NEPA, i.e., North East Frontier agency, is the name given to the hilly areas situated in the north eastern part of India. This area is predominantly inhabited by the different tribes who came to this area at different times. The different tribes like viz. Nishi, Adi, Apatani, Hill Miri, Khampti, Nocte, Wancho, Mompa, Tangsha etc have their own languages but these are mutually unintelligible i.e. one tribe does not understand the language of another tribe. In fact it is said that there was no need of communication among the different tribes in the past as one tribe did not know there could be any other tribe inhabiting in the same region. The reason that Arunachal Pradesh is full of mountains and dense forests which have prevented the intermingling and inter communication between the tribes, living in the river valleys of the state. Isolation imposed by the geography was considered as the prime reason behind non development of a common language among over twenty nine major tribes and a large number of sub-tribes having several dialects, cultures, traditions etc. After Independence of India the first school in NEFA was established in Doimukh in 1948. So far as the medium of instruction in school was concerned after taking consensus of the people of NEFA it was finalised as Assamese because it was the language understood be the different tribes. It is to be noted here that before 1948, the people of NEFA could speak Assamese but were not very well versed in writing in Assamese. But as soon as Assamese was introduced as the language of instruction in Schools the people of the region could also write in the Assamese language.

The unwillingness to learn the dialect of one tribe by other tribe and the introduction of Assamese as the medium of instruction in schools made it possible for the
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Assamese language to emerge as a lingua-franca among the different tribes of the region of course in a simplified way.

So in a way from 1948 to 1971, it was a golden period for Assamese, in a simplified manner with some modifications, in this region. However when this region was upgraded to a union Territory in January 1972 under North Eastern Areas (Regulation Act) 1971, the Assamese language was started to be superseded by Hindi and English. Some of the reasons behind the dominion of English and Hindi over Assamese language were due to the introduction of C.B.S.E. syllabus where Hindi is compulsory, prospect of governmental jobs as recruitment to different All India Services were held in English and Hindi, coming of different officers from different part of India to serve in different capacities in different governmental jobs, presence of Army in the border areas, popularity of different Hindi serials and movies etc.

So in the beginning of eighties AAPSU (All Arunachal Pradesh Student Union) decided to make a revolution in order to change the medium of instruction from Assamese to English as English, in the mean time, became the tool to get an entry in the governmental jobs in different departments in Central Government. Accordingly Assamese was replaced by English as a medium of instruction in 1972 in different educational institutes of Arunachal Pradesh. However still Assamese is one of the such language which is understood by a great number of people though a considerable portion of people of this region cannot write in it. Even then it is still used as a link language between different tribes, mainly in the foot hills of Arunachal Pradesh.

However the indigenous people of this region simplified the Assamese features in the process of oral communication. The aspirated sounds in Assamese are spoken as deaspirated sounds in Nefamese. As for example Assamese word /khai/ “eat” becomes /kai/ in Nefamese.
Nefamese is derived from Assamese, the state language of Assam. It is called Nefamese for being spoken by the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh in different style. It is a fact that Nfamese is influenced a lot by Assamese. But at the same time in the process of development as a lingua-franca among the different tribes of Arunachal Pradesh as well as outsiders, it has also been influenced by Hindi and English languages, of course in a simplified style.

Nefamese has 6 vowel phonemes, 18 consonantal phonemes & 7 Diphthongs. Among 18 consonants, there are 6 stops & 12 continuants. Among the stops there are 3 voiced & 3 voiceless. All the stops are unaspirated. Among the continuants, there are 3 nasals, 3 fricatives, 2 affricates, 1 trill, 1 lateral & 2 approximants. The majority of the monosyllabic words of Nefamese have the CV structure i.e. they are open ended syllables. In Nefamese consonant clusters occur only in initial and final position, whereas a lot of consonant sequences occur in the medial position.

Besides this, it is also found that in Nefamese a very few number of three consonant sequences occur in the medial position. The 1st member is either a voiceless stop or a nasal. The 2nd member is usually a stop and the 3rd member is always a trill. Besides this, it is also found that in Nefamese a very few number of three consonant sequences occur in the medial position. The 1st member is either a voiceless stop or a nasal. The 2nd member is usually a stop and the 3rd member is always a trill.

So far as supra segmental features in Nefamese are concerned The primary stress, written /'/, falls in first syllable of monosyllabic words and also in the open ended disyllabic as well as tri syllabic words. In case of closed ended disyllabic and trisyllabic words. The primary stress falls on second syllable, where there is a diphthong in a word, the primary stress falls on the diphthong.
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/ˈpoila/ First
/ˈɡutei/ All

One interesting feature is that /č/, /ɦ/, /y/ and /w/ ending nouns are not available in Nefamese. In Nefamese, gender and number are not grammatically marked; so it does not affect the grammatical pattern of the language. In Nefamese, gender is determined on the basis of natural recognition of sexes. In other cases, sex is indicated by using words like /mota/ for male and /maiki/ for female and these words are used before the generic form of (–human) nouns:

In case of personal pronouns, there is no gender distinction in Nefamese. Same pronoun is used to substitute noun referring to male and female:

/ɪ/ He/She

In Nefamese plural is formed at the morphological level by using prefixes viz. /bohot/ and /besi/ as well as suffix /bilak/ to the singular forms. Besides these plural markers, another plural marker /hōt/ is used in order to express the third person plural form. It is to be noted here that in Nefamese the verbs have no plural form.

The case in Nefamese is indicated by two devices (a) by independent post­­positions and (b) by the case endings.

Nefamese has nine cases and different cases use different markers to denote the case relation.

One of the interesting features of Nefamese is that there is no change in the verb form according to gender, number and person. In Nefamese

Verbs are those roots which take the morphemes for tense, aspect and mood. In Nefamese there are three aspects and six moods. The three basic tenses are constructed in Nefamese by using different suffixes i.e. the verb is inflected by separate suffixes.
The numeral system in Nefamese are influenced by Assamese numeral system with little modification i.e. /ta/ is suffixed to each cardinal number.

The ordinal numerals in Nefamese are as follows:

/portom/ first
/ditiyo/ second
/titiyo/ third

However the ordinals indicating four and more than four are formed in the same way in which cardinals are formed.

/sarita/ fourth
/pasta/ fifth
/soita/ sixth
/dosta/ tenth

Nefamese has three negative markers. They are /na/, /nô/ and /nai/. the three negative markers occur in mutually exclusive environment in Nefamese and where one occurs the others do not occur.

When the sentence is in simple present tense, /na/ is used and prefixed to the main verb to express the negation.

The negative marker /nô/ is used to negate a positive verb of a statement. That means when a sentence in Nefamese has “be” as the main verb, it becomes /nôhoi/-Neg.+V in the negation. Like /na/, /nô/ is also used as a prefix.

The negative marker /nai/ is used to negate a sentence in the past tense as well as future tense form. Like /na/ and /nô/, /nai/ is used before the main verb. /nai/ is also used to express negation in Imperative or Prohibitive sentence.

/nai bohibi/

Neg. sit
Do not sit down.

/nai/ is also used as a negative copula to express negative sense in existential construction, possessive construction etc.

/akasõt sorai nai/


There is no bird in the sky.

So there are two ways of expressing negation in Nefamese:

(iii) By using negative markers

(iv) By using negative copula.

The most common morphological processes of word formation found in Nefamese are compounding, derivation, reduplication as well as inflection.

The normal word order in Nefamese is SOV. In other words, it can be said that in Nefamese, the normal order of words, in a sentence, is as S (Subject), O (object) and V (Verb).

However some sentences can occur without the subject in Nefamese. For example, the subject is optional in Imperative sentences. This can be shown by the following examples.

/kitaptu poribi/

(S) O V

(you) Read the book

Even a verb can make an Imperative sentence in Nefamese when the use of subject and object are not necessary.

/bohibi/ sit down
V

/utibi/ get up
V
A simple sentence in Nefamese consists of a Noun Phrase (N.P.) and a Verb Phrase (V.P.).

The Noun Phrase (N.P.) consists of a noun which is obligatory and called as the head noun. This head noun 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 numeral etc. These optional elements modify the head noun in Nefamese.

The Verb Phrase (V.P.) in Nefamese may consist of a lexical verb or a “Be” verb which is obligatory in the verb phrase. Besides this obligatory verb in the verb phrase some other optional elements like Noun, Adverb etc. are also found in the verb phrase. It is to be noted that in Nefamese these optional elements may follow or precede the main verb. However, there are some instances of simple sentences in Nefamese in which the verb phrase consists of only the verb.

The adjective is the nucleus in an adjectival phrase. The adjectival 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 Nefamese.

In Nefamese, the adverb in an adverb phrase modifies the verb. An adverb always occurs before the verb in Nefamese.

In Nefamese there are two types of clauses. They are the main clause and the subordinate clause. The main or principal clause is independent and can occur on its own in a sentence. However, the subordinate clause can never occur on its own and always dependant on the main clause.

In Nefamese the main clauses are basically simple sentences.

The sentences in Nefamese can be classified into three types:

- Simple sentence,

- Complex sentence and
Compound sentence.

A sentence is simple when there is only one subject. 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 an imperative sentence in which the use of the subject is optional.

In Nefamese a complex sentence consist of one main clause and one or more subordinate clauses. In the complex sentences, the subordinate clause is introduced by conditional particle /jōdi/ “if”, which usually precedes the main clause.

In Nefamese compound sentence consist of two or main clauses or simple sentences and these are joined either by the conjunctive particle /aru/ “and” or by the disjunctive particle /ba/ “or”.

In Nefamese the interrogative sentences are formed by employing one of the interrogative pronouns or particle. The interrogative sentences in Nefamese can be classified into three types. They are yes/no questions, wh-question and Alternative question.

Yes/no question: the particle /neki/ is used in Nefamese to form yes/no type of question.

/eitu hosa ase neki/

This true be partl.

Is this true?

Wh-questions are formed by placing the interrogative pronoun after the subject. For the very purpose the interrogative pronouns, which are used in Nefamese start with /ku/, /ke/ and /ki/.

/tumar baba kun hoi/

You -Gen. Father who be

Who is your father?
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Alternative question consists of two alternatives and the question particle /ne/ is placed after the first alternative. A peculiar characteristic of this type of sentence in Nefamese is that it does not have "be" verb form.

/eitu hosa ne misa/

This true Q.Partl. lie

Is it a true or false?

In Nefamese passive sentences are not found. When we gave the active and passive versions of sentences in English to the Informants, they came up with only one response in Nefamese for both the active and passive constructions.

Nefamese is based on Assamese and most of the features found in Nefamese are in fact the simplified features of Assamese language. In other words it can be said that Nefamese is simplified version of the Assamese language. Because if Nefamese is compared with Assamese it will be found that Nefamese has less number of vowels and consonants. G.C.Goswami(1966) shows that there are 8 vowel phonemes and 23 consonantal phonemes in Assamese language. However it is found that in Nefamese there are 6 vowel phonemes and 18 consonantal phonemes. Again where as Nefamese has 7 diphthongs, Assamese has more diphthongs than Nefameses. All these are nothing but simplification of Assamese phonological system.

Assamese morphology has undergone a number of changes in Nefamese. The Assamese third person pronoun (singular form) is expressed as - /xi/ and this /xi/ becomes /i/ in Nefamese. It is to be noted that the same form i.e. /i/ is used to indicate both male and female in Nefamese.

Assamese has 5 major plural morphemes i.e. /bor/, /bilak/, /lok/, /xököl/ and /mokha/. Nefamese has only three plural markers i.e. /bilak/, /besi/ and /bohot/. Similarly Assamese language uses number of definatives namely /ta/, /tu/, /ti/, /khôn/, /gôraki/.
etc. which carry the value of the English definite article “The”. But Nefamese has only one definitive /tu/ which is derived from Assamese.

Assamese has different Finite verb form according to number in all the three tenses. Nefamese has only one and this nothing but simplification Assamese forms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assamese</th>
<th>Nefamese</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Person</td>
<td>First</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simple present</td>
<td>/-o/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simple past</td>
<td>/-sile/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simple future</td>
<td>/-m/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

So far as Syntax is concerned, very differences are noticed between Assamese and Nefamese. Both the languages have the same word order i.e. SOV.

However besides simplifying the Assamese language, Nefamese is also influenced by Hindi and English languages to an extent. That is to say the people of NEFA use Hindi and English words in place of Assamese words. As for example the English word “marriage” means /biya/ in Assamese but the people of NEFA use /sadi/ which is a Hindi word and it is used in place of Assamese word /biya/. Some of the Hindi words which have got place in Nefamese are as follows:

- /anda/ Blind
- /patta/ leaf
- /bača/ infant
- /haddi/ bone
- /lal/ red
- /čalak/ clever
- /asli/ original
- /nōkli/ artificial
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/dusmôn/ enemy
/āčar/ pickle
/āwāj/ sound
/mośom/ climate

The list of the Hindi words is not exhaustive. Besides these Hindi words in some cases Nefamese use some English words as well. Some of the English words which have got their place in Nefamese are as follows:

/iskul/ school
/istet/ state

In the above two examples an /i/ is added before the borrowed English words when these words are used in Nefamese. Whenever there is final consonant cluster of /ks/ in borrowed English words, consonant /k/ is dropped as shown in the following examples:

/miks/ “mix” becomes /miś/
/fiks/ “fix” becomes /fiś/

Another important feature of Nefamese is that the last consonant of the final consonant cluster is dropped in case of borrowed English words as shown below:

/post/ “pillar” - /pos/

Nefamese is not used as medium of instruction at any level. Moreover No linguistics work has been done on Nefamese so far. In the mean time there is a gradual language shift towards Hindi. This means that Nefamese is gradually dying out giving ways to Hindi. But at the same time it is to be noted that even though Nefamese is nobody’s mother tongue, people of Arunachal Pradesh have been using it knowing its usefulness as a means of oral communication as it is understood by all the tribes of
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Arunachal Pradesh. So it is hoped the study on Nefamese will definitely help this language to be preserved for future generation.