

F 237
992

NAGAMESE

THE LANGUAGE OF NAGALAND



B. K. Foruah

Foreword by
S. N. GOSWAMI

MITTAL PUBLICATIONS
NEW DELHI-110059 (INDIA)

ger

NAGAMESE
THE LANGUAGE OF NAGALAND



NE
495.919
BAR 3

First Edition 1993

© 1993 by the Author
All rights reserved.

ISBN 81-7099-353-9

SEHU LIBRARY

Acc. No... 210792

Acc. by... [Signature]

Date... [Signature]

Class by... [Signature]

Sub Heading by... [Signature]

Entered by... [Signature]

Transcribed by... [Signature]

Published by K. M. Rai Mittal for Mittal Publications, A-110,
Mohan Garden, New Delhi-110059

Printed in India at New Prints, Delhi-110034

MITTAL PUBLICATIONS
NEW DELHI

To
My
Father and Mother
Sri Rupeswar Boruah and
Mrs Sunpahi Boruah
Whose never-ending
Inspirations and blessings
are emblemmed
in the caverns of my mind

CONTENTS

<i>Foreword</i>		ix
<i>Preface</i>		xi
<i>Abbreviations & Symbols</i>		xiii

PART ONE

Introduction		1
--------------	--	---

PART TWO: PHONOLOGY

Chapter I	Phonemics	18
	Vowels Consonants	
Chapter II	Vowels (Treatment of Vowels)	39
Chapter III	Phonetic Changes	46

PART THREE : MORPHOLOGY

Chapter IV	The Nouns	52
Chapter V	Definitives and Indefinitives	58
Chapter VI	The Pronouns	60
Chapter VII	The Adjectives	65
Chapter VIII	Verbs and Verbal Inflections	73
Chapter IX	The Participles	82
Chapter X	Emphatic Forms	88
Chapter XI	Word Formation and Word Order	90

Appendices

96

Glossary and Text Specimens

Word List

Onomatopoeic and Echo Words

Terms of Relationship

Specimens of Nagamese Language

Bibliography

138

FOREWORD

Assam is the gateway of the North-East India, and all its neighbouring states were the part and parcel of Assam till seventies. Geographically Assam is now considered as a small state, but it appears as India in miniature for its rich varieties of languages and dialects and the composite nature of culture. The various languages and dialects spoken by the people of Assam are actually derived from four different major linguistic families. The Assamese language has evolved as the medium of conversation of the masses as a link language among the speakers of the various tongues throughout the North-Eastern region of India. Thus from the pre-historical era, perhaps, the population of the different ethnic groups of the region have been keeping a good relationship among them, and at the same time, they have been contributing a lot towards the growth and development of its common language for conversation, that is, the link language Assamese, which in some parts of the North-East India among various other language speaking communities has evolved certain remarkable form as a speech of conversation. Nagamese is one of such prominent common medium of expression of thoughts among the different communities of Nagaland.

Nagaland is the home of fourteen tribes, each of which has different tongues identified with different cultural characteristics. All these tongues are quite different from the others and these are spoken within the community level. The Nagamese language has evolved as their common link language among all the Tribes of Nagaland, who speak about eighteen different tongues. Nagamese is actually based on the spoken varieties of Assamese and it has developed in the sacred soils of Nagaland through the lips of its population. Nagamese spoken by the major fourteen Naga tribes shows some linguistic variation. This way it shows five dialect

varieties while the Nagamese language spoken by the people of different linguistic groups in the town and its neighbouring areas of Kohima and Mokokchung appears as prominent and popular, and so, this variety of speech is considered as the Standard Colloquial form of Nagamese. Moreover, the language has been occupying a very prominent place in all the districts of Nagaland including the areas of remote corners, and the language is also getting good patronage from the Nagaland Government. The Standard Nagamese is also used in literature and other writings prepared for Akashbani, Kohima centre and other Govt. and non-govt. publicity purposes, etc. Thus, in the eyes of linguists Nagamese today appears purely as a distinct language of Nagaland like the tribal speeches of the state. It is the common lingua franca of Nagaland, and therefore, some serious study is most essential. Some scholars and institution have undertaken some studies on it.

Considering the socio-economic importance of the language the Central Institute of Indian Languages, Mysore has already undertaken a study on the language besides a few other tribal tongues of Nagaland. Another scholar of Mokokchung Sri Dharani Baruah prepared a preliminary dictionary of the Nagamese Language. The author of this book Dr. Bhim Kanta Boruah starting with his research work on the language had taken an extensive tour in different districts of Nagaland for field study programme. For his very keen interests and labourious attempts the work has got due recognition in the academic field. The Dibrugarh University specially the Department of Assamese deserves congratulations for the noble encouragement in this research on a neglected but most vital linguistic topic. Dr. Boruah, a hardworking and sincere student of Indian linguistics has tried his best to make a descriptive study through the pages of it. The book will be very useful for the general public who want to get informations of the North-East India while this will be an interesting collection for the students of the Indian linguistics. He deserves good encouragement, and then, we can expect something more from him.

I am really happy in commending the book to the scholars and specially to the general readers who are willing to get first hand information about the various languages and dialects of Assam and its neighbouring states.

Satyendranarayan Goswami

PREFACE

Nagamese: The Language of Nagaland is the outcome of my works on Nagamese done in the Department of Assamese, Dibrugarh University during the period from 1975 to 1980. It was my venture to visit Nagaland and study Nagamese first in the year 1975 and I submitted a full report on the language in a book form at Dibrugarh University in the year 1976. The Nagamese language is the only lingua franca in Nagaland which brings unity amongst different tribes of the State and creates national integration. It is to be noted that no one can move a single step in Nagaland without knowing this language. The main concern here in this book is to give a descriptive analysis of the language as spoken in Nagaland with some contrasts with Assamese language. It is to be noted here that there is immense scope of study on the language separately on various aspects with various approaches. This language comes especially as a result of some sociolinguistic interactions and these problems are left aside to the interested researchers.

When I think of this work I always remember the friendliness and exuberant welcome and spontaneous help of my Naga friends during the period of my field investigations in Nagaland. Among them Mr. Dharani Boruah, B.A., (S.B.T.)' Retd. Headmaster, Mrs. Noksala Boruah (Teacher), Mr. Bangerlemba Ao and C. Yangerlemba Ao of Mokokchung, T. Khochomo Nguli Lotha of Wokha district, Mrs. Shitoli Hokishe and Shenili Sema (Doctor) of Zunheboto, Mrs. Helen Goyari and Mr. Ponendro Goyari and Neilano Chadi of Kohima deserve special mention here. I would like to acknowledge a debt of gratitude to Dr. S.N. Goswami, Head of the Department of Modern Indian Languages, Gauhati University whose encouragement and suggestions had made it possible to complete the work. I received inspiration from Dr. M.N. Bora, Lakshminath Bezbaroa, Professor of Dibrugarh University, Dr.

K. D. Goswami, Professor & Head of the Department of Assamese, Dibrugarh University and Dr. Lila Gogoi, Reader in Assamese, Dibrugarh University and Director, D.H.A.S. I express my gratefulness to all of them. It is Mr. K. M. Rai Mittal who took an active interest in publishing the book for which I am highly obliged to him.

Bhinkanta Boruah

ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

AFD	Assamese: Its Formation and Development
As.	Assamese Language
As. dial.	Assamese dialect
Ap.	Apabhramsa
Bg.	Bengali language
Bhoj.	Bhojpuri language
C	consonant (as in ba-C-or; CVCV)
cf.	compare
col.	colloquial
cont.	continuous
Dem.	Demonstrative
D.H.A.S.	Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies
Eng.	English language
ESL.	Elements of Science of Language
fem.	feminine gender
H.	Hindi
hon.	honorific
hon. inf.	honorific inferior
hon. sup.	honorific superior
J.A.S.B.	Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal
J.R.A.I.	Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute, London
Kam.	Kamrupi dialect
Khasi	Khasi language
lit.	literally

mas.	masculine gender
M.I.A.	Middle Indo-Aryan
Mok.	Mokokchung
Nep.	Nepali language
N.I.A.	New Indo-Aryan
non. hon.	non honorific
O.I.A.	Old Indo-Aryan
Pers.	Persian
Pers. suf.	Personal suffix
Pkt.	Prakrit
plu.	plural
Sec.	Section
sing.	singular number
Skt.	Sanskrit
St. Col. As.	Standard Colloquial Assamese
suf.	suffix
U.P.	Uttar Pradesh
Uzn.	Uzani (Upper Assam)
V	Vowel (as in CVCV)

Symbols

[]	indicates allophone
/ /	indicates a phonemic transcription
"	indicates meaning (sometimes a letter as in 'i' and quotation)
/	as in 0/i, indicates either 0 or i
>	indicates gives, leads to, is changed to etc.
<	indicates comes from, is derived from.
√	indicates root
+	indicates joins
~	indicates nasal
*	indicates hypothetical

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, 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 "nāg" meaning 'snake'. The etymology of nagā or nāgā may be explained in another way. Sanskrit "naga" means 'hill', and nagā with the suffix-ā, 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 Singpho⁹ (=man); the Bodos as Boro¹⁰ (= 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 a 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 good-will 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 18 February 1961. 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 6,366 sq. miles, mainly consisting of rugged mountainous terrain. According to Nagaland Government, the population¹⁴ in the state is comprised of about 5,16,449 souls. Nagaland is divided into seven districts,¹⁵ Kohima, Mokokchung, Tuensang, Wokha, Zunheboto, Phek and Mon. The physique of the state of Nagaland lies between 25°6 and 27°4 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 Burma and NEFA (at present Arunachal) in the East and Manipur in the South and runs more or less to the left bank of the Brahmaputra.¹⁶

The major groups of Naga tribes in Nagaland¹⁷ are----- Konyak, Ao, Sema, Lotha, Angami, Chakhesang, Phom, Rengma, Chang, Sangtam, Yimchunger, Khenmungam, Kuki and Zeliang and other minor groups. Comparatively, Konyaks are more numerous than the Aos. Each of them has their own tongue which vary widely from one language to another. Dr. Grierson has divided the Naga languages into five sub-groups as follows:¹⁸

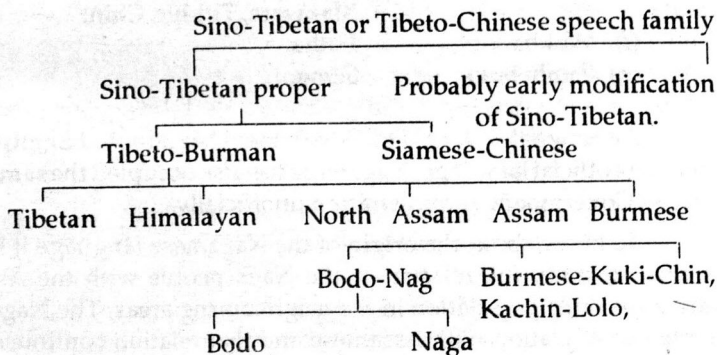
- (a) Western sub-group : it includes Angami, Sema, Rengma and Kezhama;
- (b) Central sub-group : it includes Ao, Lotha, Tengsa, Thukumi and Yachumi;
- (c) Eastern sub-group: it includes Angwanku or Tablung, Chingmegnu or Tamlu, Banpara, Mutonia, Mohongia, Chang or Mojung, Assiringia, Moshang and Shangge;
- (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 to the following tables

Table 1

Tibetan	Original Tibeto-Burman speech
Himalayan Languages	North Assam Languages
Bodo group	Kachin-Lalo
Kuki-Chin group	Naga group
	Burmese (Quoted from <i>L.S.I.</i>)

Table 2



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 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 districtwise geographical distribution of these languages mainly are 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, Khinmungan,
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 Kāmarūpa, 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 Kham-jangia 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 troublemakers 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 population were undoubtedly the Lothas who lived by the side of the Dayang 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 Dugaria 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 promise 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 and accentuation. 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 at that time. 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 organisation 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 was the common practice with all the Naga people of different tribes. 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 'Heorā Chukrā', 'Kābuliwāllā' and songs like 'mānuhe mānuhor bābe . . .' etc., preserved in the All India Radio Station, Kohima, are also written in the Roman script. The book 'Nagaland' by Navamalati

Chakravorty, a publication of Asom Sahitya Sabha is also written in the same 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 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 the author of this work in the Department of Assamese, Dibrugarh University. 'The Pronouns in Nagamese' presented by the author in the VIIth All India Conference of Linguists, 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 the latest book 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. 'Batsa Path' of Bhim Kanta Boruah is the latest publication and is the first Primer on Nagamese published by Asom Sahitya Sabha in the year 1988.

The Nagamese language has also notable influence on the vocabulary of Naga languages. For instance, in Angami language kotāri 'knife', sāki 'lamp', keralā 'charatia', begenā/pegenā 'tomato' (in the sense of tomato and not brinjal), mit^hātyer 'mustard oil', sigho 'lion', gurā 'horse', dāl 'split-pulse', poisā 'paise', etc. and in Ao language hisāp 'to count', keserā 'not decisive minded', pegenā 'tomato', nāspoti 'pear', noksen/noksel 'loss', āli 'a small foot path', k^hel (in the sense of Khel of Ahom age), etc. The

Ao speakers have their own week-days term, in spite of having that they use the terms of Assamese week-days in their conversation as *humbār*, *monolbār*, *budbār*, *bihosotibār*, *hukubār*, *honibār* *deubār*. Thus Semas use *nāspoti* 'pear'. Moreover, *tobāsi* (*dobhāsi*) 'interpreter', *gāoburā* '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 idioms, 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) *gāhori besi/bici hole sobto ālog/ālāg rāk^he.*

bostite hole nizor nizor murgitu pās soitā rak^he.

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

- (b) āmi āhise nobemborotme. āmār māibi āse bābābi t^hākise.
 āmi sobse older t^hākise. ('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 Arunchal speak Arunamese or Nefamese as a link language which is unlike Nagamese 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 glossorial aspects of the language is given below showing the relation of Nagamese with standard colloquial Assamese.

Phonology

Standard colloquial Assamese $\partial > o$ in Nagamese. In Nagamese the lower 'α' is not tolerated as in Kamrupi. (See sec. 2.1.1; 2.1.2) e.g.

<i>Ngamese</i>		<i>Assamese</i>
upor	'on'	op̄ar
kārone	'for'	kār̄one
porā	'from'	p̄arā
logote	'with'	l̄oḡote
usor	'near'	os̄ar
noromkoi	'softly'	mn̄ar̄m̄koi
hodāi	'always'	x̄d̄d̄ai
bogoli	'crans'	b̄oḡoli
pobitro	'pure'	p̄ob̄it̄r̄o

Standard colloquial Assamese $o > u$ in Nagamese (Sec. 2.1.6).

Predominance of high vowels is a special feature in Nagamese. St. Col. As. $\partial > o$; St. col. As. $o > u$ in Nagamese, e.g.

<i>Ngamese</i>		<i>Assamese</i>
soluā	'manage'	s̄l̄oā
upor	'on'	op̄ar

St. col. As. (sibilants : ś, ṣ, s) x > h/s in Nagamese (Sec. 3.7.1).

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

<i>Nagamese</i>		<i>Assamese</i>
elehuā	'idle'	elehuwā
kāniā	'opium eater'	kāniyā
diā	'give'	diyā

kṣ > Nagamese k^h (Sec. 3.7.4).

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

Nagamese bi 'also' phi (H.)

St. col. As. ṛh > 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.

<i>Nagamese</i>		<i>Assamese</i>
enekā	'such'	enekuwā
āpnā	'you'	āpuni, āponār
tukrā	'piece'	tukurā

Diphthongs are available in the language.

(Sec. 1.2.5).

Morphology

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

āmā-k^hān 'we' (of. As. āmā-lok), tumā-k^hān 'you'

(of. As. tomā-lok), tār-k^hān 'they' (of. As. xihat,

teo-lok), āpnā-k^hān 'you' (of. As. āpunā-lok).

Compare, Assamese (Uzani dialect)

Kamrupi dialect

Uzani dialect

Kamrupi dialect

lārākhān 'boys'

lārākhān 'boys'

biyākhan 'marriage
including all functions'

biyākhan 'marriage
including all functions'

Uzani dialect	hālkh n 'plough with all instruments, including bull and ploughman'
Kamrupi dialect	hālkhān

Nagamese first personal pronoun is āmi (= I) in singular form. Its plural form is āmi-k^hān (= 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 tār (= he) in Nagamese; it is a third personal singular pronominal form in genitive in Assamese language. Its plural form is tār-k^hān (= they). Third personal singular pronominal form in feminine is tāi (= she) in Nagamese language. This is a clear loan from Assamese. Sometimes this tāi (=she) is used to indicate both 3rd personal pronoun (masc. & fem.) in Nagamese.

Nagamese has a frequent term -lāgā to denote a possessive case (Sec. 4.5.6.)

Nagamese plural suffixes are -bur, -bulāk, -k^hān, -luk (Sec. 4.4.1). The plural suffix -bulāk in Nagamese is derived from the Assamese plural suffix -bilāk. So also -bur <As. -bor, -k^hān < As. -kh n, -luk <As. -lok.

Nagamese accusative suffix -ke (Sec. 4.5.2) and locative suffix -te (Sec. 4.5.7) are the extended formations of Assamese accusative -αk and locative -αt 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 the 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 it 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 the vocables of standard colloquial Assamese and the Nagamese lan-

guage. 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	ðl̥p homoi	'moment'	of. Assamese muhurta
	kāpur bonāwā k ^h ori	'shuttle'	māku
	kot ^h ā zuziā	'argue'	yukti
	kopāl dāṅor	'lucky'	bhāgyabān
	sob milāi eke	'average'	gōḍ
	besi dāṅor gā āru	'giant'	daitya
	hokti t ^h ākā mānuh		
	māti k ^h āndi ulāwā	'mineral'	khānij
	muk ^h porā luā	'oral'	mukhastha
	motā not ^h okā māiki	'widow'	bidhāvā
	mon k ^h usi korā homoy	'recreation'	jirāṇi

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.

<i>Nagamese</i>	k ^h undiā	'dig' of. Assamese	kh ndā
	golb ^h erā	'tomato'	bilāhi
	pātāron	'green'	xeujiā
	monb ^h āb	'idea'	dhār nā
	hātguti	'elbow'	kilākuti
	husbisār	'adultery'	by bhisār

Vocabulary

Some writers⁴² want to refer the Nagamese language as a mixture of Assamese and Naga languages, but the vocabulary of

- (2) In the areas of Konyak, Sangtam, Phom, and Chang $r > 1$ and sometimes, $1 > r$. 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 .

NOTES & REFERENCES

1. Yonuo, Asoso : *The Rising Nagas*, 1974, p. 6.
2. Elwin, Verrier : *Nagaland*, 1961, p. 4
H. Bareh : *Gazetteer of India, Nagaland*, 1970, p. 19.
Woodthrope : *J.R.A.I.*, XI, p. 57.
Furness : *J.R.A.I.*, XXXII, p. 445.
Butler : *J.A.S.B.*, 1875, I, p. 309
3. Elwin, Verrier : *Nagaland*, 1961, p. 4.
4. Peal : *J.R.A.I.*, III, p. 477.
J.A.S.B., LXIII, III, p. 14.
5. Hutton, J.H. : *The Angami Nagas*, p. 351 f.
6. Playfair, Major A. : *The Garos*, 1st Reprint 1975, p. 7.
Majumdar, D.N. : *The Garos*, 2nd Edition 1966, p. 3.
7. Barkataki, S. : *Tribes of Assam*, March 1969, pp. 16 & 81.
8. *Ibid.* p. 16,
9. *Ibid.*,
10. *Ibid.*,
11. Anand, Major V.K. : *Nagaland in Transition*, p. 15.
12. Bareh, H. : *Gazetteer of India, Nagaland, Kohima District*, 1970, p. 16.
13. *ibid.*, p. 56,
14. *Statistical Hand Book of Nagaland*, 1974 p. 34.
15. *Basic Facts of Nagaland*, 1974.
Nagaland Today, p. 3.
16. *Statistical Hand Book of Nagaland*, 1974, p. 2
17. Directorate of Information : *Nagaland at a Glance*, p. 3.
Paxton, John (ed.) : *The Statesman's Year-Book 1972/1973*, p. 374.
18. Grierson, G. A. : *L.S.I.*, Vol. III, Part II, Reprint, 1967 p. 193
19. Mills, J.P. : *The Ao Nagas*, p. 333.
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, present Producer, Farm and Home, All India Radio, Kohima.
21. Devi, L. : *Ahom Tribal Relations*.
Younuo, Asoso : *The Rising Nagas*, 1974, p. 35
Alemchiba, M.: *A Brief Historical Account of Nagaland*, 1970, p. 29.
 22. Gait, E. A.: *A History of Assam*, 1967, p. 78.
Borua, Golap Chandra: *Ahom Buranji*, 1930, p. 45.
Barua, Gunaviram: *Asom Buranji*, (Assamese), 1972, p. 67.
Barua, Harakanta Sadaramin: *Asom Buranji* (Assamese), 1962, pp. 11-12.
 23. Gait, E. A., : *op. cit.*, p. 79
 24. Elwin, Verrier: *Nagaland*, 1961, p. 18
Younuo, Asoso: *op. cit.*, p. 56
Asom Sahitya Sabha: *The Outlook on N.E.F.A.*, 1958, p. 8.
 25. Barua, Golap Chandra: *Ahom Buranji*.
 26. Devi, L.: *Ahom Tribal Relations*, p. 28.
Barua, Golap Chandra: *Ahom Buranji*, p. 134.
 27. Bhuyan, S.K. (ed.) : *Tunkhungia Buranji*, (A History of Assam 1681-1826 A.D.), 1968, p. 28.
 28. *Ibid*, p. 15
 29. The Outlook on N.E.F.A.: The Age-Old Amity of the Hills and the Plains, article by L. Gogoi, p. 15.
 30. D.H.A.S. M.S. Vol. XIV, p. 42.
 31. Barua, Harakanta : *Asom Buranji* (As.), 1962, p. 22.
Barua, Gunabhiram : *Asom Buranji* (As.) 1972, p. 73.
Acharyya, N.N. : *The History of Medieval Assam*, p. 86.
 32. Goswami, H.C. : *An Old History of Assam*, 1966, p. 16.
 33. Acharyya, N.N. : *op. cit.*, pp. 87-88.
 34. Mills, A.J. Moffatt : *Report on the Province of Assam*, 1854, Appx. M., P. CXXVII.
 35. Asom Sahitya Sabha : *Simantar Sambhed* (As.), 1958, p. 6.
 36. Mills, A.J. Moffati : *Report on the Province of Assam*, Calcutta, 1854 Appx. M., p. CXXIV
 37. Bareh, H. : *Gazetteer of India, Nagaland, Kohima District*, 1970, p. 27.
 38. Preface of the *Outlook on NEFA*, 1958.
 39. Smith, W.B. : *The Ao Naga*, p. 117.
 40. Hutton, J.H. : *The Sema Nagas*, 1968, p. 266.
 41. Elwin, Verrier : *Nagaland, Shillong*, 1961, p. 13.
 42. Singh, Prakash, I.P.S. : *Nagaland*, 1972, p. 67.