6.1 Word Order

Word order refers to the linear sequence in which words occur in a sentence. The normal word order of Nagamese is SOV. In other words, the normal order of words in an unmarked sentence in Nagamese is S (subject), O (object) and V (verb) or we can say that in Nagamese,

Subject (S) occurs in the sentence initial position.

Object (O) follows the subject and precedes the verb.

Verb (V) occurs in the sentence final position.

The following sentences show the order of words in Nagamese.

(a) /moi student a:se/ I am (a) student.

\[ S \quad O \quad V \]
(b) /moi maːnso khaːy/ I eat meat.

S O V

*(i) /taːi bhaːt φ khaːy/
She rice Acc. eat – Pre

She eats rice.

(ii) /taːi moike dekhise/
he l-Acc see-Past

He saw me.

(iii) /moi taːi-ke maːtibo/
I she-Acc call-Fut

I will call her.

With the help of the above cited illustrative sentences, we can confidently state that the SOV is the most common type of word order in Nagamese. But alternative orders are also possible in Nagamese. Hence, apart from the SOV order which is the most popular one, we can have the following sentences that exhibit, to some extent, the flexibility of orders in Nagamese.

1. /guru khaːs φ khaːi/ (SOV)

cow grass Acc. eat-Pre.

Cow eats grass.

*Grammatically, bhaːt is in accusative case but it is not marked for the case. In Nagamese the inanimate object does not take overt accusative case marker. So, it has a φ format.*
In the above mentioned examples, the same sentence is given with a considerable amount of word order variation. But these variable word orders like OVS or SVO are rarely used. In fact, our informants provided these word orders after a considerable amount of pressure and the informants themselves were not sure whether these sentences can be used or not in practical situations. Thus, the normal and most commonly used word order in Nagamese is SOV, and it seems that Nagamese follows it very strictly. It means Nagamese has a very rigid word order and no other order is allowed in normal circumstances.

However, some sentences can occur without the subject in Nagamese. For example, the subject is optional in imperative sentences. Consider the following sentences.

/kita:ptu puribi/

(S) O V

(you) Read the book,
Even a verb can make an imperative sentence in Nagamese where the use of subject and object is not necessary.

\[
\begin{align*}
/buhibi/ & \quad \text{Sit down} \\
/uthibi/ & \quad \text{Get up} \\
/kha:bi/ & \quad \text{Eat} \\
/puribi/ & \quad \text{Read}
\end{align*}
\]

It is to be noted here that in the case of imperative sentences, the /-bi/ which is the future tense marker in Nagamese, is always present and it is suffixed to the verb.

The interrogative pronouns precede the subject if the subject is present because the use of the subject is optional in some interrogative sentences in Nagamese. In other words, the interrogative sentences are formed in Nagamese with interrogative pronoun placed before the subject.
Where do you live?

Who is your father?

What do you want?

Few exceptions are to be found regarding the above mentioned statement. Some interrogative sentences are available in Nagamese where the subject precedes the interrogative pronoun.

When shall we eat?

Where did you go last year?
6.2 CONSTITUENTS

A simple sentence in Nagamese consists of a noun phrase (NP) and a verb phrase (VP). For example,

/čokra: ja:ise/ The boy went

NP VP

/ma:s girise/ The fish fell

NP VP

6.2.1 Noun Phrase

The Noun Phrase (NP) consists obligatorily of a noun which is called the head noun and that may be followed or preceded by one or more modifiers. The modifiers, which are basically optional elements, may be an adjective, a case marker, a post-position, a numeral etc. These optional elements modify the head noun in Nagamese.

/bha:i ma:nu/ 

Adj. + N

good man A good man
When the head noun is modified by an adjective and a case marker, the order is that the adjective always precedes the noun and the case marker follows the noun as exemplified above. In the case of numeral, it precedes the head noun.

In Nagamese when the head noun is modified by a demonstrative and an adjective, the order is that the head noun follows these two as in the following sentences.
Dem. + Adj. + N
that good girl

This is a good girl.

When demonstrative, numeral and adjective along with a noun, all occur together in a single sentence in Nagamese, the order is that the head noun is preceded by the demonstrative, followed by the numeral and adjective as exemplified below.

Dem. + Nu + Adj + N
this one good man

This is a good man

Dem. + Nu + Adj + N
that one beautiful house

That is a beautiful house

When the numeral higher than one is present in the noun phrase, then the plural marker cannot be used in Nagamese. It means Nagamese does not allow double plural markers. For example,

Adj + N + pl
good men

Good men
It is to be noted here that the order of Numeral + Adjective + Noun is not a rigid one in Nagamese. A different order where the adjective is followed by the noun and the noun precedes the numeral is also found in Nagamese as in the following constructions:
It is worth mentioning here that this order is not that much favoured by the Nagamese speakers.

On the basis of the above mentioned examples, we can state the structure of a noun phrase of Nagamese as

\[ NP \rightarrow \pm \text{Dem} \pm \text{Numeral} \pm \text{Adj} + N \]

### 6.2.2 Verb Phrase

The verb phrase (VP) in Nagamese may consist of a lexical verb or a “be” verb which is obligatory in the verb phrase. Apart from the obligatory verb in the verb phrase, some other optional elements like Noun Phrase, Adverb etc. are also to be found in the VP which may follow or precede the main verb. However, there are some instances of simple sentences in Nagamese in which the VP consists of only the verb. For example,

\[ /\text{buhibi}/ \quad \text{Sit down!} \]

\[ V \]

\[ /\text{uthibi}/ \quad \text{Get up!} \]

\[ V \]
/morise/  It died.
V
/kha:bi/  Eat!
V

The noun generally precedes the verb in a simple sentence in Nagamese as in the following examples.

/ta:i kha:ise/
NP  VP
she  eat – Past  She ate.

/ma:s girise/
NP  VP
fish  fall – Past  The fish fell.

/gla:s bha:ŋise/
NP  VP
glass  break – Past  The glass broke.

When the Verb Phrase (VP) has two Noun Phrases (NPs), NP₁ is the direct object and NP₂ is indirect object. The two NPs can interchange their places of occurrence, but the NPs must be followed by the main verb.

/tiba: moike kita:p disise/

NP₁  NP₂
tiba  I – Dat  book Acc. give – Past

Tiba gave me (a) book.
Tiba gave me (a) book.

He gave us medicine.

He ate rice slowly.

John goes to college everyday.
On the basis of the above illustrative sentences, the structure of the Nagamese verb phrase can be stated schematically as

$$\text{VP} \rightarrow \pm \text{Adv.} \pm \text{NP}_1 \pm \text{NP}_2 \pm V$$

6.2.3 Adjective Phrase

The adjective is the nucleus in an adjectival phrase. The adjective phrase consists of at least one adjective and it may or may not be accompanied by an intensifier. The adjective of the adjectival phrase either precedes or follows the noun in Nagamese.

/\text{pa:\text{kl}a:\text{\text{ma:\text{nu}}}}\text{/}

\text{Adj.} \quad \text{N}

\text{mad} \quad \text{man}

/\text{ek\text{d}om \text{da:\text{n}or ghor}}\text{/}

\text{Inten} \quad \text{Adj.} \quad \text{N}

\text{Too} \quad \text{big} \quad \text{house(a) Very big house}
The structure of the adjective phrase in Nagamese may be formalised as follows:

\[ \text{Adj. Phrase} \rightarrow \pm \text{Adj.} \pm N \pm \text{Adj.} \]

### 6.2.3 Adverb Phrase

The adverb in an adverb phrase modifies the verb. An adverb always occurs before the verb in Nagamese. Hence, it can be called ‘sentential adverb’. Consider the following examples.

/\text{hoda}:i \ \text{ja}:y/  
Adv. V  
everyday go  
Goes everyday

/\text{la}:\text{he} \ \text{ja}:\text{ise}/  
Adv. V  
slowly go-Past  
Went slowly

/\text{itia}: \text{a}:\text{hibo}/  
Adv. V  
now come – Fut.  
Will come now.
The adverb of place always carries a particle along with it. In fact, the particle is suffixed to the adverb of place.

\[ /bhitorde\ a:se/ \]
Adv. Partl. V
inside is Is inside

\[ /apørde\ a:se/ \]
Adv. Partl. V
above is Is above

On the basis of the above examples, we can establish the structure of an adverb phrase in Nagamese as

\[ \text{Adv. Phrase} \rightarrow + \text{Adverb} + \text{Particle} + \text{V} \]

6.3 Clause

Two types of clauses can be identified in Nagamese. They are main clause and subordinate clause. The main or principal clause is independent and can occur on its own in a sentence. In fact, the main clause in Nagamese is always identical with a simple sentence. In contrast, the subordinate clause can never occur on its own and is always dependent on the main clause.

6.3.1 Main Clause

The following are the examples of main clause in Nagamese. They are basically simple sentences.
6.3.2 Subordinate clause

The subordinate clause in Nagamese is marked by either conjunction or particle and always precedes the main clause as exemplified below.

\[
\text{/ta:i kha:ile moi ra:ndhibo/} \\
\text{Sub. Clause} \quad \text{M. clause}
\]

she eat - Partl. I cook - Fut

If she eats, I will cook

\[
\text{/jedi ta:i a:he moi ja:bo/} \\
\text{Sub. Clause} \quad \text{M. clause}
\]

if he come - Pre I go - Fut.

If he comes, I will go.

6.3.3 Coordinative clause

Coordinative clause in Nagamese is marked by the presence of conjunctive particles. The primary function of
conjunction is to connect words, phrases, clauses and sentences. Consider the following examples.

(i) /a:ɾə/ and


Tiba and Nina went out.


Father and mother came.

If there are more than two objects, then the conjunctive particle is placed just before the last object as in the following.

/timəθi, lija: a:ɾə ra:m ja:ise/

Timothy, Liza and Ram went.

(ii) /kintu/ but

/moi ta:ike ma:tise kintu ta:i a:ha: na:y/

I called her but she did not come.

/ta:i ča: kha:y kintu kophi na:kha:y/

She drinks tea but not coffee.

(iii) /ba:/ or

It is used for disjunctive construction only which is formed by placing /ba:/ between the two propositions so that they are in an “either … or” relationship.
Either Tim or Dam will come.
He will eat either fish or meat.

6.3.4 Conditional Clause

Conditional clause in Nagamese is introduced by placing the conditional particle /j̃di/ "if" in the initial position of the subordinate clause and the noun in the main clause takes /bi/ "also". In the conditional statement of a sentence, the conditional clause always precedes the conclusion without any known exception in Nagamese. The following sentences will explicate this.

/j̃di moi koribo pa:re a:pnibi pa:ribo/
if (condl.) I do – Fut. can you also can – Fut.
If I can do it, you can also do.

/j̃di a:pn ji:i təmbi a:hibo/
if (condl.) you go Tom come – Fut.
If you go, Tom will come.

/j̃di ta:i diye moikha:nbi kha:bo/
if (condl.) she give we eat – Fut.
If she gives we will eat.
6.3.5 Complement Clause

The complement clause in Nagamese is introduced by complementizer /je/ “that” and the complement clause always follows the main clause. For example,

/ta:i koise je ta:i ja: ka:li a:hise/
he say – Past Comp. he yesterday come – Past
He said that he came yesterday.

/moi ja:nise je ta:i kukurke mora:y dise/
i know – Past Comp. he dog – Acc. kill Past
I knew that he killed the dog.

/itu hosa: kotha: je ta:i morise/
this truth talk Comp. she die – Past
This is true that she died.

6.3.6 Relative Clause

Relative clause in Nagamese is introduced by the participle in which the relative clause always precedes the head noun of the main clause. In other words Nagamese exhibits externally headed relative clauses where the relativized nouns occur to the right of the clause. Relativization in Nagamese differs from that of Assamese where the relative clauses is introduced by a
6.4 Sentences

The sentences in Nagamese can be classified into three types, viz., (i) simple, (ii) complex and (iii) compound. These three types of classification are made at the surface level structure of the sentences.

6.4.1 Simple sentence

A sentence is simple when there is only one S at the surface phrase structure. It means that it is a construction which has only one clause, i.e., the main clause, and it has at least a subject and a predicate except in imperative sentences in which the use of subject is optional. Consider the following examples.

relative pronoun. Consider the following examples. The participial forms have been typed bold face.


The book you gave me yesterday is expensive.

/a:pni bisi bha:l a:se kowa: ma:nu tu mo i la:ga dušmon a:se/

The man you praised (lit. said) a lot is my enemy.


The man you met (lit. found) yesterday is my uncle.
6.4.2 Complex sentence

A complex sentence in Nagamese consists of one main clause and one or more subordinate clauses. In the complex sentence, the subordinate clause is introduced by subordinators (particle) which usually precede the main clause. For example,

/ta:i  bha:t kha:y/
he rice eat – Pre
He eats rice.

/moikha:n student  a:se/
i pl. student be
We are students.

/ænil ekta:  čithi likhise/
anil one letter write – Past
Anil wrote a letter.

/buhibi/
Sit down

/ta:i  pola:i  a:se/
he run – Pre Cont. is
He is running.
/moi koribo pa:rile a:pni bi pa:ribo/

i do – Fut. can – Partl. you also can – Fut.

If I can do it, you can also do.

/bərkhun a:hile ra:m na:hibo/


If it rains, Ram will not come.

6.4.3 Compound Sentence

It consists of two or more main clauses or simple sentences and these are conjoined co-ordinately either by the conjunctive particle /a:ra/ “and” or by the disjunctive coordinator /ba:/ “or”.

/men a:ra ma la: ba:ha:r ja:ise/

Mary and Mala out go – Past

Mary and Mala went out.

This sentence is made up of two simple sentences:

(i)  /men ba ha:r ja:ise/  Mary went out
(ii)  /ma:la. ba ha:r ja:ise/  Mala went out.

and both the simple sentences are conjoined by the conjunctive particle /a ra/ “and”

/lila: dima purde ja ise a:re moni kəhima:de ja:bo/


Lila went to Dimapur and Moni will go to Kohima.
/nitu tem a:re jitu a:hibo/
nitu tom and jitu come – Fut.
Nitu, Tom and Jitu will come.

/taːi daːktər baː: injiniːrəkə səːdi kəribo/
she doctor or engineer – Acc marry do – Fut.
She will marry either (a) doctor or (an) engineer.

/jən dilli baː: punəːdə pəribo/
john delhi or pune – Loc. study – Fut.
John will study in Delhi or Pune.

6.5 NEGATION

The negative markers used in Nagamese are /naː/, /no/ and /naːy/.

/naː/

When the sentence is in simple present or in simple future tense, /naː/ is used and it is prefixed to the main verb. It is also used to express negation in imperative or prohibitive sense.

/moi ke ektaː pen naːləːge/
I one pen Neg. want.
I do not want a pen.

/moi maːŋso naːkəhəːy/
I meat Neg. eat
I do not eat meat.
/taːi naːjaːne/
he Neg. know
He does not know.

/taːi mestu naːjitibo/
he match Neg. win
He will not win the match.

/naːbuhibi/
Neg. sit
Do not sit down!

/kothaː naːkoribi/
talk Neg. do
Do not talk!

/taːte naːjaːbi/
there Neg. go.
Do not go there!

/toi laːgaː bhaːyke naːmaːtibi/
you belong to brother Neg. call
Do not call your brother!

/no/

This negative morpheme is used in equational constructions to negate a positive verb of a statement. Therefore, when an equative sentence in Nagamese has “be” as
the main verb, it becomes /nohoy/ - Neg. +V in the negation and like /na:/, /no/ is also used as a prefix.

/ta:i moila:ga: tiča:r nohoy/
he I Gen. teacher Neg. is
He is not my teacher.

/ta:i ga:na: kora: ma:nu nohoy/
he song do man Neg. is
He is not (a) singer.

/rita: sundor nohoy/
rita beautiful Neg. is
Rita is not beautiful.

/moi da:ktər nohoy/
I doctor Neg. is
I am not (a) doctor.

/itu bha:l kita:p nohoy/
this good book Neg. is
This is not (a) good book.

/na:y/

It is used to negate a sentence in the past tense as well as in interrogative form and when it is suffixed to the verb, the past tense marker /-se/ is deleted from the verb, i.e., /na:y/ is added
to the stem. It is also used when it is an auxiliary or when the sentence is in V+ complement construction as in the following:

\[ /\text{ta}:i\ \text{jiu}:\ \text{kinise}/ \] (Affirmative)
\[ /\text{ta}:i\ \text{jui}:\ \text{ka}:\ \text{na}:\text{y}/ \]
he shoe buy Neg. – Past
He did not buy a pair of shoes.
\[ /\text{ra}:\text{j}\ \text{ek}:\ \text{kuk}rke\ \text{mora}:\ \text{na}:\text{y}/ \]
raj one dog Acc. kill Neg. Past
Raj did not kill a dog.
\[ /\text{moi}:\text{kha}:\text{n}\ \text{iti}:\ \text{koth}:\ \text{ko}:\ \text{ro}:\ \text{na}:\text{y}/ \]
I pl. now talk do Neg.
We are not speaking now.
\[ /\text{ta}:i\ \text{ka}:\text{wa}:\ \text{na}:\text{y}/ \]
he eat Neg.
He is not eating.
\[ /\text{a}:\text{pni}\ \text{khu}:\text{s}i\ \text{na}:\text{y}/ \]
you happy Neg.
Aren't you happy?

There are also some instances in Nagamese where /\text{na}:\text{y}/ is used as a negative copula to express negative sense in existential construction, locative predicates as well as in possessive constructions.
/a:ka:ste čiriya: na:y/
sky – Loc. bird Neg. Cop.
There is no bird in the sky.
/nadi aparde duloŋ na:y/
river above – Loc. bridge Neg. Cop.
There is no bridge on the river.
/ta:i puisa: na:y/
he money Neg. Cop.
He has no money.
/ta:i ta:t na:y/
she there Neg Cop.
She is not there.

On the basis of the above illustrative examples, we can state that Nagamese has basically three negative markers - /na:/, /no/ and /na:y/ which occur in mutually exclusive environments. As mentioned above, the negative marker /na:y/ can also be used as a negative copula. Thus, there are two ways of expressing negation in Nagamese

(i) by using negative markers which are most frequently used in Nagamese, and

(ii) by using negative copula
6.6 Interrogative

The interrogative sentences in Nagamese are formed by employing one of the interrogative pronouns or particles or by using just the rising intonation. The formation of interrogative sentences in Nagamese does not involve any inversion of the word order. The interrogative sentences in Nagamese can be classified into four types. They are Yes/No questions, Wh-questions, Alternative questions and Tag questions.

6.6.1 Yes/No questions

No interrogative particle is used in Nagamese to form Yes/No type of question. An affirmative sentence can be converted into an interrogative sentence of Yes/No type simply by using a rising intonation.

/itu hosa: a:se/ (Statement)

this true is

This is true.

/itu hosa: a:se/ ↑ (rising intonation)

Is this true?

/ta:i morise/ ↑ (rising intonation)

he die – Past

Did he die?
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/ta:i moikha:n lokot a:hi a:se/ ↑ (rising intonation)
he I pl. with come is – Pre. Cont.
Is he coming with us?
/toi ka:li a:hibo/ ↑ (rising intonation)
you tomorrow come – Fut.
Will you come tomorrow?

6.6.2 Wh-questions

Wh-questions are formed by placing the interrogative
pronoun either before or after the subject. The interrogative
pronouns in Nagamese start with /ko-/ or /ki-/

/kon toi la:ga: ba·ba: a:se/ ?
who you Gen father is
Who is your father?
/moikha n kitia kha bo/?
I pl when eat – Fut.
When shall we eat?
/kile misa koise/?
why lie tell – Past
Why did you tell (a) lie?
/kile itu koi a se/?
why this tell Pre Cont.
Why are you saying this?
6.6.3 Alternative questions

It consists of two alternatives only and the question particle /ne/ is placed after the first alternative. A peculiar characteristic of this type of sentence in Nagamese is that it does not have "be" verb form and like any other interrogative sentence, it is accompanied by a rising intonation.

/hosa: ne misa:/ ↑ (rising intonation)
true Q. Partl. lie
Is it true or false?
/hoyse ne na:y/ ↑
complet - Past Q. Partl. Neg.
Have you completed or not?
/itu murga: ne murgi/
it cock Q. Partl. hen
Is it a cock or hen?
/ta:i šima: ne sonia:/
she sheema Q. Partl. sonia
Is she Sheema or Sonia?

6.6.4 Tag questions

Usually yes/no type of questions are known as tag questions. We have made a distinction here because of a little
6.6.3 *Alternative questions*

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Is it true or false?
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complet - Past Q. Partl. Neg.
Have you completed or not?
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it cock Q. Partl. hen
Is it a cock or hen?
/ta:i šima: ne sonia:/
she sheema Q. Partl. sonia
Is she Sheema or Sonia?

6.6.4 *Tag questions*

Usually yes/no type of questions are known as tag questions. We have made a distinction here because of a little
difference found between the two in Nagamese. The negative marker /na:/ is followed by interrogative pronoun /ki/ and this /na:ki/ is placed at the end of the sentence to make it a tag question in Nagamese. Nothing of this sort is used in Yes/no type of questions as we have shown in 6.6.1.

/ta:i morise na:ki/
he die – Past Neg. Int. Pro.
He died, didn’t he?
/ta:i ektres na:ki/
she actress Neg. Int. Pro.
She is (an) actress, isn’t she?
/itu toila:ga: pen na:ki/
it you Gen. pen Neg. Int. Pro.
It is your pen, isn’t it?

6.7 Passivization

Passive sentences are not found in Nagamese. When we gave the active and the passive versions of sentences in English to the informants, they came up with only one response in Nagamese for both the active and the passive constructions. For example,
This sentence stands for both

(i) Tim killed the dog, and
(ii) The dog was killed by Tim.

Consider another example.

this book Nitu write – Past
Nitu wrote this book.
This book was written by Nitu.

So, on the basis of above mentioned examples, we can state that passivization is not a grammatical process in Nagamese. However, some kind of semi-passive sentences are available in Nagamese as exemplified below.

The song will be heard.
The work will be done.
The hen was killed.