Nagamese is basically a contact vernacular spoken by the various ethnic groups in Nagaland. As we mentioned earlier, Nagamese is a lingua franca, not the native language of any of its speakers. Nagamese represents a language which has been stripped off everything but the bare essentials necessary for communication. So, Nagamese is regarded as a reduced language that results from extended contact between groups of people with no language in common. It evolved when the Nagas wanted some means of verbal communication especially with the people of the plains, perhaps for trade, but no group learned the native language of any other group for racial reasons as we have discussed earlier.
In order to find out whether Nagamese is a pidgin or not, we have to examine some of the pidgin characteristics and some famous theories of origin of pidgin. As far as the origin of pidgin is concerned, five theories are doing the round and all the Creolists have recognised the importance of these five theories. They are discussed below.

9.1 Pidgin Theories

Different Creolists have formulated different theories at different point of time. The question of pidgin origins and development is considered to be one of the oldest issues in the field. DeCamp (1971) says that opinion was divided between two theories – monogenetic and polygenetic. But others have listed different theories. Among those, five major theories are examined below.

9.1.1 Nautical language theory

This theory of pidgin origin is related to the sailor, ship or sailing. This theory takes the view that pidgin develops in the merchant vessels as a means of communication among the sailors who have different mother tongues. It considers the sailor as the figure of greatest importance in the creation, development and in spreading the pidgin to different localities.
That is why we find some linguistic features as well as some lexical sharing between distant pidgins such as Hawaii Pidgin English, Chinook Jargon and Eskimo Jargon. For example, the term /ka:na:ka:/ "man" occurs in both English and French based pidgins throughout the Pacific. It is found in Chinook Jargon also where it and other items spread after the development of fur trade along the north-west coast of North America in the late 18th century. Likewise, Eskimo Jargon has /ka:uka:u/ "food", itself a loan word in Hawaiian Pidgin, introduced from Chinese Pidgin English "chowchow" (Romaine, 1988).

9.1.2 Relexification theory

According to this theory, most of the European based pidgins and creoles are related via a special process involving the maintenance of the 16th century pidgin Portuguese or possibly medieval Mediterranean Sabir and the replacement of lexical units by other languages. Hesseling (1933) said that European based pidgins and creoles are relexified versions of a 16th century Portuguese pidgin which was first used along the African coast and later carried to India and the Far East. Afrikaans began as a Portuguese pidgin and then this pidgin was relexified with Dutch vocabulary. This process of relexification may be abrupt or it may take generations.
9.1.3 Universalist theory

This theory claims that the linguistic nature of pidgins is universally motivated and it is argued by Heine (1973) that pidgins that were apparently quite unrelated to those based on European languages shared many of their structural properties. The followers of this theory said that language universals of simplification must play a role in the formation of pidgins since native speakers of the lexical source languages followed them in the speech they used with the non-native speakers. They also say that the creole speakers all over the world have a number of features in common such as multiple negation, lack of passivisation, and restricted morphophonemics which are simply impossible to happen by chance.

9.1.4 Substratum theory

Mühlhäusler (1986) said that pidgins and creoles combine the lexicon of the language (typically the superstratum – that is, the socially dominant) with the grammar of another language (typically the sub-stratum or socially inferior). According to this theory, various features like phonological, syntactical and lexical widely found in pidgins and creoles are of African origin – of African substratum. Hall (1966) said that the entire inflectional
system of the Haitian Creole verb with its loss of tense, person
and number ending and its use of aspectual prefixes, is straight
African. The origin of the Jamaican Creole word /hepihepi/ "very
happy" can be traced to the English word /hæpi/ and an African
construction of iteration indicating more.

9.1.5 Foreigner talk/Baby talk theory

Hesseling (1933) said that pidgin arose because of the
imperfect learning of the model language on the part of the
down-trodden. Pidgin is also the result of a conscious effort at
simplification by the whites in a master/slave relationship, typical
of colonial situations. It means that a conventionalised pidgin
emerges as the result of a process of mutual imitation or of the
slave's imitation of the master's imitation. The foreigner talk or
baby talk is governed by cultural conventions as well as natural
tendencies towards input simplification.

Experimental elicitation of foreigner talk was pioneered by
Ferguson (1975) for English and the results of such tests are that
a number of phonological, morphological and syntactic
simplifications promoting greater naturalness are found by
Ferguson and also for all languages tested by others as well.
Mühlhäusler (1986) also got the same result when he gave a set
of sentences such as "I have not seen the man you are talking
about" and asked the informants who are staying at Oxford at that time to transform it into a version suitable for a group of non-English speakers who are illiterate and non-European. The responses were –

1. I haven't seen man you talk.
2. I no see man you say.
3. I no see that man.
4. I no see man you speak.
5. That man you talk, I not see.
6. I no see man you talk about.
7. The man you talk of, I not see him.

This type of sentences are very common in all the English based pidgins such as Jamaican pidgin, Barbados pidgin etc.

Romaine (1986) obtained a very similar result from a group of native and non-native speakers of English at the University of Hawaii.

9.2 Application of pidgin theories in Nagamese

From the analysis of Nagamese data, it becomes quite clear that there is not a single set of lexical item in Nagamese which can have nautical elements in it. All the Nagamese lexical items are of Indo-Aryan origin. The history of Nagaland also tells
us that there was no trade conducted by any sailors at any point of time. So, nautical theory does not apply in Nagamese.

Assamese is the source language of Nagamese. Since, Assamese is an Indo-Aryan language and it has provided almost all the lexical items for Nagamese, the question of Portuguese origin of Nagamese does not arise at all. Suppose, for the sake of argument, we say that Nagamese was based on Portuguese and later complete relexification took place, then we directly run into the problem of evidence. Had it been the case, we could have found at least some traces of Portuguese elements in Nagamese.

Apart from simplification feature, no other features of Universalist theory is applicable to Nagamese. For example, there is no multiple negation in Nagamese.

Substratum influence in Nagamese is very difficult to identify. For example, deletion of the plural marker when the context or numeral indicates plurality is a regular feature of the Naga languages, Nagamese as well as Assamese. So, it is impossible to identify the source of it. It may have come to Nagamese from the Naga languages or it may be the influence of Assamese. One is reminded here of Bickerton's (1979) more
general statement on the role of substratum influence in pidgins and creoles,

Although there are here and there some sweeping similarities which tease you and provoke you to go on with the search, you never find any language which has quite the same kind of structures as the Creole language does.

Romaine (1988) said that baby talk theory conflates two processes, one which is initiated primarily by the upper or dominant group of speakers, who simplify their language, and another which is initiated by the lower or subordinate group who simplify the language they hear while trying to acquire it. In the first case the lower group merely imitate what they hear from the upper group. In the second case the active role is played by the lower group, and the upper group simply reinforce their errors. In this way a pidgin arise which is a simplified variety of the upper language. It seems to be the case with Nagamese as well. The Assamese speakers might have simplified the Assamese language while talking to the Nagas and the Nagas in turn simplified the Assamese language while they tried to acquire it and in this way Nagamese might have developed.

To substantiate our claim that Nagamese is indeed a simplified variety of Assamese language and nothing else, we have shown in the preceding chapter that Nagamese has
simplified the Assamese consonant clusters, reduced the number of vowels and diphthongs in phonology. In morphology, pronouns are simplified, number of plural markers is reduced and only one definitive is used by Nagamese. In semantics also we see the use of extension and thereby reducing the number of lexical items in Nagamese. All of these are nothing but the simplification of Assamese features.

9.3 Pidgin Features in Nagamese

A number of creolists have identified some of the similarities found in pidginised speech varieties across the world. Nagamese also share some of the features found in other pidgins of the globe. They are discussed below.

(i) Like the superstratum language, pidgins also have a pronominal system. But the pronominal systems of the pidgin languages, generally do not maintain the gender distinction. For example, in Tok Pisin, the third person singular pronoun /em/ can be used to refer to masculine, feminine and neuter subjects and objects (Romaine, 1988). The same is true in Nagamese as well. In Nagamese, the third person singular pronoun /ta:i/ is used to refer to male as well as female subjects whereas in Assamese, the source language of Nagamese, the distinction
between the third person singular masculine pronoun and feminine pronoun is maintained by using two separate lexemes - /hi/ he and /ta:i/ she.

(ii) The most famous characteristics of pidgin is that it is a simplified code. Southworth (1971) said that the most obvious characteristic of pidgins is their lack of complexity. The popular notion of simplicity of pidgin means complete absence of grammar. So, for the common people, pidgins do not have a grammar at all. When we conducted field work in Nagaland, most of our informants told us that Nagamese has no grammar, no rules.

The term simplification is defined by a number of linguists in different ways. We will use the term simplification here in the sense in which Mühlhäusler (1974) defines. He defines it as an increase in regularity. Just like any other pidgin, Nagamese also shows simplification in several areas. For example, in the marking of plural, Nagamese uses /kha:n/ in all the nouns and pronouns. It means that by using only one plural marker, Nagamese has simplified the Assamese plural marking system and it is nothing but an increase in regularity as far as plurality in Nagamese is concerned.
Another feature of pidgin is the number of lexicon. It is said that pidgin has a limited number of lexicon and hence, it exhibits a high degree of motivation. Hall (1953) compares the lexical items of an ordinary language with the number of lexical items in pidgin and he said that an ordinary language has 25-30000 lexical items whereas Neomelanesian pidgin has just about 1500. He further said that these 1500 words can be combined into phrases so as to say anything that can be said in English. Nagamese is no exception in this regard. When we counted the vocabulary in Nagamese speaking children between the ages of 10 and 15, it is found out that they have an active vocabulary of about 1000 words. In urban areas it is as high as 1500 but this is largely due to incorporation of loan words from Hindi and English.

Let us compare some examples of the lexical structure of Nagamese and Assamese:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nagamese</th>
<th>Assamese</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/čuli/</td>
<td>/suli/</td>
<td>hair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/čukula:ga: čuli/</td>
<td>/bhuru/</td>
<td>eyelash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ga:ola:ga: čuli/</td>
<td>/nom/</td>
<td>body hair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ чiriya:la:ga: čuli/</td>
<td>/pa:khi/</td>
<td>feather</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In Assamese, the meanings such as hair, eyelash, body hair and feather are all expressed by means of separate, unrelated lexemes as shown above. It means that there is a greater degree of lexicalisation in Assamese. But as far as Nagamese is concerned, there is a kind of relationship between the words and that relationship can be called “diagrammatic iconic relation” after Romaine (1988). It means that there is a kind of relation between the above mentioned items which is expressed by the fact that they are all encoded by means of constructions (phrasal construction) incorporating the word /čuli/ in Nagamese and here Nagamese resembles the famous pidgin Tok Pisin in the formation of words. For example,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tok Pisin</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gras</td>
<td>grass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mausgras</td>
<td>moustache</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gras bilong fes</td>
<td>beard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gras bilong hed</td>
<td>hair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gras bilong pisin</td>
<td>feather</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(iv) As far as the function of pidgin is concerned, it is not used in all the functions especially in the earliest stages of its formation. In this regard Hall (1966) said,

From the point of view of social function, the chief difference between pidgins and creoles is in the type of speech community whose needs they
meet. Unlike normal languages, a pidgin language usually comes into existence for a specific reason.

The first stage of pidgin development which is called jargon phase, we find that jargons are used for communication in limited referential domains such as trade, labour recruiting etc. The stable pidgin which is the second stage of development is used for communication in a fixed number of domains, for social control and to some extent for self expression. The third stage of development called expanded pidgin is used in all domains of the day to day life like word play, literature etc. It means that only an expanded pidgin has pragmatic component and expressive function.

From this point of view also Nagamese follows the characteristics of a pidgin. Nagamese is abundantly used in all sorts of communication in Nagaland. So, from this angle it appears that Nagamese has achieved the status of an expanded pidgin. But, Nagamese is hardly used in written communication and even in formal oral communication. A few exceptions can not be cited as evidence for its use in all walks of life. For example, there is no newspaper, no weekly printed in Nagamese. We found only two radio one-act plays and few music cassettes. Hence, we can say that Nagamese like any
other pidgin performs the communicative or referential function of language. At present Nagamese has achieved the status of a stable pidgin but it is developing day by day towards an expanded pidgin as Nagamese is being used in more and more domains. During our field work some informants told us that some people are seriously considering the possibility of publishing a newspaper in Nagamese. It is worthwhile to mention here an incident regarding the use of Nagamese as reported by Krishna (1991),

...recently, the speaker of the State Legislative Assembly objected to a member using Hindi and pointed out that he could talk either in English or Nagamese.

(v) Pidgins lack standardisation. It means an agreed set of codified norms which are accepted by the speech community. Standardisation is a feature which is imposed on a language and not inherent in it. Pidgins have norms for use but these are not sanctioned by any externally recognised authorities of the language. Nagamese follows the tradition of a pidgin by not having standardisation – it has grammar but it is not recognised by any external authority.

(vi) Normal, natural languages have historicity which refers to whether the languages have grown up through the use by
some ethnic groups. A mother tongue is usually used as a marker of social identity. On the other hand, pidgin which is a second language is never used as a marker of social identity or it is not used in an affective function. It lacks the feature of historicity. Nagamese, like any other pidgin, is not used by the Nagas as a means of group identity or social identity. It does not belong to any one particular Naga tribe. Everybody in Nagaland finds Nagamese useful and handy but it is like an orphan as nobody owns it.

(vii) Pidgins are mixed languages with de facto norms. Mixture means that pidgins consist essentially of items and structures derived from outside sources. No doubt, there are hardly any pure languages as all the languages of the world borrow items from each other but as Hall (1966) said, some languages are purer than others. But mixing and borrowing is much more prominent in a pidgin than in other languages. “Moreover, the pidgin was more likely to have had more input from regional or non-standard varieties of the lexifier language” (Romaine, 1988). Nagamese has borrowed extensively from Hindi/English/Bengali as we have shown in chapter no. 7. Apart from this, Nagamese is influenced more by the Kamrupi dialect of Assamese than the standard one. It is because of the fact
that many people from the rural areas of Kamrup and Goalpara districts of Assam worked in Assam Police in Nagaland when the British Government formed this Force for smooth running of their administration in Nagaland (Boruah, 1993). The speakers of the lower Assam, i.e., the speakers of Kamrupi dialect, practically dominated the Nagamese language at that time. Therefore, the influence of the Kamrupi dialect in Nagamese can easily be identified especially in the areas of accentuation, intonation as well as in the lexicon.

The above discussion clearly shows that Nagamese follows the tradition of the pidgins not only in terms of the origin of the theories but also in characteristics. Hence, it can be surmised that Nagamese is not a form of hybrid Assamese as thought by Goswami (1982) but a full-fledged lingua-franca, a pidgin.