CONCLUSION

The Nagas are basically hill people and belong to different tribal groups – having no common language to facilitate interpersonal and intra-tribal communication. The prolonged contact with the neighbouring Assamese society owing to several reasons gave rise to a pidgin language – popularly known as Nagamese. Nagamese has not become the mother tongue of any Naga tribe and despite being understood in the entire valley, it lacks any kind of political and moral support and encouragement from the people of Nagaland. Though the tribes are not prepared to encourage and learn each others language yet the acute necessity to have certain modes of communication among the people at large finally gave fillip to the evolution of
the Nagamese language though reluctantly. This has been further intensified for the conduct of trade and import of handicraft technology etc. Therefore, the people of Nagaland inevitably know two languages – one, their own indigenous mother tongue and the other, Nagamese.

Nagamese is used throughout Nagaland and without this language communication among the people belonging to different tribes and social classes can not take place, at least not between the illiterate persons. Because there are many people in Nagaland who know only two languages – one, their own tribal language, the mother tongue and two, Nagamese. Any kind of conversation between two unknown Nagas usually starts in Nagamese. From this point of view Nagamese can be termed as the life line of Nagaland.

Nagamese is derived from Assamese, the state language of Assam and the influence of the Assamese language is all pervasive in Nagamese. Hence, Nagamese looks like another Indo-Aryan language with an Assamese base. It is called Nagamese for being spoken by the Nagas in a different style. Hutton (1921) considers Nagamese (Naga-Assamese) as the broken Assamese, a bastard tongue. But in reality it is neither a broken Assamese nor a bastard tongue. It is a pidgin having its
own independent structure. No doubt, Nagamese is influenced a lot by Assamese as we showed in the preceding chapters but it does not mean that one can term it as a broken Assamese. It is a full-fledged pidgin and like any other pidgin, it is influenced by a super stratum language. The analysis we did in the preceding chapters showed that Nagamese has remained mostly consistent with the Assamese typology.

Nagamese has 6 vocalic phonemes and 28 consonantal phonemes. The majority of the monosyllabic words of Nagamese have the CV structure, i.e., they are open-ended syllables. Consonant clusters occur only in initial and final positions in Nagamese and as far as medial position is concerned, we get only consonant sequences. Nagamese does not have tone like its parent language Assamese and it is quite surprising. Because it was expected by everybody that the aboriginal Naga languages which have tone will have at least some influence on Nagamese by making Nagamese a tonal language which never happened.

Like Assamese language, there is a lack of grammatical gender and number is marked by using suffixes. It is interesting to note that Nagamese makes a gender distinction in some nouns like /murga:/ cock, /murgi/ hen, /čokra:/ boy, /čokri/ girl,
/beta:/ son, /beti/ daughter. It is because Hindi makes it but that has no effect on the verb. These items are borrowed as totally distinct items. Case relations in Nagamese are expressed by using post-positions. It has 9 cases and uses 6 different case markers for this purpose. There is no change in the verb form according to gender, number or person. The three basic tenses in Nagamese are affected by using different suffixes, i.e., the verb is inflected by separate suffixes. Nagamese makes use of 5 aspects – 6 moods and each mood is having separate markers. Nagamese numerical system is borrowed from Assamese as well and hence, like Assamese, secondary numerals are derived from the primary numerals by using summation and multiplication. Nagamese has 3 negative markers - /na:/, /no/ and /na:y/ and it occur in mutually exclusive environments. The auxiliary verb follows the main verb and the adverb always precedes the verb. Nagamese makes use of some common morphological processes like derivation, compounding, reduplication etc. to coin new words just like any other normal, natural languages.

Nagamese is an SOV language and no other word order is allowed in Nagamese. In Noun Phrase, the head noun is preceded by the modifier(s). The verb in Verb Phrase also follows the other elements like noun phrases, adverbs etc. The
main clause follows the subordinate clause and the subordinate clause in Nagamese is always marked by particle or conjunction. Interrogative sentences of Wh-type are formed by placing the question particle /ki/ or /ko/ before the verb and for Yes/no type of questions, only a rising intonation is used in Nagamese. Passive constructions are not found in Nagamese.

Apart from the Assamese lexicons, Nagamese has borrowed a lot of lexical items from Hindi and English and a few words from Bengali. Nagamese is a flexible code and therefore, it can easily absorb sounds such as [æ] and [3:] when it borrows words from English. We have also observed the presence of alveolar plosives such as [t] and [d] in the borrowed English words. Of course, these sounds are found only in the speech of English speaking Nagas. Apart from that, we could not get the minimal pairs for these. They exist only as distinct sounds. That is why we did not include these sounds in the Phonology section. No Naga languages have provided any lexical items to Nagamese as our data show it even though there is language contact between the Nagamese and the aboriginal Naga languages. It might have happened because of the age old hostilities of one Naga group towards the other Naga language groups.
Nagamese is based on Assamese and most of the features found in Nagamese are, in fact, the simplified features of Assamese language. In other words, Nagamese is a simplified version of the Assamese language. Hence, the popular belief exists that Nagamese is indeed a broken Assamese. When we compare Nagamese phonology with Assamese, it becomes immediately clear that Nagamese has less number of consonant clusters than Assamese, less number of vowels and diphthongs and absence of the peculiar, typical Assamese pharyngeal voiceless /h/ in Nagamese. All of these are nothing but simplification of the Assamese phonological system.

Assamese morphology in every aspect has undergone a tremendous change in Nagamese. For example, Nagamese has dropped the Assamese polite form of 2\textsuperscript{nd} person pronoun /tumi/ and retained only the 3\textsuperscript{rd} person pronoun form /ta:i/ in place of two in Assamese and this /ta:i/ refers to both male and female in Nagamese.

Assamese has five major plural morphemes and each plural marker has its own domain of usage. In contrast to these, Nagamese has only one plural marker and all the nouns and pronouns are made plural in Nagamese by using /kha:n/ as a suffix. Similarly Assamese uses a number of post-positional
affixes which carry the value of the English definite article "the". The use of the Assamese definitives depends on the shape and animate-inanimate distinction of the objects. But Nagamese uses only one definitive /tu/ which is derived from Assamese.

According to the number in all the three tenses, Assamese makes use of different finite verb forms. But Nagamese has only one form in all the persons. This is a case of simplification as the marker is borrowed from Assamese.

Very few cases of simplification is noticed in syntax. One such case is the use of the interrogative particle. For tagged questions, Assamese uses an interrogative particle /-ne/ after the verb. On the other hand, Nagamese does not require the use of any particle, only a rising intonation is sufficient for this purpose.

Nagamese simplifies the Assamese semantics as well. For example, Nagamese has less number of lexicons than Assamese. Nagamese has a tendency to use a superordinate term for the hyponyms. There are paraphrases in place of single words in Nagamese. These are all clear cases of simplification because few rules and fewer exceptions always indicate simplicity.
Nagamese is a pidgin because it adheres to the existing pidgin theory, namely, Foreigner talk/ Baby talk theory which claims that pidgin is the result of a conscious effort at simplification of the upper language. In case of Nagamese, the upper language Assamese is simplified as we shown above. Apart from this, Nagamese also follows some of the pidgin characteristics found in some well known pidgins of the world. For example, pidgins usually do not maintain the gender distinction in the pronominal system and Nagamese is no exception in this regard. /ta:i/ is used for both male and female pronouns in Nagamese. Like any other pidgin, Nagamese also has a limited number of lexical items. Pidgins lack standardisation, so does Nagamese. Like any other pidgins, Nagamese lacks historicity because it is not used as a marker of social identity.

Nagamese is not used as a medium of instruction at any level. But we found that the text books which are written in English are often explained in Nagamese in the classroom so that all the students understand the contents. Because it is the only language the teacher and the students share. We also observed some peculiar tendencies on the part of the informants. They are:
1. When the informants have no Nagamese words for some concepts, they would immediately give Hindi or English equivalents. For example, some informants could not easily give colour terms for the following words in Nagamese – pink, green and purple. Then they gave the words /rojka:la:r/, /grin ka:la:r/ and /ma:čis ka:la:r/ respectively.

2. The informants usually show a tendency to use a superordinate term for the hyponyms. For example, /kutta:/ stands for dog, bitch and puppy; /guru/ means both cow, bullock and their young one. So, normally Nagamese does not have its own distinctions.

3. We found that there are semantic gaps in the basic vocabulary of Nagamese. For example, in the body parts field; there is no word for forehead, eyelid, chin. In the domestic articles field, we did not get words for mattress, comb, doormat, grinder, bed-cover etc. But it does not mean that these concepts are not identified at all in Nagamese. Nagamese is not put to use when one comes to these and above all Hindi/English is there to make up the loss, if at all there is any such problem.
If the use of Nagamese is forced and borrowing from the other languages is not going to help in the communication, concepts are explained rather than named. It means that there are paraphrases in place of single words in Nagamese. For example, /ga:na:kora: ma:nu/ means singer, /ka:pur ba:na: khuri/ means shuttle, /pa:ni gira: ta:im/ means rainy season.

It is interesting to note here that though Nagamese carries the maximum functional load in Nagaland as it is used in different spheres (market, office, talking to strangers, class room, police station, intimate talk between friends, street quarrels, enquiry counters, banks, telephone, church and even songs) which give it almost a status of a language, its existence is outrightly denied by the educated Nagas. It usually happens in case of pidgins because of the prestige issue. A very interesting anecdote was cited by Verrier (1961) in this regard. He said,

...for a long time past Nagas of different groups have talked to one other .... in broken Assamese (Nagamese), and the Nagas themselves observed with some amusement that at a conference at which they demanded separation from Assam, many of the speakers made their speeches in the Assamese (Nagamese) language. Assamese (Nagamese) has been useful to the Nagas for the purposes of trade and to promote unity between the different tribes.
Nagamese is not used on formal occasions as well as in literary writing though an effort is being made to publish a newspaper in Nagamese. It is a code, a lingua-franca which is extremely flexible and therefore, everybody finds it convenient and useful as a means of communication.

Being a pidgin, Nagamese is nobody's mother tongue and hence, the speakers have an indifferent attitude towards it. Since, nobody owns it, Nagamese is like an orphan. Everybody uses it, knows its usefulness but simply does not care about Nagamese. Irrespective of the hostility, indifferent and negative attitude of the speakers towards it, Nagamese is serving selflessly and is acting as a great bond of unity in Nagaland.