THE DEVELOPMENT OF A BILINGUAL BOOK BASED ON THE HISTORY OF NAGA AT WAT SRIDARAM, UDON THANI TO PROMOTE TOURISM

Kittipong Thongsombat and Chanika Chatdecha*

Business English Program, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Udon Thani Rajabhat University and Business English Program, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Udon Thani Rajabhat University

*Corresponding Author E-mail: c.chatdecha@gmail.com

Received Date: March 1, 2026 ; Revised Date: March 27, 2026 ; Accepted Date: March 30, 2026

Abstract

The study aimed to 1) explore the historical and mythological narratives of the Naga at Wat Sridaram, 2) develop a bilingual book from the adapted narratives, and 3) investigate the satisfaction of the target audience with the content, language, and presentation of the bilingual book about the Naga at Wat Sridaram. Borg and Gall's (1989) Research and Development (R and D) framework and a mixed-method design of both integrating qualitative and quantitative approaches were employed. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with monks, community members, business owners, tourists, and local officers to collect information. The prototype was evaluated through expert reviews and satisfaction surveys with 35 target readers. Data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. The findings showed that:

1) Expert reviews indicated a highest level of overall satisfaction of the bilingual book (Mean = 4.26, SD = 0.62), with design receiving the highest rating (Mean = 4.60, SD = 0.58).

2) The satisfaction survey likewise reflected a highest level of overall satisfaction score of the bilingual book (Mean = 4.29, SD = 0.85) with the design achieving the top-rated aspect (Mean = 4.38, SD = 0.88).

These findings indicate that the bilingual book demonstrates high quality and effectiveness and is suitable for publication and practical use in cultural tourism promotion.

Keywords : Bilingual Book, Naga Narratives, Wat Sridaram, Cultural Tourism, Mutelu Tourism

Background and significance of the problem

Tourism refers to the movement of people to places outside their own usual environments such as beaches, cities, and mountains. (Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2008). The movement can bring about a rich exchange of culture, language, and heritage. For many countries, tourism has been regarded as a key driver in boosting its economy. Thailand is no exception. Due to its abundance of beautiful beaches and unique cultural heritage, the country has enjoyed an increasing number of foreign tourists while many projects have been initiated by the government to promote tourism in order to generate revenue for the country. Among their strategies is to promote cultural tourism, which is a type of tourism activity in which the visitor's focus is on learning, discovering, experiencing and consuming the tangible and intangible cultural attractions and products in a target destination. One of those cultural tourist attractions is the myth of the Naga, a legendary serpent deity deeply embedded in local beliefs and influenced by Buddhism. In Thailand, the Naga beliefs are prominently found in Buddhist art and architecture, such as staircases, temple gateways, and decorative motifs adorning religious buildings. Generally, it is regarded as a guardian of sacred spaces and a mediator between the human world and the religious or spiritual realm (Wongthet, 2001). It is not just a religious belief, but also serves as a cultural mechanism that legitimizes authority, sacred power, and the institutions of both the state and religion (Keyes, 1987). Northeastern Thailand, or the Isan region, is an area where belief in the Naga remains vibrant

and intensely expressed, particularly in such communities as Udon Thani, Nong Khai, Nakhon Phanom, and Bueng Kan provinces.

Despite the cultural richness of the sites, many international visitors and even some domestic tourists are unaware of the deep stories and spiritual significance surrounding the Naga legend. The lack of accessible, accurate, and practical materials is likely to limit the potential for these unique stories to contribute to cultural appreciation and eventually may hinder the promotion of cultural tourism. It can be witnessed at Wat Sridaram in Thungphon district, Udon Thani province. The temple has been gaining more and more popularity in the past few years thanks to its famous Naga statue, being constructed based on both dream and local beliefs. The history of the Naga at Wat Sridaram can be found online and it is only in Thai. Unfortunately, there is a lack of practical materials in recording and showcasing the history of the Naga in a way that can be accessible to both Thai and international visitors. The development of a bilingual book based on the history of Naga at Wat Sridaram, Udon Thani to promote tourism is an attempt to address this gap in documentation, interpretation, and bilingual accessibility. It aims to provide not only a cultural record but also a marketing tool to promote tourism in the area.

Research objectives

1. To explore the historical and mythological narratives of the Naga at Wat Sridaram.
2. To develop a bilingual book from the adapted narratives.
3. To investigate the satisfaction of the target audience with the content, language, and presentation of the bilingual book about the Naga at Wat Sridaram.

Research Methodology

Population and Sample

The population of this study consisted of all stakeholders and visitors related to tourism at Wat Sridaram, who were considered key sources of essential information about the site. Individuals who were both directly and indirectly in association with the management, promotion, and experience of tourism at Wat Sridaram were included.

From this population, the samples of the study were divided into 3 groups based on purposive sampling. The first one is a group of 10 stakeholders such as monks, tourists, business owners, and government officers in Wat Sridaram, Na Chum Saeng Subdistrict, Thung Fon District, Udon Thani. The second one was the group of the 3 experts in the areas of language, educational material, and cultural tourism. The last one was a group of 35 target audiences.

Research Instruments

1. Semi-Structured Interview was employed in the study to answer research question 1 and its focus was placed on ten purposively selected participants, including monks, community members, and stakeholders to gather narratives and perceptions about the Naga legend and identify the needs and expectations for the bilingual book in terms of language, content, and design. The semi-structured interview questions were constructed based on the reviewed documents. There were 5 open-ended questions written in Thai employed with 10 participants to find out the detailed information about Naga narratives at Wat Sridaram and the opinions on the bilingual book as a facilitative tool to enhance local tourism.

2. Expert review checklist was for three specialists to assess the bilingual book in terms of language, content, and design to ensure its effectiveness and appropriateness in promoting tourism.

3. Satisfaction survey was constructed in a questionnaire form to gain feedbacks of the

bilingual book from 35 target audience. The questions were validated by the three experts before distribution. To facilitate the respondents' understanding and convenience, it was prepared in both Thai and English. The Thai version was presented as the primary language, followed by the English version.

To validate the research instrument, the researchers designed and developed the questionnaire and submitted it to three experts for the evaluation of content validity. The questionnaire, which was constructed in accordance with the research objectives, was reviewed by experts with relevant knowledge and expertise. Each item was examined to determine its relevance and coverage of the research content. The Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) was then calculated to assess the consistency between the questionnaire items and the behavioral characteristics specified in the research objectives. Items with IOC values greater than 0.50 were considered acceptable. Based on the experts' recommendations, the questionnaire was revised and refined prior to its use for field data collection.

Data Collection

The study was conducted in four main phases according to the adapted framework of R&D Model (Borg and Gall, 1989) : Step 1: Collecting: Researchers conducted in-depth interviews with ten purposively selected participants such as monks, tourists, local business owners, and government representatives to know their expectations and perceptions about the Naga legend at Wat Sridaram and its potential for promoting tourism. Step 2) Planning: Both primary and secondary data were collected in Step 1 were used as the foundation for the bilingual book's themes, structure, and storyline. Step 3) Development and Expert Review: The researchers developed the structure of the bilingual book by using a storyboard technique. The book was validated to ensure its appropriateness and accuracy of content, design, and translation by the experts. After that, the book was revised based on the experts' suggestions. Step 4) Final Production and Satisfaction Assessment: There were 35 copies of the bilingual book disseminated to local tourism centers and temples. The satisfaction survey was distributed to 35 target audience.

Data Analysis

Qualitative data from the Semi-Structured interviews and focus groups was transcribed, coded, and analyzed thematically. Quantitative data from the questionnaires was analyzed by using percentages, mean scores, and standard deviations.

Research Result

The statue of "Phaya Naga Srisuttho" was built at Wat Sridaram in Na Chum Saeng subdistrict, Nong Han district, about 50 kilometers from the center of Udon Thani province. Apart from its 131-meter long and nine heads rising majestically, the story behind it is what draws people's interest to the temple. Based on her dream, Dr. Aorapan Rueangwiriyaphokin led the group of people to donate and got the construction built in 2021. It took just 14 months for construction to be completed with a sacred celebration being held on May 18, 2022. The total cost was up to four million baht. Other sacred figures including Grandfather Srisuttho, Grandmother Sridachan, and the hermit sage within the temple are also important to the community. These figures have been in existence prior to the construction of the large Naga and they still remain central to temple activities. Interestingly, Wat Sridaram acts as a stopover point for people traveling to Kham Chanod, Ban Dung District, which is known to be the capital of the Nagas. These two sites are only 38 kilometers away. According to legends and local beliefs, the participants clarified that Wat Sridaram and Kham Chanod are relatively connected. Based on interviews from stakeholders, the Naga at Wat Sridaram is perceived as both a religious and cultural symbol. The portrayal of the Naga significantly has attracted people's attention

and brought them closer to the temple and Dharma, which encourages them to perform merit as stated by one participant, **"Grandfather (the Naga) brings blessings and fortune. When we ask for financial help, he truly provides. In return, we make merit for him." (Translated from Thai).** This shows a mutual connection of faith and action because when people seek fortune and blessings and in return they charitably bestow upon the needy. These charitable practices fulfill personal spiritual development and boost the community economically. As the earnings from donations and other offerings from the temple increase, they go back to benefit the community through events and festivals. The monk noted that **"We can provide a scholarship sponsor for schools from these offerings." (Translated from Thai).**

The development of the bilingual book was guided by Borg and Gall's (1989) Research and Development framework, which features the stages of collecting narratives, drafting the initial version, obtaining expert feedback, revising the content, and finally testing the book with the target audience. Ten stakeholders including a monk and a government officer were interviewed for insight information about Wat Sridaram and Phaya Naga Srisuttho. Expert Review Checklist (adapted from Phongwichai, 2013) was also deployed for the structured evaluation of language, content, and design. To ensure that readers or visitors can easily grasp the contents, the Dual-Coding Theory (Paivio, 1991) of the integration of text with visuals was introduced. With the images and texts together, tourists and learners would see, imagine, and connect meaning through both verbal and visual codes. Building on these frameworks, the bilingual book was shaped into a resource that is culturally authentic, linguistically accessible, and visually attractive. It meets the goal of balancing of cultural preservation with educational and tourism promotion. It can also be reached by both Thai and international audiences.

The prototype bilingual book was developed to preserve the historical and mythological narratives of the Naga of Phya Naga Srisuttho at Wat Sridaram while making them accessible to both Thai and international audiences. The book combines cultural storytelling with bilingual presentation to ensure that it can be deployed as a practical resource for tourism and education. The prototype book contains 23 pages and it is presented in Thai and English side by side. Contents are accompanied by photographs and illustrations. The design follows a two-column format, which makes it convenient for readers to compare both languages. It was validated by experts in Thai, English, Educational Material and Tourism, and its reception among participants showed high levels of satisfaction across language, content, and design.

Table 1 Mean Scores of Expert Evaluation by Category

Category	Item	Mean Score	SD	Interpretation
Language	Thai grammar accuracy	3.33	1.53	Moderate satisfaction
	English grammar accuracy	4.33	1.15	Highest satisfaction
	Vocabulary appropriateness	4.00	1.00	High satisfaction
	Thai–English consistency	3.67	0.58	High satisfaction
	Clarity and readability	4.30	1.00	Highest satisfaction
	Total	**3.92**	**1.05**	**High satisfaction**
	Accuracy of Naga history and legends	3.67	1.53	High satisfaction
	Coverage of key issues (Wat Sridaram & community)	4.67	0.58	Highest satisfaction

Content	Up-to-date and reliable information	4.33	0.58	Highest satisfaction
	Relevance to cultural tourism promotion	4.67	0.58	Highest satisfaction
	Proper referencing of sources	4.00	1.00	High satisfaction
	Total	**4.27**	**0.85**	**Highest satisfaction**
Design	Organization of layout and illustrations	4.67	0.58	Highest satisfaction
	Font size and style readability	4.67	0.58	Highest satisfaction
	Use of colors and visuals	4.67	0.58	Highest satisfaction
	Quality and relevance of illustrations	4.33	0.58	Highest satisfaction
	Reflection of community identity and culture	4.67	0.58	Highest satisfaction
	Total	**4.60**	**0.58**	**Highest satisfaction**
	Overall	**4.26**	**0.62**	**Highest satisfaction**

The results of the expert evaluation in Table 1 indicate that the bilingual book received a generally positive assessment across all three aspects. The Language aspect was rated at a high level of satisfaction (Mean = 3.92, SD = 1.05), which showed overall clarity and appropriateness of language use. The Content aspect achieved the highest level of satisfaction (Mean = 4.27, SD = 0.85). it reflected strong agreement among experts regarding the accuracy, relevance, and suitability of the content for cultural tourism promotion. Similarly, the Design aspect was rated at the highest level (Mean = 4.60, SD = 0.58), which indicated a high degree of consistency on layout, visual elements, and cultural representation. Overall, the bilingual book was evaluated at a high level of satisfaction (Mean = 4.26, SD = 0.62).

A total of 35 participants completed the satisfaction survey, which evaluated the bilingual book across three categories: Language, Content, and Design. The results were shown in the following tables.

Table 2 Language

Item	Mean	SD	Level
The Thai text in the book is clear and easy to understand.	4.37	0.76	Highest satisfaction
The words and sentences are suitable for general readers.	4.40	0.62	Highest satisfaction
The language used in the book makes reading enjoyable	4.06	0.98	High satisfaction
The Thai and English texts match in meaning.	4.03	1.11	High satisfaction
The overall language used in the book makes reading comprehensible	3.89	0.67	High satisfaction
Total	**4.15**	**0.83**	**High satisfaction**

Table 3 Content

Item	Mean	SD	Level
The book provides accurate information about the history and legends of the Naga.	4.26	0.95	Highest satisfaction
The stories in the book are interesting and keep my attention.	4.49	0.65	Highest satisfaction
The information in the book is useful for learning about Wat Sridaram and the community.	4.03	1.03	High satisfaction
The content of the book helps me understand more about cultural tourism.	4.57	0.73	Highest satisfaction
Overall, I am satisfied with the knowledge and information presented in the book.	4.37	0.86	Highest satisfaction
Total	**4.34**	**0.84**	**Highest satisfaction**

Table 4 Design

Item	Mean	SD	Level
The layout of the text and pictures is well organized.	4.34	0.95	Highest satisfaction
Font size and readability	4.66	0.83	Highest satisfaction
The use of colors and pictures makes the book attractive.	4.20	1.01	High satisfaction
The visual elements in the book are clear and help me understand the stories better.	4.37	0.72	Highest satisfaction
The overall design of the book reflects local identity and culture.	4.31	0.92	Highest satisfaction
Total	**4.38**	**0.88**	**Highest satisfaction**

Table 5 Overall Satisfaction Scores

Category	Mean	SD	Level
Language	4.15	0.83	High satisfaction
Content	4.34	0.84	Highest satisfaction
Design	4.38	0.88	Highest satisfaction
Overall	**4.29**	**0.85**	**Highest satisfaction**

Feedback from 35 participants showed consistently high levels of satisfaction across all three areas evaluated – language, contents and design. For Language aspect, the overall mean score was 4.15 (SD = 0.83), indicating high satisfaction. Respondents find clarity and readability as strengths, with "The words and sentences are suitable for general readers." scoring the highest (Mean = 4.40, SD = 0.62). Other aspects, such as Thai grammar correctness (Mean = 4.37, SD = 0.76), enjoyable language (Mean = 4.06, SD = 0.98), and Thai–English equivalence (Mean = 3.89, SD = 0.67) were rated at the high satisfaction level. The results in Table 3 indicate that respondents expressed a very high level of satisfaction with the content and the design of the bilingual book. Most items were rated at the highest satisfaction level, with mean scores ranging from 4.03 to 4.57. Overall, the content dimension achieved a mean score of 4.34 (SD = 0.84). The Table 4 showed a very high level of satisfaction with the design of the bilingual book. Of all items, three of them were rated at the highest satisfaction level with the overall mean score of 4.38 (SD = 0.88). The highest-rated aspect was font size and

readability (Mean = 4.66, SD = 0.83) while the use of colors and pictures received slightly lower ratings (Mean = 4.20, SD = 1.01).

In conclusion, all three categories demonstrated a consistently highest level of satisfaction (Mean = 4.29, SD = 0.85) shown in Table 5. These results confirm that the bilingual book prototype was positively received in terms of language accuracy and readability, content relevance, and design appeal.

Discussions

1. The Naga with unique background and architecture

The Phaya Naga Srisuttho at Wat Sridaram represent a blend of recent history and mythological belief. Its origin narrative reflects patterns identified in Thai studies on contemporary Naga worship, where dreams, personal revelation, and community participation have led to the creation of new sacred sites. With its body stretching 131 meters in length and nine heads towering 15 meters high, the status is different from other Naga statues in Thailand in terms of both its origin story and dramatic design. The Naga statue was emerged from Dr. Orapan's dream and such creation aligns with the idea that new sacred sites can acquire spiritual legitimacy when integrated into local cosmologies (Cohen, 2007). In Nong Khai, the Naga stories are most visible in the annual Bang Fai Phaya Naga (fireball festival), where mysterious fireballs rising from the Mekong are interpreted as the homage to Buddha (Kliengpibula, 1997). This tradition highlights the connection between Nagas, nature, and miraculous phenomena. In contrast, Wat Sridaram emphasizes a tangible and monumental representation by combining art, architecture, and faith. While the Naga narratives at Kham Chanod, Nong Khai, and Nakhon Phanom focuses on ancient cosmologies, natural wonders, and regional guardianship, the Naga at Wat Sridaram shows how modern myth-making can coexist with traditional belief.

2. Spiritual and economic reasons

What's interesting is that the construction of Naga statues or other sacred objects in Thailand, although initially driven by a sincere desire for spiritual support in times of hardship, has in quite a few cases later become a tool for profit-making. Despite being different in terms of its background and architecture, these Naga statues are used not only for spiritual but also economic reasons. It can reinforce both cultural identity and tourism development. Richard (2018) argued that cultural icons and festivals often act as catalysts for community-based economic growth, especially in rural areas where alternative industries are limited. Similarly, Cohen's (2007) study of the Naga Fireball Festival in Nong Khai illustrated how mythological belief can be transformed into commercial opportunity without undermining its ritual value. Goodwin and Santilli (2009) emphasized that local people benefit most when they are directly involved in tourism value chains, such as offering products or services to visitors.

3. Lack of Guides and Records Holds Back Tourism Potential

Everyone knows that producing a bilingual book, whether as a hard copy or an e-book, benefits both the local community and tourists. Rather than functioning solely as a translated cultural text, this bilingual book was designed to meet the communicative and experiential needs of both Thai and international audiences and position it as not only a tourism-oriented but also educational resource. However, stakeholders involved with these tourist sites, including Wat Sridaram, have not given it the attention it deserves. As a result, the site's stories and history have been left without systematic documentation and transmission. More importantly, there is a lack of personnel with the

knowledge and ability to provide explanations to visitors. This means missed opportunities to promote community-based tourism and to share these narratives with the wider world. Furthermore, from an educational perspective, if high-quality bilingual books are developed, they can help enhance and support students' learning in those local areas as well.

Knowledge from research

The most significant implication of this study lies in the field of tourism. The development of the bilingual book provides an innovative tool for destination branding, which helps strengthen Wat Sridaram's visibility as a cultural and spiritual site. From a marketing perspective, it functions as a tangible cultural product that extends the visitor experience beyond the physical site. As a souvenir, it allows visitors to take home not only a memory but also a narrative of Wat Sridaram and the Naga belief. This form of narrative-based souvenir is not just a generic commercial product but also the enhancing of destination branding by associating the temple with authenticity, spirituality, and local identity. In terms of marketing, the book serves as a story-driven branding tool that leads to the strengthening of emotional attachment and encourage repeat visits and word-of-mouth promotion. Economically, the book aligns with the principles of community-based tourism (CBT), where local people benefit directly from tourism initiatives. By selling or distributing the book, community members gain a supplementary source of income and at the same time promote their cultural assets. For education, the book can be incorporated into formal and informal learning contexts, particularly within schools and community education programs. By presenting content in both Thai and English, the book supports language learning and also foster cultural awareness. The inclusion of local narratives ensures that learners can hone their linguistic skills and develop a deeper appreciation of their community's cultural heritage. This dual function supports the goals of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), which focuses on the importance of cultural identity alongside global competencies. The book also serves as a permanent record of the narratives associated with the Naga at Wat Sridaram. By documenting these narratives in written bilingual form, it would help contributes to the preservation of intangible cultural heritage and provides a reference point for future generations to study the history of the Naga and its significance.

Implications and Recommendations

Implications

1. Tourism Implications

The development of the bilingual book provides an innovative tool for destination branding, strengthening Wat Sridaram's visibility as a cultural and spiritual site. This book functions as a tangible cultural product that extends the visitor experience beyond the physical site. As a souvenir, it allows visitors to take home not only a memory but also a narrative of Wat Sridaram and the Naga belief.

For marketing aspect, it serves as a story-driven branding tool that leads to the strengthening of emotional attachment and encourage repeat visits and word-of-mouth promotion. Its bilingual format will expand the temple's market reach. Revenue generated from book sales can support temple maintenance and community-related activities. By linking the temple with other tourist attractions in Udon Thani and nearby provinces, the book positions Wat Sridaram as part of a broader spiritual and cultural tourism circuit.

2. Educational Implications

The material can be incorporated into formal and informal learning contexts, particularly within schools and community education programs. By presenting content in both Thai and English, the book supports language learning while simultaneously fostering cultural awareness. Teachers may use the book to improve English proficiency among students, especially in rural areas where access to engaging bilingual resources is often limited.

3. Community Implications

For the local community, the Naga functions as both a symbol of identity and a source of economic opportunity. Festivals, ceremonies, and donations associated with the Naga already generate substantial income for residents. The presence of such a resource enhances community pride, as residents see their traditions formally documented and presented to outsiders in a respectful and appealing manner. The book thus acts as a bridge between tradition and development, supporting both the economic vitality and cultural resilience of the community. By documenting these narratives in written bilingual form, the study contributes to the preservation of intangible cultural heritage. The book provides a reference point for future generations to study the history of the Naga and its significance within both Buddhist cosmology and local folklore.

Recommendations

For practice: The bilingual book should be distributed and used in tourism information centers, schools, and temples as both a cultural learning resource and a promotional tool. Teachers and monks can employ it to educate children and visitors about the Naga while fostering pride in local heritage.

For stakeholders: Local authorities and community leaders may consider training guides, vendors, and monks in storytelling techniques that draw directly from the book. This would enhance visitor experience and ensure consistent, accurate presentation of the narratives.

For future research: Further studies could expand the model by documenting other Naga-related sites in Udon Thani and the Isan region, creating a network of interconnected narratives. In addition, developing digital versions such as e-books or AR/VR applications could widen accessibility and appeal to younger and technologically proficient audience.

Limitations

First, there is the limited samples of stakeholders and participants during the study. They are monks, local community members, temple visitors, and representatives of local authorities. Although the interviews give important perspectives or insight information, they may not fully reflect the diversity of opinions and experiences. Second, there were only 35 respondents for the satisfaction survey. Although this sample size was adequate for preliminary analysis, it restricts the ability to generalize results to larger populations. Third, with the data collection based mainly on interviews, it may lead to certain biases. They might give responses that they felt were expected by researchers or viewed positively rather than their true opinions. Finally, this bilingual book was tested only in its prototype form. It should have examined for its long-term effectiveness in actual educational or tourism contexts.

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