The lexical items mentioned in the foregoing chapters in the course of the analysis show a mixture of Assamese, Hindi, English and Bengali words. Although there is Assamese influence in Nagamese lexicon, the magnitude of linguistic influence from the Assamese language is at present, nominal in comparison with the Hindi, English and Bengali words incorporated in Nagamese vocabulary. Hence, this chapter focuses on the identification and analysis of the non-Assamese component.

According to the Nagaland Gazetteer (1970), for some time during the pre-independence, Assamese was taught to the Naga children side-by-side with the indigenous Naga languages in the...
government schools of Nagaland. But afterwards Assamese was abandoned in favour of English. That is why we find a lot of Assamese words in Nagamese. In fact, Assamese was the flesh and blood of Nagamese lexicon. But recently relexification is taking place in Nagamese whereby some original Assamese lexicons incorporated earlier in Nagamese are now being replaced by Hindi, English and Bengali lexicons. The extensive use of Hindi and English words in Nagamese can be explained in terms of the settlement of a lot of Hindi speakers in urban areas in Nagaland, popularity of TV programmes and Hindi movies, and of course, the use of English as the official language of Nagaland. Apart from strictly formal linguistic change, the long period of interaction between the Nagas and the Hindi speakers, and later with the Christian missionaries, has resulted in a radical change in the way in which the Nagas view the world.

As we mentioned above, relexification is taking place in Nagamese vocabulary. Relexification can be gradual or abrupt, according to Mühlhäusler (1986). In the case of gradual relexification, continuity is maintained by the joint use of both the lexical items in a synonym pair whereas in abrupt change, a particular word is suddenly introduced and the old lexical item is no longer used by the speakers. It is also to be noted here that
gradual relexification is always associated with a prolonged period of bilingualism and the simultaneous presence of more than one prestige lexifier language. Thus, in the case of Nagamese, although the relative status of Assamese, English and Hindi changed over time, all the three languages were partially accessible for lexical borrowing for a considerable part of its development. As far as relexification in concerned, Nagamese exemplifies the case of gradual relexification because it encourages the joint use of lexical items as our following discussion will prove.

At all the levels of linguistic structures, especially in the lexicon, but also in phonology, morphology and to some extent in syntax, Nagamese has been highly influenced by the co-existing dominant languages – Hindi and English, and also to some extent by Bengali. The degree of linguistic interference varies spatially, from the rural to urban areas, and temporally from the older to the younger generation. The villagers and the older generation use the original Assamese words in the Nagamese language, while the younger generation and urban people's speech in Nagamese is full of Hindi and English words.

The available lexical records though very few show that a large proportion of Hindi and English loan words have been
incorporated and assimilated in varying degrees in the Nagamese lexical inventory.

The status of Hindi and English loan words vary, ranging from the established loan words in general usage which have displaced their Assamese counterparts, to loan transfers and marginal loans, which co-occur with their Assamese counterparts. The loan words may be phonologically and morphologically assimilated thus affecting the structure of the language. From the point of view of semantics, the loan words have more or less identical referents in Nagamese as in the donor Hindi and English languages. So far no attempt has been made by any linguist to identify the Hindi and English loan words in Nagamese lexicon. Neither Sreedhar (1974, 1985) nor Boruah (1993) paid any attention to this factor in the past.

A statistical analysis shows that about 16% of the vocabulary is borrowed from Hindi and 5% to 6% of the vocabulary belongs to the English language. A negligible 0.5% to 1% vocabulary is borrowed from the Bengali language. Field observation show, however, that although a large number of words are borrowed from Hindi and English, original Assamese terms are also in use, especially in the older generation in rural areas as we mentioned earlier.
From the analysis of lexical records available, substantiated by a large corpus of field data, it is immediately evident that there has been an extensive use of Hindi and English words in Nagamese. A statistical analysis of Hindi and English words reveal that an overwhelming majority of the loan words are nouns, indicating that when two or more ethnolinguistic groups come into contact with each other, some cultural items inevitably cross the boundary and their lexical referents pass into the recipient culture, either untranslated in its original form, or integrated into the language with varying degrees of morphological assimilation.

The degree of lexical infiltration of Hindi and English words in Nagamese varies on four major axes. They are:

(a) The rural – urban distribution,
(b) age,
(c) sex, and
(d) education.

(a) Lexical infiltration is highest in the speakers of Nagamese residing in the multilingual urban areas like Kohima, Dimapur, Mokokchung, Wokha etc. with much higher retention of native Assamese words in speakers living in rural areas as well
as border areas of Assam where interaction with other languages apart from Assamese is considerably less.

(b) The age is also a significant variable and the proportion of original Assamese words retained is naturally higher in the older generation. The young generation of Nagamese speakers’ speech is full of Hindi-English words as they are exposed to these languages in a much higher scale. It happened because of their greater mobility, their eagerness to imitate the modern culture etc.

(c) The sex variable is also equally significant. The Naga women retain a higher proportion of Assamese words in comparison to men as they have less contact with the outside world, and hence, function as the preservers and carriers of the Nagamese language. Apart from that, the women folk usually have a sympathetic attitude towards Assam and Assamese people whereas the Naga men’s attitude is influenced by the political compulsion of the state. The border dispute between Assam and Nagaland plays a major role in vitiating the political atmosphere and the men are easily influenced by it and develop a negative attitude towards Assamese and since Nagamese is based on Assamese, they tend to dislike Nagamese.
(d) Education plays an important role in bringing new Hindi and English words into Nagamese. Our study revealed that most of the English words have crept into Nagamese due to the decision of the government to use English as the language of instruction. As a consequence, one can see mushroom-like growth of English medium schools and therefore, the educated Naga speakers’ Nagamese is always accompanied by a lot of English loan words.

Another factor that also helped in bringing new Hindi, English and Bengali words into Nagamese is the ongoing urbanisation and industrialisation. There is an inverse correlation between the levels of the industrialisation and urbanisation, and the maintenance of the original language. Urbanisation and industrialisation exposes the Nagamese language and the Naga speakers to ethnically diverse non-regional people, which subsequently brought linguistic change into the Nagamese language. This trend also indicates that the urban Nagas seldom consider it a privilege to speak Nagamese. On the contrary, ignorance of the Nagamese language in the Assamese way is regarded as an enhancement of their status and prestige. By speaking Nagamese mixed with Hindi/English words, they feel
superior in comparison with other fellow Nagas who can not speak it that way.

Though there is a growing tendency among the Nagas not to encourage the use of Nagamese as informed us by many of our informants, yet they can not avoid its use. When asked what do they think of Nagamese, their typical response was “We do not like this language. We don't want to use it because it is not a proper language, it is a bastard tongue”.

It occurs to us that there is a gradual displacement of the predominantly animistic traditional folklore and songs which were the hallmark of the Naga culture by Christianised substitutes. It is the diagnostic of wider socio-cultural and linguistic changes in conformity with the heterogeneous cultural milieu of Nagaland. It is a fact that the spread of Hindi and English in the major towns of Nagaland is ever on the increase, so that the rising generation of the Nagas begin to forget the original Assamese lexical items used earlier in Nagamese by the old generation.

As we mentioned above, mobility is greater among the Naga males than the females. The men folk are always moving from one place to another either as government servants, teachers, compounders, doctors or as domestic servants. As a consequence, they learn to speak other languages more quickly
than the females. That is why their speech becomes a mixture of Assamese, Hindi and English words. Because of the usage of these, the Nagamese spoken by the male Nagas differ from the females' speech to some extent.

The modern Nagas have imitated a good deal of western manners after the spread of Christianity and they tend to think like them, even talk like them (Horam, 1990). It has acted as a detriment to their own culture and they have undergone a huge cultural and linguistic transformation. All these factors convergently indicate potential language relexification and language contraction.

7.1 Loan words in Nagamese Lexical Records

The available lexical records indicate that a large proportion of Hindi and English words and, to a lesser extent Bengali loan words have been incorporated and assimilated in varying degrees in the Nagamese lexical inventory. Some of the loan words are morphologically assimilated in Nagamese and others are remaining unchanged. Semantically, the loan words have not changed their referents in Nagamese, i.e., they are having the same referents in both the languages.

Sreedhar (1974, 1985) and Boruah's (1993) work show the loan words though they did not try to identify it. These words
were considered by both the linguists as native Nagamese words.

The largest proportion of the loan vocabulary is from Hindi/English languages consisting mainly of material artefacts introduced to the Nagas in their interaction with the speakers of Hindi as well as with the English language. Apart from material artefacts, much of the basic vocabulary from divergent semantic domains has also been incorporated. They are listed below from the works of Sreedhar and Boruah.

(a) Material artefacts

(b) Kinship terms

(c) Animal and other names
/billi/ cat, /mocr/ mosquito, /murga:/ cock, /murgi/ hen, /za:nowar/ animal, /siria:/ bird, /koputor/ pigeon, /kutta:/ dog etc.
(d) General words


It is worth mentioning here that Boruah's (1993) work contains more Hindi/English words than that of Sreedhar's (1974, 1985). It means that the loan words are a recent phenomenon in Nagamese and more loan words are creeping into the lexicon of Nagamese as the days are passing by. It also indicates that these words have completely displaced their Assamese counterparts which were in use in Nagamese before and during Sreedhar's time. Our data contains more Hindi/English/Bengali words than Boruah's which again proves our point of view that Nagamese is changing day by day as far as lexicons are concerned. Keeping in view of this, one can safely surmise that if this trend continues, Nagamese will lose all the original Assamese words after say, twenty to thirty years from now and it will be replaced by Hindi/English/Bengali words. Surprisingly, the grammar is not affected by it.
The infiltration of Hindi/English loan words into the basic vocabulary in Nagamese is indicative of language change in the most resistant areas of the vocabulary and emphasises the magnitude of Hindi/Anglicization.

7.2 Loan words in current usage and the motivation for lexical borrowing

A lot of words from Hindi and English have entered the Nagamese lexicon. At present, Bengali is also donating some of the words to Nagamese. Our field data show that majority of the loan words belong to the category of noun. Nagamese has gladly accepted all these words as its domains of usage are expanding day by day. So, to cater for its speakers' needs, Nagamese is making good use of all the loan words. The motivation for lexical borrowing comes from the fact that Nagamese is the only language in Nagaland which is understood in every nook and corner of it. One has to use it in order to survive in Nagaland. Nagamese carries the maximum functional load in Nagaland and it is being used now almost in every domain. Because of the expansion of the domains of usage, Nagamese has to borrow words from any available sources.
7.2.1 Hind/English/Bengali loan words in Nagamese “Basic” vocabulary

The analysis of our data prove that there is an extensive infiltration of Hindi/English and to some extent of Bengali loan words. The degree of lexical interference varies on four major areas. They are – the rural-urban distribution, age, sex and education. Lexical interference is highest in speakers living in urban areas. On the other hand, very few loan words are used by the people residing in rural areas. The age is also a significant variable and the proportion of original Assamese forms retained is naturally higher in the older generation. The sex variable is also equally significant. The Naga women retain a higher proportion of Assamese forms in comparison to men, and hence, the Naga women function as preservers and carriers of the Nagamese language. Educated Nagas use more loan words in Nagamese than that of illiterate Nagas.

The common Hindi/English/Bengali words identified in the basic vocabulary, with a considerably higher incidence of loans in urbanised educated younger Naga generation speakers are mainly in the domain of:

(a) Numerals: The data on numerals in the basic vocabulary indicates that numerals /ek/ one, /tin/ three,
/čaːr/ four, /paːč/ five are pronounced by all the informants in Hindi way. The ordinal numerals from first to third are again borrowed from Hindi - /poila:/ first, /dusra:/ second, /tisra:/ third. The adjectival/pronominal construction like “the two”, “the seven” etc. are formed in Nagamese by borrowing Hindi suffix /-thu/ such as /duithu/ the two, /saːṭhu/ the seven etc.

(b) Kinship terms: /baːbaː/ father, /aːmmaː/ mother, /didi/ elder sister, /saːsuː/ mother-in-law, /səsur/ father-in-law, /boyni/ sister are borrowed from Hindi whereas /aːŋkəl/ uncle, /aːnti/ aunt are taken from English.

(c) Body part nomenclature: This shows predominantly Hindi forms such as /paːo/ leg, /kəmor/ waist, /golaː/ neck, /khun/ blood, /čəməː/ skin, /naːkhun/ nails, /haːddi/ bone, /čaːti/ chest, /čuːči/ breast etc.

(d) The temporal organisation: The nouns used to denote discrete time consist dominantly of Hindi forms, even in the basic vocabulary such as /muhinaː/ month, /saːl/ year etc.

(e) Natural objects: The objects which are part of the Nagas’ natural habitat are also donated by Hindi such as
(f) **Adjectives**: Loan words have not been able to enter the domain of adjectives to some extent. Hence, most of the adjectives are native Assamese words. A few Hindi adjectives found in Nagamese are /bhaːri/ heavy, /čotaː/ small, /laːmbaː/ long etc.

The colour terminology of Nagamese shows a mixture of Assamese, Hindi and English words such as /laː/ red, /haːraː/ green, /haːldiː/ yellow, /roj/ pink, /grin/ green, /brinjal/ purple, /begun/ purple (Bengali), /bogaː/ white (Assamese).

(g) **Miscellaneous**: A lot of words belonging to different categories are taken from Hindi/English/Bengali and they are clubbed together under the heading of miscellaneous. They are:

gorib/ poor, gila:/ wet, gusa:/ anger, bha:ri/ heavy, dhup/ sun, 
khun/ blood, khuši/ happiness, khira:/ cucumber, modut/ help, 
mirča:/ chilli, mehma:n/ guest, nəkli/ artificial, nokər/ servant, 
sa:m/ evening, sa:l/ year, sa:thi/ friend, sa:di/ marriage, 
ha:la:/ noise, ha:wa:/ wind, ha:jə:a:m/ barber, čəm Yapı/ skin, 
ciria:/ bird, čuha:/ mouse, čaku/ knife, ča:ti/ chest, ča:ndi/ 
silver, čuna:/ lime, fəba:b/ answer, jəwa:n/ young, jəindegi/ life, 
fəa:ŋli/ wild, čhokra:/ son, čhokri/ daughter, jəhokra:/ fight, 
jhola:/ bag, rui/ cotton, losun/ garlic, la:lsı/ greedy, lora:i/ fight 
etc.

(From English) pil/ tablet, pulis/ police, post/ pillar, plet/ 
saucer, prejent/ gift, bled/ blade, ta:im/ season, tep/ tap, 
tebul/ table, dupliket/ duplicate, dra:m/ drum, ka:p/ cup, kla:rk/ 
clerk, kriminel/ criminal, kla:s/ class, kitčen/ kitchen, kendel/ 
candle, get/ gate, grin/ green, pha:rnisa:r/ furniture, philm/ 
film, cinema, phlor/ floor, bhot/ vote, khrista:n/ Christian, skul/ 
school, spa:idar/ spider, siment/ cement, stobh/ stove, silin/ 
round, ruph/ roof, res/ rest, robor/ rubber, la:lt/ light, lem/ 
lamp, wul/ wool etc.

(From Bengali) ekla:/ alone, la:ka:s/ sky, pa:pita:/ papaya, 
pa:thor/ stone, ba:ba:/ father, ba:s/ bamboo, ba:ga:n/ garden,

The lexical loan component that has been identified in the basic vocabulary of Nagamese represents, at a micro-level, the magnitude and the semantic domains of Hindi/English/Bengali lexical loans. In the following section an attempt will be made to suggest a sociolinguistic rationale and motivation for this kind of extensive lexical borrowing in Nagamese.

7.2.2 Rationale and motivation

As far as the numeral system is concerned, Menninger (1969) said that number words strongly resist change. But our Nagamese data represents a strong counter example to Menninger’s claims. Field observation show that the present Nagamese speakers have no knowledge of the original Assamese ordinal numerals. The borrowing of numerals from Hindi is understandable in view of the extensive commercial transactions between the Nagas and the non-Nagas. The business in Nagaland is controlled by the Hindi speaking group and hence their influence in this specific area is quite obvious.
Apart from the incorporation of lexical loans, the infiltration of Hindi kinship terms into Nagamese has brought about the morphological distinction of gender, the masculine marked by the terminations /-a:/ (ma:ma:/ mother's brother, /beta:/ son, /čhokra:/ boy) are replaced by the /i/ (/ma:mi/ mother's brother's wife, /beti/ daughter, /čhokri/ girl). This is interesting as gender is not a salient grammatical category in Nagamese.

The overwhelming majority of borrowed words in Nagamese are nouns, functioning as referents of material and cultural importations from societies in contact. The urbanisation, the advent of Christian missionaries, and the introduction of formal education through the medium of English brought about radical changes among the Nagas. The advent of Christianity has had a far reaching effects on the tribals of Nagaland. An elaborate terminology pertaining to Christian doctrines and institutions have been adopted, either directly from native Hindi words or English words morphologically integrated in the Hindi lexicon like /khrista:n/ Christian, /kethlik/ catholic, /jisa:s/ Jesus, /girja:/ church, /pa:dri/ Christian priest, /prætestent/ Protestant, /bišop/ Bishop etc.

Nagamese has also borrowed the word formation process from Hindi. Nagamese has incorporated the markers for
masculine and feminine genders for some nouns. Gender is not marked in Assamese language. The feminine suffix /-i/ is directly borrowed from Hindi. The suffix is added only to the borrowed nouns as we mentioned earlier.

/beta:/ son  /beti/ daughter
/murga:/ cock  /murgi/ hen
/bura:/ old man  /buri/ old lady
/čokra:/ boy  /čokri/ girl

Apart from Hindi and English words, Bengali words are also found in Nagamese as exemplified above. Bengali words have crept into Nagamese because of the presence of quite a sizeable number of Bengali speakers in Nagaland. The migration of the Bengali population dates back to 1922 from Cachar, Goalpara and Nowgaon districts of Assam (Singh, 1994). Apart from services in central and the state government departments, the Bengalis of Nagaland are also involved in the business of grocery, fruits, vegetables, tea, snacks, shoes, hardware, clothes and repairing of vehicles. So, they also maintain a regular contact with the Nagas and hence, some Bengali words have entered the Nagamese language.

Here one should remember that though a lot of Hindi/English/Bengali words are found in Nagamese, its
pronunciation is not like that of the source language but a modified one. The words are having a typical Naga way of pronunciation and the borrowed words are phonologically and morphologically integrated into the Nagamese language. It is very interesting to note that the language samples elicited from older people residing in rural areas show a negligible occurrence of these loan words in their speech. In some cases, both the original Assamese lexicon and the borrowed lexicon from Hindi/English/Bengali such as /kutta:/ ~ /kukur/ dog, /ulti/ ~ /bamil/ vomit, /prothom/ ~ /poila:/ first, /čhokra:/ ~ /lora:/ boy, /čhokri/ ~ /sua:li/ girl, /billi/ ~ /mikuri/ cat, /konjus/ ~ /kripon/ miser, /kuwa:/ ~ /kola:/ ringwell, /jentu/ ~ /ja:nuwa:r/ animal etc. exist side by side. The borrowed items are in extensive use among the urban younger generation speakers and this indicates that the borrowed items are a recent phenomenon in Nagamese and it is happening, as we said earlier, because of the advent of cable TV, popularity of Hindi films, use of English as the official language of Nagaland. The modern Nagas have imitated a good deal of western manners after the spread of Christianity and they tend to think like them, even talk like them. While many students go out of Nagaland for the purpose of higher study, they come into contact with other people of different communities and as a
result they create a different class for themselves. This has resulted in a gap not only in terms of their habit but also of language behaviour between the villagers and the educated group of people, and as a consequence these people are regarded by the villagers as aliens (Horam, 1990).

Nagamese is used throughout Nagaland for oral everyday communication. There is an easy code-switching from English/Hindi or a Naga language to Nagamese. Nagamese is abundantly used in all sorts of communication, except for some specific, restricted, formal functions. It might be a variety with restricted structures and vocabulary but it is not a restricted code. The Nagamese language has expanded itself by borrowing words and structures from Hindi/English/Bengali. The borrowing became a necessity as the domains of usage of Nagamese has expanded. The changes, which are taking place in Nagamese are language contact induced changes. If these languages were not in contact with Nagamese, the lexical changes discussed above would not have taken place.

The Nagamese language has expanded itself by borrowing words from the contact languages like Hindi/English/Bengali. The borrowing is “gratuitous” i.e., the language borrowed those lexical items for which it already had Assamese stock.
Gratuitous borrowing is usually considered to be a sign of language change, and that is exactly happening in Nagamese.

All the informants that we met did not think that Nagamese was a language worth considering. It has no social prestige for them. It is a fact that not only the Nagas show disrespect to Nagamese but also all the non-Nagas who are speakers of Hindi, Bengali or even Assamese. All of them have scant respect for Nagamese. Some of them even went to the extent of saying that it is not a language at all asserting that it has no grammar, no rules etc. As a result, it generates new language loyalties in favour of other languages, motivated by educational, social and economic considerations.

From the above discussion it is seen that a large proportion of Hindi/English/Bengali loan words have been incorporated and assimilated in varying degrees in the Nagamese lexical inventory. Apart from the lexicons, it has also borrowed phonemes from Hindi like the retroflex sound /tʃ/ and /dʒ/ alveolar /ʃ/ and /ʒ/ and palatal /ʃ/ and /ʒ/. Many of the material artefacts, kinship terms, household terms, animal names and body parts are undoubtedly Hindi/English/Bengali borrowings. Though to some extent, paired items are available, gradually it is
being replaced by the new borrowed words which are a sure case of language change as far as lexicons are concerned. It is also a sign of expansion and development as gradually Nagamese is being used in all the domains, though the speakers do not want to acknowledge its existence. Nagamese is expanding and adapting itself to new socio-cultural environment. Comparing the vocabulary collected by Sreedhar (1974) and Boruah (1993) with the one we collected at present, we find that there is a rise in borrowings from Hindi and English. This indicates that Nagamese as a pidgin did not get stabilised, it did not die out though. Since its use is not any more restricted to communication among the Naga and the Assamese language speakers alone, it absorbs any vocabulary items from other languages depending on the convenience of the speakers.