Nagaland is the only state in India which was created on the basis of ethnicity rather than on the linguistic lines. In Nagaland, not a single tribe wants to learn the language of the other tribe as a means of communication as all the Naga languages are mutually unintelligible. So, Nagamese is used as a spoken variety throughout Nagaland for everyday oral communication among the Nagas who have different languages as their mother tongues.

The Nagamese language originated during the Ahom dynasty when the Nagas came into contact with the much civilised and economically superior Assamese community.
Nagamese is the only language that is understood in the entire state of Nagaland. In this regard J H Hutton (1921) said,

Nagamese, though a somewhat clumsy vehicle of conversation, is very easy to pick up and with a little application can be spoken perfectly. It is, moreover, an excellent vehicle for the expression of Naga turns of speech and thought, and therefore, infinitely better as a medium for conversing to Nagas than Hindustani.

So, apart from using it between the Nagas, it is also used in communication between the Nagas and non-Nagas – especially those non-Nagas who are the speakers of Assamese, Bengali, Hindi etc. Educated speakers of a Naga language also use it quite often; there is an easy code-switching from English, Assamese, Bengali, Hindi etc. or a Naga language to Nagamese.

The main source of Nagamese is Assamese though lately a trend has emerged whereby original Assamese words are being gradually replaced by Hindi/English/Bengali words. Though relexification is taking place in the speech of the young urban educated Nagas of Nagamese, it still retains the overall Assamese structures. Except the few changes taking place here and there, especially in the area of lexicon, Nagamese still has predominantly Assamese characteristics, though in a simplified form. Simplification of Assamese features in Nagamese is the outcome of the universal phenomena of the second language
learning. The second language learners invariably simplify the target language in the course of learning it. Simplification usually occurs in those areas of the second language which are different from the mother tongue of the learners and thought to be difficult to acquire it by the learners. Nagamese is a second language for most of the Nagas and non-Nagas who speak it in Nagaland. Hence, the Nagamese speakers, in order to make the learning easy, had simplified some of the Assamese features in Nagamese which were considered by them to be complex to acquire. But simplification does not necessarily mean impoverishment of meaning. It neither means the loss nor the lack of certain means of expression. Simplification means, according to Mühlhäusler (1974) as the increase in regularity and simplification will have psycholinguistic consequences, since one can expect that greater generality of rules and fewer exceptions in grammar make a language easier to learn. Simplification is neutral with regard to a language's expressive power.

Nagamese is based on Assamese language, the official language of Assam. Though relexification is taking place in Nagamese as we pointed out in the previous chapter, one can still see the Assamese influence on Nagamese though in a
simplified manner. It is interesting to note that there is a diminishing influence of Assamese on Nagamese and a growing influence of Hindi and English on it. Whatever may be the end result, it is a fact that the simplification of Assamese features present on Nagamese is taking place in the areas of phonology, morphology, syntax as well as in semantics. The discussion in the following sections will explain the simplification matrix of Nagamese.

8.1 Phonology

At the level of phonology, the most conspicuous simplification seems to have taken place in the field of initial consonant clusters. Assamese uses a lot of clusters in the initial position. The following table shows the nature of the initial clusters in Assamese.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First member</th>
<th>Second member</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) /p, b, t, d, k, g, bh, dh, gh, m, n, s, h/</td>
<td>/r/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) /p, k, g, m, s/</td>
<td>/l/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) /b, t, g, dh, kh, m, n, s, j/</td>
<td>/y/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) /s/</td>
<td>/p, t, k, ph, th, kh, m, n, r, w/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Some examples of initial consonant clusters in Assamese are cited below.


(b) /plaːbən/ flood, /klaːntiː/ fatigue, /glaːni/ abuse, /mlaːn/ gloomy, /slok/ hymn.

(c) /byaːkəɾən/ grammar, /tyaːg/ abandonment, /gyaːn/ knowledge, /dhyaːn/ meditation, /khyaːti/ fame, /myaːd/ limit, /nyaːi/ justice, /syəːm/ a name, /ʃyoti/ light.

(d) /spəstə/ clear, /stəmbhə/ post, /skel/ scale, /sphətik/ transparent, /sthaːn/ place, /skʰəɫən/ down-fall, /sməɾən/ recollection, /snaːn/ bath, /srəm/ labour, /swaːmi/ husband.

So, Assamese allows a lot of consonant clusters in the initial position whereas Nagamese allows a few consonant clusters in the same position as the below mentioned examples show.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First member</th>
<th>Second member</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) /p, b, t, d, k, g, ph, dh, kh/</td>
<td>/r/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) /p, b, k, g/</td>
<td>/l/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) /d/</td>
<td>/w/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As far as the final consonant clusters in Assamese are concerned, they are very few and limited in nature. The following clusters are available in the final position in Assamese.

(a) /mp/

(b) /nt, nd, ndh/

(c) /rt, rs, rʃ, rh/

   (a) /kemp/ camp
   (b) /sint/ think!, /ka:nd/ cry!, /pondh/ the end of the dhuti tucked in behind,
   (c) /sa:rt/ shirt, /sa:rs/ church, /a:rʃ/ earn, /pərh/ read.

The three consonant clusters are also available in Assamese. In the three consonant clusters, the first member may be /s/, /rl or a nasal and the last member may be either /r/, /s/, /ʃ/ or /yl/. The clusters are:

(d) /p, g, dh/ /yl/
(i) /spr, str, skr, smr/
(ii) /mpr, mbhr, ntr, ndr, ndhr/
(iii) /nty, ndy, ndhy, ɳgy, ɳghy, ɳkhy/

Some examples of these consonant clusters in Assamese are:

(i) /nispraːn/ lifeless, /stri/ wife, /niskriya/ inactive, /smriti/ remembrance,
(ii) /həmprəti/ now, at present, /həmbhrəm/ prestige,
(iii) /əntyə/ final, end, /əgnimaːndə/ indigestion, /həndhyaː/ evening, /həŋgyəː/ consciousness, /əlaŋghyə/ unconquerable, /həŋkhyaː/ number.

Of course, almost all the words mentioned above are basically tadbhava and tatsama words. These are borrowed and learned words from Sanskrit.

In Nagamese, only a handful of words having three consonant clusters are found. They are:

/histri/ history, /inspector/ inspector, /ektres/ actress, /əsembli/ assembly etc.

Again, all these words are borrowed from English and found its occurrence in the speech of the educated Nagas only.

If we compare the number of possible consonant clusters in Assamese and Nagamese, it will immediately come to the light that Nagamese has less number of consonant clusters than
Assamese. In fact, Nagamese has almost 50% less consonant clusters than Assamese. By reducing the number of possible consonant clusters, the speakers of Nagamese have made the Nagamese language much more easy to pronounce as more combination of consonants need different arrangement of the vocal organs. Less number of consonant combinations also mean less stress on the speakers. Nagamese has either dropped those Assamese words which have difficult consonant clusters or inserted a vowel to break the consonant cluster. So, this is nothing but a kind of simplification of consonant combinations.

In vowels also we get to see the working of the simplification matrix. Assamese has eight vowel phonemes whereas Nagamese has only six. By reducing the number of vowels, Nagamese has reduced the possibility of using more vowels in different words. Same can be seen in the number of diphthongs also. Assamese has more diphthongs than Nagamese. In fact, Nagamese uses seven diphthongs.

Assamese has pharyngeal voiceless /h/ and glottal voiceless /h/ and they are distinctive. Nagamese has retained only the glottal /h/. This can also be considered as a case of simplification because the Assamese pharyngeal voiceless /h/ is
considered to be difficult to pronounce by the non-native speakers of Assamese.

All these mean that as far as Nagamese phonology is concerned, it is definitely a simplified form of Assamese phonology. By reducing the number of consonant clusters, vowels, diphthongs, it has simplified the phonological pattern of the Nagamese language. Because more consonant clusters, vowels, diphthongs give rise to the complexity as there will be more rules and more exceptions and hence, it puts extra pressure on the speakers. By reducing the number, the Nagamese language has also reduced the possible number of rules and exceptions. It minimises the knowledge a speaker must have and the speed with which he must decide, to know what in fact has grammatically happened as said by Hymes (1971). All these kinds of changes can be thought of as reductions in complexity. Because invariance in form is an indication of simplicity.

8.2 Morphology

The most drastic change and simplification can be found in the sphere of morphology. A lot of simplifications of original Assamese features have taken place in this area of Nagamese. They are discussed below.
8.2.1 Pronouns

Assamese personal pronouns make a three way distinction. They are:

1\textsuperscript{st} person /moi/ I
2\textsuperscript{nd} person /toi, tumi, a:puni/ you
3\textsuperscript{rd} person /hi/ he
 /ta:i/ she

In Assamese /toi/ Is used when the addressee concerned is familiar and known to the speaker, /tumi/ is polite and /a:puni/ is honorific. This distinction is social and it is very strictly followed in the Assamese society. The mix-up will lead to a terrible faux pas and the user will be termed unsocial, arrogant etc. by the Assamese society. This distinction is very crucial and it has to be learned by being a part and parcel of the Assamese society.

In contrast to this, Nagamese has a slightly different distinction. It has simplified the personal pronoun system of Assamese language. Nagamese has the following system:

1\textsuperscript{st} person /moi, a:mi/ I
2\textsuperscript{nd} person /toi, a:pni/ you
3\textsuperscript{rd} person /ta:i/ he/she

Nagamese has dropped the Assamese polite form of 2\textsuperscript{nd} person /tumi/ and combined the two third person Assamese forms /hi/ and /ta:i/ into one by retaining /ta:i/ and using it to refer to both
male and female. Thereby Nagamese has simplified the Assamese personal pronoun system and made it more simple for its speakers.

8.2.2 Number

The Assamese nouns and pronouns show a two-way distinction in number – singular and plural. The singular is always unmarked whereas the plural form is marked by some suffixes. Basically 5 suffixes are used in Assamese for this purpose which can be termed as major plural markers. They are /bor/, /bila:k/, /hət/, /lok/ and /həkəl/. All these plural markers, except /lok/ are common for both the nouns and pronouns. /lok/ occurs with a few pronouns only.

(a) /bor/ occurs in all the nouns and only in the third person pronoun. It is used as an ordinary plural marker in a contemptuous sense. For example,

/ma:nuhbor/ men (in general)

/gərubor/ cows

/heibor/ those

(b) /bila:k/ is used to indicate a little bit of elegance and respect for human beings. It can also be used for things in general.
/ma:nuh bila:k/ men
/tirotaba:lak/ women
/hibila:k/ those things (in general)

(c) /h9t/ indicates the members of a trade, group of human beings etc. But when it is used with nouns meaning some animals, it does not necessarily express the plural form of those nouns but indicates abuse for human beings.

/lara:h9t/ boys
/k9h9:h9r9t/ blacksmiths
/ga:dh9h9t/ fools (lit. donkeys)

(d) /lok/ is very restrictively used and it occurs only with the second person pronoun.

/toma:lok/ you
/a:pona:lok/ you (polite)

(e) /h9k9l/ is used as a plural marker which expresses deep respect to those nouns and pronouns after which it is added.

/9kheth9k9l/ these men
/hikkhy9k9l/ teachers
Nagamese uses only one plural marker namely, /kha:n/. All the nouns and pronouns are made plural in Nagamese by using /kha:n/ as a suffix.

/ma:nukha:n/ men
/gurukha:n/ cows
/ta:ikha:n/ they

Though another plural marker /bula:k/ is also found in Nagamese, its occurrence is very rare. Both /kha:n/ and /bula:k/ have been derived from Assamese. /bula:k/ is a distorted version of the Assamese plural marker /bila:k/ and /khən/ is a definitive in Assamese. /khən/ is also sometimes used as a plural marker and it is used in a contemptuous sense, to abuse persons or to mean utter disrespect as in the following words in Assamese (Goswami, 1982).

/a:le$hikha:n/ guests (but in reality burdens)
/lə$ra:kha:n/ (troublesome) boys

8.2.3 Definitive

Assamese uses post-positional affixes or words which are added to nouns, adjectives and numerals. They carry the value of the English definite article “the”. They become the part of the words to which they are attached and the case affixes come after
them. The following are some of the most commonly used definitive of Assamese.

(i) /jən/ It is used for man and person only.

/ma:nuhjən/ the man
/ejən/ one person

(ii) /jəni/ It is used for women and female animals.

/ma:nuhjəni/ the women
/tirotajəni/ the lady
/ga:iəni/ the cow

(iii) /gəra:ki/ is used for men and women in a very respected sense.

/ma:nuh gəra:ki/ the gentleman or lady
/egəra:ki/ one gentleman or lady

(iv) /to/ is used for inanimate objects, male animals and for man in impolite sense. It has two allomorphs - /ta:/ and /to/. /ta:/ occurs after numerals as in

/əta:/ one
/duta:/ the two

and /to/ occurs elsewhere as in

/ma:nuhto/ the man (impolite)
/kukurto/ the dog
(v) /kʰən/ is used for things only.
   
   /kitaː:pʰən/ the book
   /nədikʰən/ the river

(vi) /də:l/ is used for things which are solid.
   
   /gəsdaːl/ the tree
   /pensildaːl/ the pencil

(vii) /pəːtl/ is used for things which are flat.
   
   /bəthaːpəːtl/ the row
   /jaːthipaːtl/ the spear

(viii) /khilaː/ is used only for leaf like objects.
   
   /paːtkhilaː/ the leaf
   /paːn khilaː/ the betel leaf

(ix) /kɔsaː/ is used for bundles only.
   
   /sulikɔsaː/ the lock of hair
   /ɡhaːhkɔsaː/ the bundle of grass

From the above discussion, it becomes very clear that Assamese uses a number of definitives depending on the shape and also whether the object is inanimate or animate. But, as far as Nagamese is concerned, it uses only one definitive /tʰu/ irrespective of the things it refers to. /tʰu/ has two allomorphs /tʰu/ and /dʊ/. /tʰu/ occurs after the voiceless sounds and /dʊ/ occurs after the voiced sounds as in the following.
As the examples show, /tu/ and /du/ are used in all the cases irrespective of the objects it refers to. We have shown in the above discussion that Assamese uses at least nine definitive for different objects. The Assamese speaker has to have a clear knowledge of the rules operating for the definitives in order to use it perfectly. On the other hand, Nagamese has chosen only one definitive out of those nine that can be used blindly for all the things. It does not make any difference whether one is referring to an animate being or inanimate being. Therefore, it becomes very easy for the speaker to use it and hence, it is a matter of simplification of the Assamese definitive system in Nagamese.

8.2.4 Finite verb forms

Assamese has different finite verb forms according to the number in all the three tenses; Nagamese has only one. This is a case of simplification. The marker is borrowed from Assamese.
8.3 Syntax

In syntax, very few differences are noticed between Assamese and Nagamese. Apart from some contrasts here and there, the rest of the Nagamese grammar is the carbon copy of the Assamese syntax. The simplifications, which are seen in Nagamese syntax, are in the following areas.

8.3.1 Word order

Assamese has a flexible word order, to some extent. Four different types of word order can be noticed in Assamese. But at the same time we should not forget that Assamese is basically an SOV type of language. Nonetheless, the following different orders are noticed in Assamese in informal situations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Order</th>
<th>Assamese</th>
<th>Nagamese</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(i)</td>
<td>SOV</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii)</td>
<td>SVO</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iii)</td>
<td>OSV</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iv)</td>
<td>OVS</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As far as Nagamese is concerned, it has a very rigid word order. It is an SOV language like its source language Assamese. Apart from this order, no other linear sequence is allowed in Nagamese. Of course, one can drop the subject in imperative sentences in Nagamese. Otherwise, in normal circumstances, one has to use SOV in this order only.

SOV - /moi bha:t kha:y/ I eat rice.

8.3.2 Interrogative particle

Assamese uses mainly one particle /ne/ after the verbs in asking a question and it is called interrogative particle as in the following:

/toi jabi ne/ Will you go?
/tumi siga:ret khowa: ne/ Do you smoke?
/toi goisiline/ Did you go?

This type of sentences usually elicit yes/no responses and they are known as tagged questions. So, for tagged questions, Assamese uses the interrogative particle /ne/ after the verb. This negative particle /ne/ does not occur in the wh-type of questions. On the other hand, Nagamese does not use any interrogative particle for the yes/no type of questions. Only a rising intonation is used as in the following:
Nagamese does not have passive sentence. It does not allow sentence embedding. For sentences such as "the man who teaches is a teacher" usually there is no Nagamese equivalence. Unless the embedded sentence can be reduced to a non-finite verb construction, Nagamese does not have any way of expression. In sentences that contain pronouns /moi/ I, /toi/ you, that refer to the speaker and the listener respectively, the tendency is to drop the subject pronoun in Nagamese which is not the case in Assamese. Consider the following sentences.

/kile itu koise/ Why did you say this?
/thik a:se/ Am I correct?

In contrast to these, the donor language Assamese has passive sentences, embedded sentences etc. These are not available in Nagamese and it means that Nagamese has simplified some of the syntactic features of Assamese.
8.4 Semantics

Simplification processes can be seen in operation in the area of semantics also. Different processes like semantic extension, semantic contraction and some other processes in the area of lexicons are used in Nagamese in order to simplify the semantics of the Assamese language so that Nagamese gets a very simple semantics.

8.4.1 Number of lexicons

Being a very old and a literary language as well as the state language of Assam, Assamese is having thousands of lexical items in order to meet its day to day needs. Like any other language, Assamese is also open ended and it gladly accepts new words for its new needs. It will be very difficult to count the number of lexical items Assamese uses. But when it comes to the question of counting Nagamese lexicons, it becomes immediately clear that Nagamese has a very limited number of lexical items numbering only a few hundreds. Like any other pidgin, Nagamese uses only a limited number of lexical items and thus, made it simple for the speakers to use it.
8.4.2 Semantic extension

The natural outcome of the reduction of the number of lexical item is the emergence of semantic extension. Since Nagamese is having only a limited number of lexical items, it has to use the technique known as extension in order to meet the challenge which is not found in Assamese. The following examples from Nagamese will make it clear.

/bha:k/  tiger, lion
/chokra:/  son, boy
/chokri/  daughter, girl
/beta:/  son, boy
/beti/  daughter, girl
/da:qi/  beard, moustache
/ha:t/  shoulder, hand, palm etc.
/then/  leg, thigh, knee etc.
/pa:o/  leg, thigh, knee etc.

/ga:s/  tree, grass, hay
/kha:s/  
/gha:s/

It means that in some cases, Nagamese uses only one word for two/three concepts thereby expanding the domain of the meaning of the word and in this way Nagamese has been able to
cope with the limited number of lexicons. In contrast to this, Assamese has a separate word for each item as in the following.

/baːɡh/    tiger
/hɪɲhə/    lion
/ləɾəː/    boy
/suaːli/    girl
/putek/    son
/ʃiːjɛk/    daughter
/daːɾi/    beard
/mos/    moustache
/kaːndh/    shoulder
/hat/    hand
/taːluaː/    palm
/bhəɾi/    leg
/aːthu/    knee
/kəɾəŋəɾ/    thigh
/gas/    tree
/ɡhaːh/    grass
/khaɾ/    hay

It means that Nagamese has a tendency to use a superordinate term for the hyponyms.
8.4.3 Paraphrase

There are semantic gaps in the basic vocabulary of Nagamese as Nagamese has a limited number of original Assamese words. Hence, there is a free borrowing from Hindi, English, Bengali etc. But when borrowing is not going to help in communication in Nagamese, concepts, objects and persons are explained rather than named. In short, there are paraphrases in place of single words. For example,

/pa:ni gira: ta:im/ rainy season
/ga:na: kora: ma:nu/ singer
/ga:na: gowa: čiriya:/ singing bird
/ka:pur ba:na: khuri/ shuttle

It becomes clear from the above discussion that Nagamese is indeed a simplified form of the Assamese language. It has simplified most of the original Assamese linguistic systems so that the speakers whose mother tongues are different from each other, do not find Nagamese difficult to use. It has found wide acceptance among the Nagas and non-Nagas living in Nagaland because of its simplicity. It is a well known fact that in order to find wide acceptance and popularity, a second language should be as simple as possible. It is a human nature to learn a concept quickly and easily if it is simple and straightforward. If the
concept is complex, two things may happen – one, the concept will not be learned at all, and two, it will be made simple by the speaker in the course of learning it. It does not mean impoverishment of meaning. That is exactly what happened in the state of Nagaland as far as Nagamese is concerned. The speakers have intentionally simplified the Assamese structure in Nagamese keeping it neutral as far as the meaning is concerned. Because few rules and fewer exceptions and above all, greater generality make a language easier to learn. This is very essential for successful second language learning.