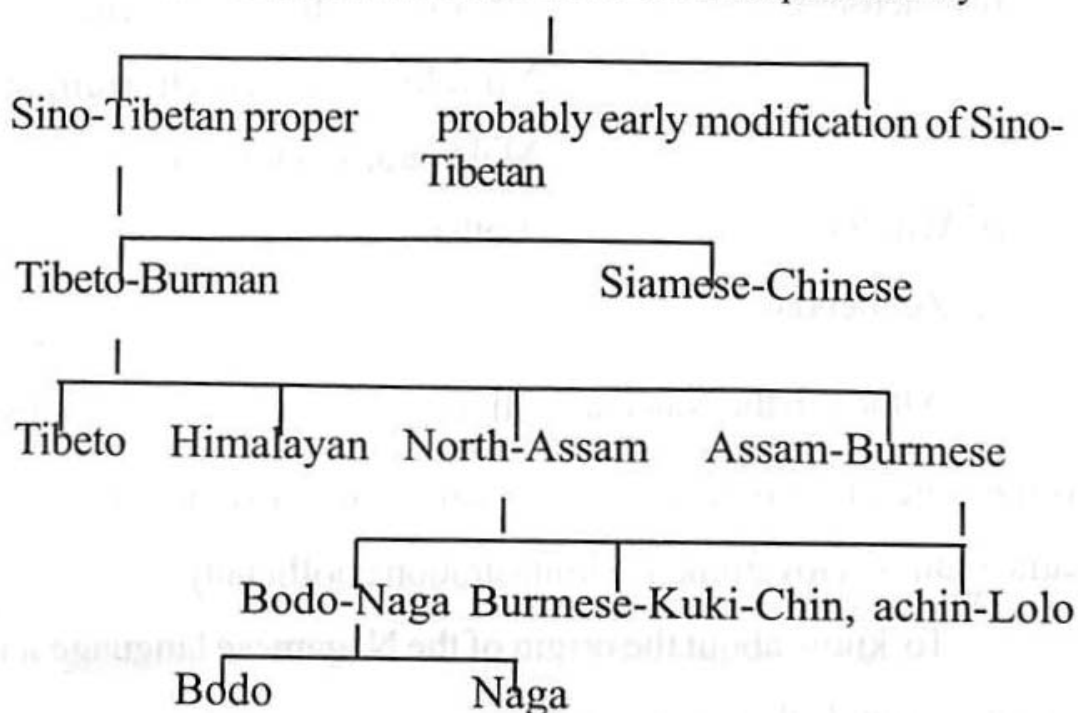
- (a) Western sub-group : It includes Angami, Sema, Rengma and Kezhama;
- (b) Central sub-group : it includes Ao, Lotha, Tengsa, Thukumi and Yachumi;

- (c) Eastern sub-group : it includes Angwanku or Tablung Chingmegnu or Tamlu, Banpara, Mutonia, Mohongia, Chang or Mojung, Assiringia, Moshang and Shangge;
- (d) Naga Bodo sub-group: it includes Mikir, Kachcha Naga, Kabui and Khoirao;
- (e) Naga Kuki sub-group: it includes Sopvoma or Mao Naga, Maram, Miyangkhang, Kwoireng or Liyang, Luhupa or Luppa and Maring.

Naga speech community can be explained according following table- (Table-8)

It is indeed very interesting that a language or a dialect spoken in one Naga-bosti (Naga-village) is not easily understood by the tribe of another 'bosti' in the vicinity. Hence, Nagamese is the media of expression among the Naga tribes as well as the outsiders. Formerly, the language was called by different writers as Naga-Assamese.¹⁹ Actually, the term Nagamese is a blended or contaminated formation of Naga-Assamese, i.e. Assamese as spoken by the different Naga tribes, or a spoken Assamese developed in Nagaland. The word is newly coined by the people of All India Radio Station, Kohima.²⁰

Nagaland has many uncultivated and mutually unintelligible

Table 8: Sino-Tibetan or Tibeto-Chinese speech family

languages, which belong to Assam-Burmese sub-family. These languages or dialects have got no script of their own. According to the Nagas popular belief they had their own script which was originally written on animal skin and ate up by somebody, and thus their script was lost. That traditional story still prevails in their society. They have adopted Roman script to write their speeches. The district wise geographical distribution of these languages mainly is as follows:

- | | | |
|----------------|---|--|
| (a) Kohima | - | Angami, Kachari, Kuki, Zemi,
Liangmei, Rongmei, Rengma,
Mao and Kheza. |
| (b) Mokokchung | - | Ao (Chungli, Mongsem, Chanki) |
| (c) Mon | - | Konyak. |
| (d) Phek | - | Pochuri, Chokri. |

- (e) Tuensang - Phom, Chang, Sangtam,
Yimchunger, Khiemniungan,
Makwara, Tirkhir, Chin.
- (f) Wokha - Lotha.
- (g) Zunheboto - Sema.

Although the Nagaland Government has adopted English as the state official language, Nagamese has also occupied the same status in Government administration unofficially.

To know about the origin of the Nagamese language it is essential to study the relation of the Naga people with the Assamese speaking population in the neighbouring areas. The Naga people had a relation with Assamese and that relation continued since the reign of the Ahom kings. In our history, systematic historical records of the Nagas are not available during pre-Ahom period except some stray references here and there. The slender accounts of the period of the Hindu kings of Kamarupa, between 4th and 12th century are silent about the Nagas.²¹ The Ahom kingdom brought a far reaching relationship with the Nagas marked, in turn, by hostility and friendship. The first tribal people with whom the Ahoms came into contact was the Eastern Nagas. Sukapha, the founder king of the Ahom kingdom in Assam,²² came through the land of the Nagas in the beginning of the 13th century. Some Nagas attempted to resist his advance, but he proceeded towards the Assam valley by defeating these enemies. The treatment of Sukapha to the Nagas was elaborately described in the history.²³

Whatever the treatment it was, the Ahom kings treated the Nagas as their subjects and collected taxes from them in different forms, such as elephant tusks, spears, hand woven clothes and cotton. In return the Ahom kings granted the Naga Chiefs land etc., as if they were Assamese nobles. Their estates (= the Naga Khats) were managed by Assamese officials called Naga Katakis.²⁴

According to the Ahom chronicles,²⁵ Ahoms had to deal mostly with the Nagas since the establishment of their kingdom till the 17th century. The Nagas offended the Ahom kings from time to time and they had also visited the Ahom kingdom. These Nagas lived in hilly region in between the rivers Dikhow and Burhi Dihing. The relationship of the Ahoms with the Nagas was improved much towards the 17th century. During the reign of Suchinpha, Naria Raja or Sutyinpha (1644-1648 A.D.) some Khamjangia Nagas came and paid homage to the Ahom king at the capital Gargaon and prayed the help to fight with their hostiles, viz. some Naga villages.²⁶ Thus for the first time one of the restless Naga tribes of the Patkai mountain, who were considered as the trouble makers towards the Ahom rulers for many times, visited the Ahom king at his capital and established friendly relations with him.

The Ahoms or Assamese inhabitants came into contact with the Nagas of the Dayang valley during the reign of Gadadhar Singha (1681-1696 A.D.) These Naga populations were undoubtedly the Lothas who lived by the side of the Doyang river,

which is very close to the plains. They showed their sentiments of loyalty to the Ahom king since their contact with Ahoms and accepting Gadadhar Singha as their overlord agreed to pay an annual tribute to the Ahom king as a mark of loyalty and respect. Moreover, the Nagas offered to the king two princesses with slaves and female attendants.²⁷ Thus the Nagas living towards the western side of the Dikhow river were easily brought to submission. The king Gadapani kept his two sons in a Naga village²⁸ to save their lives.

Besides, the custom of adoption of children of other caste and marital relation with the hill tribes were prevailing during the Ahom regime. Sometimes the adopted children were placed in a superior position. The Dupgaria Naga presented three boys to the Burha Raja. Their names were Ao, Apam and Lachit.²⁹ Few references of marital relationship between the Ahoms and the Nagas are found in the Chronicles. Previously, the Dihingiya Raja (1497-1531 A.D.) was residing in the hills. He had a friendly relationship with a khunbaw of Banpheria Naga named Karengpa. His daughter Changkun had some familiarity with the king's household. A son was born to Changkun who later became known as Tyachengmung. Then the king asked his ministers- "The boy should find his place between you two Gohains, because he came of a Naga mother." The ministers replied, "Be it so. We accept him as such."³⁰

There are many instances of the marital relationship

between the Ahom princes and the Naga people Supimpha, the son of Suhanpha handed over one of his queens to a Naga Khunbaw for her misbehaviour.³¹ Dihingiya Raja offered Khunbaw, a Naga, a princess as a token of gratitude.³² In 1504 A.D., a treaty was concluded in which the Nagas acknowledged the supremacy of the Ahom king and promised to pay an annual tribute. The Naga chief arranged the wedding of his daughter to Suhummung to uphold their mutual relations.³³ Moreover, many of the Rengma Nagas 'have married Cacharree and Assamese wives'.³⁴

It will not be out of place to mention here that a talented and notable work was done by Sri Sankaradeva (1449-1569 A.D.) for creating amity between hills and plains. He also took his disciples from the hill people; among them Narottam of Naga, Gobinda of Garo and Balai of Mikir were more prominent.³⁵ There still exist some Naga villages in Sibsagar sub-division and Tirap district who are of Hindu religion. The migrated Nagas of the plains of Assam do not speak Nagamese like the Nagas of Nagaland. The seven Sema Naga villages at Margherita of Dibrugarh district, Latum Gaon and Ligiri Pukhuri Gaon (Konyak) at Sibsagar district are notable in this respect. Linguistically, they merged with the Assamese fold; also their acculturation is a notable feature.

Ahom reign ended with three Burmese invasions. During these invasions many Assamese took refuge in the Naga villages

and some of them merged themselves with the Naga fold. Such Assamese people are found in Kohima and Mokokchung districts and in the long run they had identified with the Nagas.

In the year 1826, the British occupied Assam and accordingly Ahom rule ended with; During this period, military expeditions were made to the Naga hills. Yet Nagas relation with the Assamese was friendly and satisfactory. In a Government letter, Lt. Col. Jenkins wrote that 'our relations just now with the Nagas may be considered satisfactory, and I have nothing at present to suggest in reference to them.' There was a commercial communication between the plains and the hills.³⁶ During the British period, the communications of the Nagas with Sibsagar were improved and trade with the Naga villages was extended.³⁷

With the advent of the British rule in Nagaland, Assamese language was occupying some prominent places in the Naga society in Nagaland. The British Government had to keep Assam Rifles and the Assam Police in Nagaland for smooth running of their administration, specially for the maintenance of law and order. Many of them hailed from the rural areas of Kamrup, and Goalpara districts. Moreover, the Civil staffs of the said army were mainly recruited from the plain districts of Assam. During the British rule Assamese was introduced in the schools of Nagaland. Thus a regular contact between the Naga tribes and the Assamese speaking population was maintained for centuries together. Thus

Naga-Assamese came into existence. It is to be noted that the language adopts a Naga form in pronunciation accentuation, morphology syntax and vocabulary by which it is developing its own characteristics. As these people, who served in Nagaland in different capacities, belonged to different linguistic stock and as their mother tongues were different they had to speak the common language of majority people i.e., Naga-Assamese and this is mixed with different elements of those languages. This way Nagamese incorporated vocabulary from Hindi, English and Nepali besides Assamese. The vocabulary from the local Naga dialects is rare except the local terms of fairs and festivals. The speakers of Lower Assam practically predominated the Nagamese language due to contact of the Nagas with the Assam Rifles people during British Rule. Therefore, the influence of the lower Assamese dialect is easily identified particularly in accentuation, intonation and in the sentence structure.

After Independence, in 1963, Nagaland was separated from Assam, but the mutual understandings between them improved upon in all respects. The Asom Sahitya Sabha, a pioneer literary organization of Assam always tries to develop a cultural amity between both the states. This life-long relation of Assam with the Nagas has not only helped to develop Nagamese in Nagaland but also helped the Nagas to contribute some elements to the life of Assamese.

Nagamese has developed as a spoken language among

the different tribes in Nagaland. It has occupied an important position and status in the state. That is why, the politicians, the teachers, the Government employees, the tradesmen etc., take the advantage of speaking this language to meet their aims and objectives. This is the common practice with all the Naga people of different tribes as regards to their common communication. The development situation of Nagamese in Nagaland can be summarised as follows:

- (a) Nagas speaking one language in contact with the Nagas speaking another language.
- (b) Nagas in contact with the non-Nagas.
- (c) Non-Nagas speaking one language in contact with the non-Nagas speaking another language.

As these three contact situations are frequent in their day-to-day life, so necessarily, Nagamese takes the advantage of rapid development in Nagaland.

The written records, documents of Nagamese language are found in Roman script which is also convenient to write the language with certain limitations. The dramas namely 'Heorâ Chukrâ', 'Kâbuliwâllâ' and songs like 'mânuhe mânuhor bâbe.' etc., preserved in all India Radio Station, Kohima, are also written in the Roman script found in the year 1975. The book 'Nagaland' by Navamalati Chakravorty, a publication of Asom Sahitya Sabha is also written in the same Roman script.

The Nagamese language is not yet thoroughly studied and explored by the linguists. Very few works are found on the language, and some of them are still in the manuscript forms. 'Nagamese into Anglo-Hindi-Ao' (July 1969) by D. Baruah is the first comprehensive work on lexicography which actually meets the need of a handbook dictionary for learning three languages- Nagamese, Hindi and English by the Aos and others. 'Naga-pidgin: A Sociolinguistic Study' of the Interlingual Communication Pattern in Nagaland (November 1974) by M.V. Shreedhar is the product of the Central Institute of Indian Languages, Mysore, which throws some light on the grammatical aspects of the Nagamese language spoken by few Naga tribes. 'The Nagamese Language: A Descriptive Analysis' (1976) is an unpublished mini-thesis submitted by Sri Bhim Kanta Boruah in the Department of Assamese, Dibrugarh University. 'The Pronouns in Nagamese' presented by Sri Bhim Kanta Boruah in the VIIIth All India Conference of Linguistics, Golden Jubilee Year (New Delhi, 1978), 'The Nagamese language' presented by Dr. S.N. Goswami in the All India Oriental Conference in the year 1977 deserve special mention here. 'Nagaland' by Mrs. Navamalati Chakravorty published by the Asom Sahitya Sabha (1979) is a book in Nagamese language written on the various accounts on Nagaland. 'Nagamiz Kothalaga Niyom' (A primary Grammar on Nagamese) is the first grammatical work done by Bhim Kanta Boruah and published in January, 1985 by Asom Sahitya Sabha, the pioneer literary and cultural

organisation of Assam with the financial grant released by the Government of Nagaland for the purpose. The language of the book is in Nagamese itself. 'Batsa Path' a primer and nursery rhymes in Nagamese written by Bhim Kanta Boruah is the first primer on Nagamese published by Asom Sahitya Sabha in the year 1988 with the financial grant released by the Government of Nagaland for the purpose. Another notable multilingual lexicographical work is English-Hindi-Naga Assamese-Tenyidie written by Menuokhrielie Sekhose. The book was published by Good News Centre, Kohima, Nagaland. Its first print was in 1997 and second print was in 2001. A notable work towards the development of Nagamese literature was done by the Hymn Book Committee of Garo Baptist Church, Kohima, by translating and publishing the prayer book 'Christian Hymnal in Nagamese' (First edition 2007.) The book is a collection of finest hymns of all times for whole range of Christian life and experiences which are translated to Nagamese to make it instrumental in all the Nagamese churches in Nagaland in glorifying God and renew their spiritual life. Rev. John Ovung, the Director of Christian literature centre (CLC) in the foreword of this Hymnal book wrote that 'there are a good number of Nagamese churches already established all over the state of Nagaland, especially the Nagaland Arms Police (NAP) can be seen everywhere in Nagaland which they use or communicate only in Nagamese. It is sad to say that the churches with Nagamese do not have Bible, hymn book and Christian literature in Nagamese. So to meet the need of the Nagamese

speaking people especially Nagamese churches in Nagaland, the Garo Baptist Church, Kohima, Hymnbook committee filled with the sense of duty, love and compassion undertook this responsibility and making this church hymnbook in Nagamese available.’

During the last decade Nagamese literature developed in an audio-visual manner. Few Nagamese singers appeared in the video albums where songs are sung in a lucid manner. Among them Thenyei Phom (Song – Ishwor Duniya te ahibo and baba morom), Angao Konyak (Song- Everlasting happy and sun moon star), David Konyak (Song-Mr. Anns and chowka te chuha), Sunep Jamir (2nd October and Eswar Bunaise) etc. are prominent. David Konyak is a good singer of Nagamese song and he is becoming popular artist for the songs like – (i) Kaun ke biswas (ii) Sathi satheni (iii) Kot jai ase (iv) Nagaland leaders (v) Mann shanti (vi) Kiman bhi sundor (vii) Oh! prabhu ishwor and (viii) Crore pati. Most of these video Nagamese song albums are produced by Naga Film Institute, Kashiram, Dimapur, Nagaland and video coverage and edited by East End Enterprise, Dimapur, Nagaland. Many Tele Films are also produced during the last decade. Few such Tele Films are Bosti Manuh, Bosti Manuh-2, Bosti Manuh Part-3 Doctor, Bosti Manuh Part-4 Lottery, Bosti Manuh Part-5 Film Director, Bosti Manuh Part-6 Aji Raja etc. Gospel Films like ‘Kun Karni’ etc. are also produced with Naga Film artists. All these films are produced by Naga Film Institute, Dimapur, Nagaland. These films are mostly based on socio-cultural life of the Nagas which are mainly thought laden but devoid of artistic

touch of high order. More scopes are there to develop these films by giving socio-cultural approach on the life of the Nagas. Many film actor and actresses have already earned popularity through their performances in the films.

The Nagamese language has also notable influence on the vocabulary of Naga languages. For instance, in Angami language kotâri 'knief', sâki, 'lamp', keralâ, 'charatia', begenâ/pegenâ 'tomato' (in the sense of tomato and not brinjal) mit^hâtyer 'mustard oil', sigho 'lion', gurâ 'horse', dâl 'split-pulse', poisâ 'paise', etc. and in Ao language hisâp 'to count', keserâ 'not decisive minded', pegenâ 'tomato', nâspoti 'pear', noksen/noksel 'loss', ali 'a small foot path', k^hel (in the sense of khel of Ahom age) etc. The Ao speakers have their own week-days term, inspite of having that they use the terms of Assamese week-days in their conversation as humbâr, monolbâr, budbâr, bihosotibâr, hukubâr, honibâr, deubâr. Thus Semas use nâspoti 'pear'. Moreover, tobâsi (dobhâsi) 'interpreter', gâoburâ 'village head man' are commonly used by the Nagas.

Nagamese is considered as a common lingua-franca in Nagaland and the Nagas treat it as their most vital language for inter-communication. Further, it is observed that Assamese was necessarily used as a medium in the discourses and reports of the momentous Naga Convention held at Kohima in 1957.³⁸ The Government of Nagaland considers Nagamese as an important language for publicity purposes, and it is always announced from

their Broadcasting Centre, All India Radio Station, Kohima. The importance of Nagamese is also laid down by some foreign writers like W.B. Smith,³⁹ Hutton⁴⁰ and Verrier Elwin.⁴¹ The European writer Hutton refers in his book that ‘indeed, the Assamese language as used in the Naga Hills is peculiarly well adopted for the reproduction of Naga idiom, and as a vehicle of interpretation it makes a far better lingua-franca for the hills than Hindustani or English would, the substitution of which for Assamese has been occasionally suggested.’ Moreover, Nagamese has got its importance for national integration.

The influence of the Christian Missionaries, British occupation of Nagaland had great impact on the vocabulary of Nagamese language. In the growth of Nagamese two principal aspects are very prominent:

- (a) Assamese in a simplified form
- (b) Assamese mixed with Hindi and English.

Of course, the syntax of Nagamese bears the process of Assamese language with simplified form of words. The following specimen will give a clear idea about the two aspects of Nagamese language respectively.

(a) gâhori besi/bici hole sobto âlog/âlâg râk^he.

bostite hole nizer nizer murgitu pâs soitâ rak^he.

(‘if pig increase it is kept separately. One keeps five or six hens for oneself in a village’)

- (b) âmi âhise nobemborotme. âmâr mâibi âse bâbâbi t^hâkise. âmi sobse older t^hâkise. (I came in the month of November. I have my mother and father also. I am the eldest of all.)

Although the hill people in the surrounding areas of Assam speak broken Assamese for their common conversation yet no homogeneity in the form of speech is observed. The people of Arunachal speak Arunamese or Nefamese as a link language which is unlike Nagamese as a link language of Nagaland.

Special Features of the Nagamese Language

Ngamese is phonologically very close to Kamrupi, a dialect of Assamese spoken in Kamrup district. A brief analysis on the phonological, morphological and glossarial aspects of the language is given below showing the relation of Nagamese with standard colloquial Assamese.

Phonology

Standard colloquial Assamese ə > o in Nagamese. In Nagamese the lower á is not tolerated as in Kamrupi

Ngamese	English	Assamese
upor	'on'	opar
karone	'for'	kârane
pora	'from'	parâ
logote	'with'	lagate
usor	'near'	osar

noromkoi	'softly'	mnəramkoi
hodai	'always'	xədāl
bogoli	'crans'	bagali
pobitro	'pure'	pəbitrə

Standard colloquial Assamese o > u in Nagamese.

Predominance of high vowels is a special feature in Nagamese.

St. Col. As. ə > o; St. col. As. o > u in Nagamese, e.g.

Nagamese	English	Assamese
Soluâ	'manage'	səloâ
upor	'on'	opar

St. col. As. (sibilants: œðs, s) x > h / s in Nagamese

/w/ and /y/ in final syllable generally become glide, e.g.

Nagamese	English	Assamese
elehuâ	'idle'	elehuwâ
kâniâ	'opium eater'	kâniyâ
diâ	'give'	diyâ

kòs > Nagamese k^h (see 3.7.4)

Aspirate becomes unspirate. It is very frequent in Nagamese,
e. g.

Nagamese bi also 'bhi'(also)..... (H.)

St. col. As. òr h > Nagamese r (Sec. 3.7.5)

The word stress in Nagamese is initial as opposed to the

penultimate stress of St. col. Assamese, In such case the medial – u- vowel of the word is generally disappeared. e.g.

Nagamese	English	Assamese
enekâ	such	enekuâ
âpnâ	you	âpuni, âpunâr
tukrâ	piece	tukurâ

Diphthongs are available in the language.

Morphology

The plural suffix -k^h ân of personal pronouns in Nagamese is quite common, but its use in Assamese is very restricted. e.g.

âmâ-k^hân ‘we’ (cf. As. Ama-lok), tumâ-k^hân ‘you’
(cf. As. toma-lok), târ-k^hân ‘they’ (cf. As. xihat.teo-lok)
âpnâ-k^hân ‘you’ (cf. As. âpunâ-lok)

Compare, Assamese (Uzani dialect) larakhan ‘boys’

Kamrupi dialect larakhân ‘boys’

Uzani dialect biyâkhan ‘marriage

Including all functions’

Kamrupi dialect biyâkhân ‘marriage

Including all functions’

Uzani dialect halkhan ‘plough with all

instruments, including bull and
ploughman’

Kamrupi dialect hâlkhân

Nagamese first personal pronoun is âmi (= I) in singular

form. Its plural form is *ami-k^han* (= we). Another singular form for first person *moi* (= I) is not frequent, but it is used in certain areas. Similarly third personal pronominal formation in singular is *tar* (=he) in Nagamese; it is a third personal singular pronominal form in genitive in Assamese language. Its plural form is *tar-k^han* (=they). Third personal singular pronominal form in feminine is *tai* (=she) in Nagamese language. This is a clear loan from Assamese language. Sometimes this *tai* (=she) is used to indicate both 3rd personal pronoun (masc. & fem.) in Nagamese.

Nagamese has a frequent term *-lâgâ* to denote a possessive case

Nagamese plural suffixes are : *-bur*, *-bulâk*, *-k^hân*, *-luk*.

The plural suffix *-bulak* in Nagamese is derived from the Assamese plural suffix *-bilâk*. So also *-bur* <As. *-bor*, *-k^hân* < *-k^hân*, *-luk* <As. *-lok*.

Nagamese accusative suffix *-ke* and locative suffix *-te* are the extended formations of Assamese accusative *-âk* and locative *-ât* respectively.

✓ In conjugation the verbs are not inflected according to persons but inflected according to tenses.

Glossary

While discussing about the Pidgin English says Landtman “the native use of Pidgin English lays down the rules by which Europeans let themselves be guided when learning it. Even Englishmen do not find it quite easy at the beginning to understand Pidgin English, and have to learn it before they are able to speak properly. “This

can also be recalled in case of Nagamese Language. This happened due to some phonological and glossarial conditions of the Nagamese language. There are little differences between vocables of standard colloquial Assamese and the Nagamese language. The most important glossarial features of the language are : (i) simplification and (ii) coinage.

Sanskrit *Tatsama* words are rare in the language which are either phonologically simplified or substituted with an explanatory note which gives a simple meaning of the term. Some of such explanatory words are given below with the Assamese words to point out a picture of the contrast with the original word.

Nagamese	English	f. Assamese
ala-p homoi	'moment'	muhurta
kâpur bonâwâ k ^h ori	'shuttle'	mâku
kot ^h â zuziâ	'argue'	yukti
kopâl dâçor	'lucky'	bhâgyâbân
sob milâi eke	'average'	gád
besi dâçor gâ âru	'giant'	daityá
hokti thâkâ mânuh		
mâti khândi ulâwâ	'mineral'	khânij
mukh porâ luâ	'oral'	mukhâsthá
motâ nothokâ mâiki	'widow'	bidhávâ
mon khusi korâ homoy	'recreation'	jiraáni

The word list will clearly show this simplification in contrast with the Assamese words.

Coinage is the interesting feature of the language. Sometimes such newly coin-words are made with the combination of two words. Some examples of such coin-words are given below showing contrast with the Assamese words side by side.

Nagamese	English	c.f. Assamese
k ^h undiâ	‘dig’	khundâ
golb ^h erâ	‘tomato’	bilâhi
pâtâron	‘green’	xeujiâ
monb ^h âb	‘idea’	dhârnâ
hâtguti	‘elbow’	kilâkuti
husbisâr	‘adultery’	byabhisâr

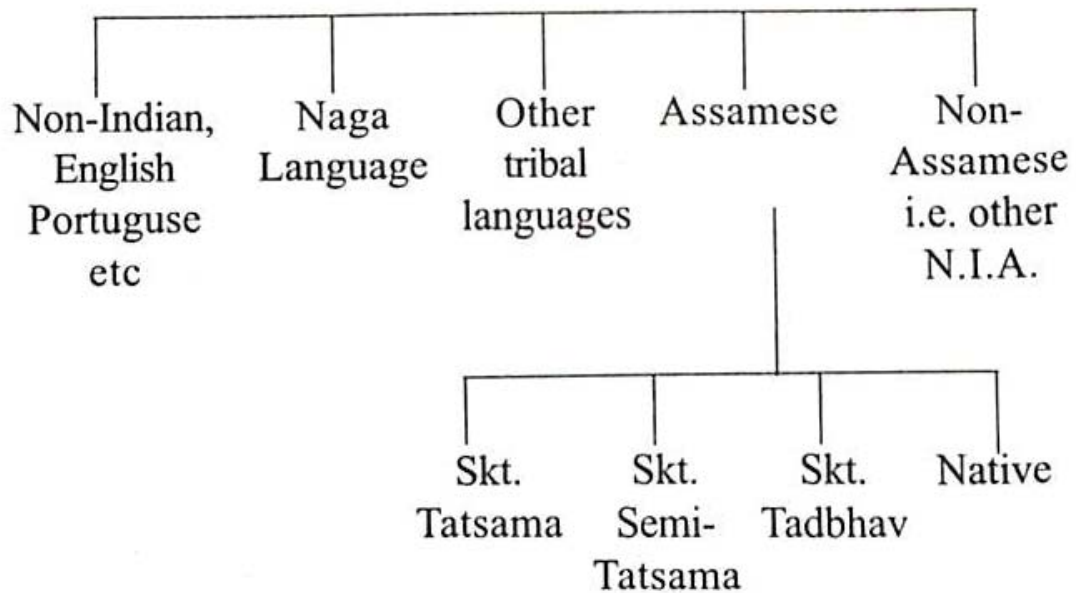
Vocabulary :

Some writers⁴² want to refer the Nagamese language as a mixture of Assamese and Naga languages, but the vocabulary of Nagamese is predominantly enriched with the loan words from the modern representative of Indo-Aryan stock of languages and such words are originated from *semi-tatsama* and *tadbhava* words. The *tadbhava* words are largest in number while *semi-tatsama* words are very small in number. *Tatsama* words are rarely used in Nagamese, and these are simplified to some extent as stated above. The native words i.e. word of Indian languages other than Assamese came through the Assamese language.

There are set of non-Assamese words in Nagamese mostly loan from Hindi. A few Bengali words are also available. Besides the simplified and newly coined words some other words are also

available in Nagamese- these words are incorporated from the sources of their own languages and dialects. Such words are cimtâ ‘gongs’, celemzi ‘a big basket’ p^hillâ ‘thigh’ etc.

Table 9: Nagamese words



Names of festivals and other cultural terms of the Nagas are found in the language. Hybrid words like mâstorni ‘a female teacher’ etc., are found in the language; these are also derived from the Assamese language. The vocabulary of the Nagamese language can be explained in a diagram as follows : (Table – 9)

The Nagamese language shows a large number of variations as a spoken tongue and thus, it shows certain phonological peculiarities in different areas. Such prominent phonological peculiarities are enumerated below:

- (1) In the Yimchunger area an initial unaspirate voiceless is confused with an unaspirate voiced.

Particularly, the confusion is seen between p & b, t & d, K & g, c & z.

- (2) In the areas of Konyak, Sangtam, Phom, and Chang r>l and sometimes, l>r In these areas generally, a voiced d is confused with a voiceless t and t^h.
- (3) Konyak(Sangtam, Phom, Chang, Khiangam, Lotha, Ao and Yimchunger shows a voiceless t^h in place of voiced d^h and
- (4) Among Konyak, Sangtam, Phom, Chang, Khiangam, Lotha and Ao a voiced g has a tendency towards a voiceless k.

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20. During my fieldwork in Nagaland it has been informed that
the word 'Nagamese' was coined by three persons, namely
..... (1) Lt. Mr. Akum
Imlong, former Minister of Information & Publicity &
Tuensang Affairs, (2) Mr. M.G. Baidya, former and first
Station Director, All India Radio, Kohima, and (3) the

informant himself i.e. Mr. Asim Roy, the then Producer for Farm and Home, All India Radio station, Kohima.

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