The Concept of Unen-Unen and Free Corruption Environment: An Anti-corruption Lesson from Javanese Heritage

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Abstract: Corruption is generally attached to one's position to obtain personal gain and create disharmony in the community. The corruption in Indonesia somehow transforms into a detrimental problem nowadays. Therefore, this study aims at proposing an alternative concept of anti-corruption from a Javanese cultural heritage which passed down from generation to generation. This anti-corruption concept formed into a variety or expression which is called unen-unen. It well known delivered from trans-generation by understanding the meaning of Unen-unen. This study record and explores Unen-unen from the book 1001 Pitutur Luhur Budaya Jawa (Ari, W. and Gunawan, W. 2014). The selection of Unen-unen was found contains the concept of anti-corruption. It then analyzed using a qualitative approach using the Triangle Theory of Meanings of Odgen and Richards (1952), and the Kohlberg (1995) Moral Development Theory. The analysis of this study reveals Unen-Unen has a unique concept of anti-corruption that can be used to teach a moral lesson from the early age to adults. It somehow ranges from phases pra-conventional to post-conventional as efforts to prevent the corruption.

Keywords: Javanese language, anti-corruption concept, moral message, unen-unen

1. Introduction

Corruption is an act that prioritizes self-benefit or certain groups by taking the right of others. Furthermore, corruption is a disgraceful act and immoral because people who have a particular position in an agency commit abuse by using their power to improve the economy. Based on this understanding, the problem is underlying the act of corruption as the existence of immoral acts, as well as the misuse of position. These problems have one purpose, to meet the interests and benefits of individuals or groups [1].

Corruption cases in Indonesia are one of the serious cases that have harmed Indonesia's state assets. Cases of corruption in Indonesia, according to the Anti-Corruption Clearing House (ACCH) as of December 31, 2017, there have been 971 corruption cases in Indonesia, within a period of 13 years, starting from 2004 to 2017 [2]. Corruption cases in Indonesia handled by the Corruption Eradication Commission (henceforth: KPK). The KPK has the authority to arrest perpetrators of corruption in Indonesia.
Further, the handling of corruption does not stop at the arrest of the perpetrators. Aspects of corruption prevention need to be taken in handling the corruption process. It must be made not to create a snowball for corruption, but to reduce the number of corruption in Indonesia. Furthermore, it seems there are two factors that are the reasons of corruption, namely internal (self-factors) and external (environmental factors) caused by greed and opportunity. To suppress two factors that cause corruption, social control is needed in the community. Thus, social control is needed to maintain the simplicity and modesty of life so that it is not replaced by greed that no longer maintains moral values [4]. Corruption as an immoral act must be prevented by emphasizing the moral from an early age. Moral prevention can be done by using local wisdom by introducing the concept of anticorruption contained in the lectures Java language. *Unen-Unen* a fixed Javanese expression and includes ideas the valuable [5]. *Unen-unen* is still in use today in the middle of Javanese and has been passed on across generations as there is no written information about the beginning of *Unen-unen* in Javanese. *Unen-unen* among the Javanese still has properties that are applicable with the times. A wise and noble thought in *unen-unen* provides an opportunity for the community to interpret the expression as moral teaching to live a good life. This is supported by the study of Muchson and Samsuri (2015: 19) which revealed that customs and culture could be used as a source of moral teaching.

One of customs and culture as a source of moral teachings is *unen-unen*. *Unen-unen* has a moral message in preventing corruption by understanding the meaning contained. *Unen-Unen* used as data in this study were taken from the oral tradition that has been well documented in *1001 Pitutur Luhur Budaya Jawa* written by Gunawan Sumodiningrat and Ari Wulandari in 2014. In the book published in 2014 is having indication *unen-unen* still relevant until now. The book contains various Javanese *unen-unen* and simple explanation of meaning. The meaning explanation is used as a reference for data classification. Five *unen-unen* are selected with moral messages related to the concept of preventing corruption. The five *unen-unen* were aluwung kalah wang tinimbang kalah wong,(2) aja melik darbeking liyan, (3) anutupi babahan hawa sanga, (4) aja katungkul marang kalungguhan, kadonyan, lan kamaraman, and (5) *narima ing pandum*. The novelty of this study compared to the book *1001 Pitutur Luhur Budaya Jawa* is shown in the data analysis and the way of presentation is deeper, which is supported by the triangle theory of Odgen and Richards meaning (1952) and Kohlberg (1995) moral development theory.

Segita meaning theory from Odgen and Richards (1952) is used to understand the meaning contained in the five variables. By understanding the *unen-unen*, it will also understand the moral message that can prevent corruption. Based on the theory of human moral development from Kohlberg (1995), moral messages can be learned through three stages of moral development that learned from an early age to adulthood. The three stages are pre-conventional, conventional and post-conventional. Therefore, this study aims to explain the concept of anti-corruption as a moral teaching contained in the Javanese *unen-unen*. Understanding the concept of anti-corruption is one of a moral teaching that can be taught from an early age, so when it reaches adulthood, the concept able to be applied in everyday life. By being able to understand the concept of anti-corruption from the early stage, it is expected to reduce the number of corruption in Indonesia.

2. Methods

The conceptual framework of this research starts from an awareness of corruption that not by the norms and laws because they damage the social life. Corruption occurs because there are individuals who attempt to abuse the rights of others or abuse by using powers they carry for personal gain. Thus, corruption is generally carried out by people who have positions, powers, and authority in an institution to fulfill the self-desire. Corruption occurs because of the changes in values that develop in society.
These values are related to the order of life in the community. Guidelines for living in harmonization, especially for the Javanese, are found in unen-unen. Unen-Unen created by thinking wise and prudent and contains a moral message that can be taught to be a guide in preventing corruption. Therefore, to look at the concept of anti-corruption in unen-unen, this research uses a qualitative approach by using empirical data and by those that grow in the Javanese environment [10]. The initial stages in discovering the concept of anti-corruption began with using the note-taking method to collect data and continued with an analysis using the Semiotic Odgen and Richards Theory (1952), with the following description.

![Figure 1. Triangles Meaning of Odgen and Richards: 1952](image1)

The triangle illustrates how meaning is created from a referent that exists. Between Symbols and Referrals, there is a dashed line, implied that the relationship is an indirect relationship, it also means that a Referent has different symbol depending on the culture and ideas that build it. However, the relationship between Symbols and Concepts, Referents and Concepts, is a direct relationship, which means having certainty or similarity in the concept. Exposure of meaning triangles can be explained through the example below.

![Figure 2. Meaning Triangle concept wang 'money' and wong 'person.'](image2)
Vocabulary Wang and Wong are fragments from one of unen-unen, Aluwung Kalah Wang Tinimbang Kalang Wong. Two vocabulary wang 'money' and wong 'human,' is a word that has concepts based on lexical and implied meaning. Unen-unen is an expression that has an implicit meaning, it relates the concept of money to anti-corruption, and the concept of wong is more appropriate not only based on its lexical meaning, 'human,' but a larger context, 'humanity.' Thus, the referent from unen-unen is “It’s better to lose material or wealth than losing humanity.” Then, after obtaining the concept of anti-corruption from Unen-unen, we will be linked it to moral teaching through the Moral Stages by Kohlberg (1995). The three stages are pra-conventional, conventional and post-conventional. At each stage, there are separate sub-stages, and it makes seven stages of moral development. The depiction of three levels and seven stages are as follows.

![Figure 3. Stages of Kohlberg Moral Development: 1995](image)

The pre-conventional stage consists of two stages, namely (1) morality that is oriented to punishment and obedience, and (2) morality oriented to instrumental. This moral stage is learned by children to obey orders from someone who older to avoid punishment. The conventional stage consists of two stages, namely: (3) morality that refers to the effort to act well *(nice girl/good boy)*, and (4) morality with an effort to maintain the system. In this stage, the perpetrator has not been able to sort out what is good and what is bad. The thing that still needs to be learned at this stage is to adjust in the society to please others (stage 3), and to adjust the interests of private groups and others (stage 4). The conventional stage is usually studied by those who are in the age of development from childhood to adulthood.
The last stage, post-conventional, consists of three stages, namely: (5) morality that refers to social contact, (6) morality oriented to universal ethics, and (7) morality that relates to religion or belief. This stage is understood by those who have grown up and can sort out what is right and what is bad. They already can adjust themselves in the society, able to understand ethics in life, and able to behave based on their beliefs. If linked to the concept of anti-corruption, it is at this post-conventional stage that the moral message can be well received.

Further, Muchson and Samsuri (2015: 18) stated that morality is not only related to human life but also related to the culture that develops in society. Therefore, Mulder (2001: 126) states morals and ethics need to be used by humans to sharpen their minds, seek the truth, and place themselves according to their proper position. Based on these considerations, *Unen-Unen* as one of the elements of culture can be used by the Javanese society to sharpen their minds through moral teachings. Thus, *unen-unen*, especially regarding the concept of anti-corruption, will be analyzed to obtain moral lessons, and a guide to prevent corruption. The anti-corruption movement is not only aimed at capturing perpetrators but also needs to pay attention to avoid it. It can be done in various ways, including through education, such as moral education, and improving governance [13].

3. Discussion

3.1. The concept of: Aluwung Kalah Wang Tinimbang Kalah Wong

- *aluwung*: *luwih becik* 'better' (Poerwadarminta, 1939: 7),
- *kalah*: *kasoran, isih dikungkuli* (Poerwadarminta, 1939: 181), 'lost', 'still superior'
- *wang*: *duwit* (Poerwadarminta, 1939: 655), 'money'
- *tinimbang*: *dipandhing karo* (Poerwadarminta, 1939: 606), 'compared to'
- *wong*: *tiyang, titah kang pinaringan budi* (Poerwadarminta, 1938: 669), 'man', 'creature bestowed'

*Wang* and *wong* are the focus of meaning on *unen-unen*. *Wang* can mean money, wealth, and everything related to material that has economic value, while *wong* is 'human'. Another vocabulary that builds this *unen-unen* is *aluwung* 'better' which means a tendency or appeal to choose between several choices, and *kalah* 'lose' which explains a situation when we do not win or not superior. The concept of anti-corruption contained in *unen-unen* is as a human being we should not take the rights of others, whether in the form of property or material. If someone does corruption, then he has violated the value of humanity by prioritizing material to enrich them.

Through the concept of anti-corruption, we can teach some moral-teaching such as an individual needs to respect the rights of others. Someone who prioritizes material always strives to gain personal advantage and do not recognize the rights of others. Therefore, the humanitarian aspect needs to be taught early by respecting the rights of fellow human beings. This moral teaching can be well understood at the stage of post-conventional morality. But it would be better if the moral message about the importance of holding humanity introduced early (conventional stage). When someone learns to adjust to other individuals as part of a wider community, it will be an effort to prevent corruption.

3.2. The concept of: Aja Melik Darbeking Liyan

- *aja* 'don't': *ora kena* (Poerwadarminta, 1939: 3)
- *melik* 'wants to have': *kepengin ndarbeni* (Poerwadarminta, 1939: 301)
- *darbe* 'belongs': *apa-apa kang sing didoweni* (Poerwadarminta, 1939: 65)
- *liyan* 'others': *sanes* (Poerwadarminta, 1939: 273)
The symbols used in this unen-unen focused on phrases consisting of four vocabulary words. The word aja 'do not' means the ban or not to act. Then, melik 'wants to have' is a symbol in the form of wanting to own. Then, darbe 'belongs' means something that is owned by someone or a creature. Lastly, liyan means something that is outside of him. The concept of anti-corruption in aja melik darbeking liyan is about not to be tempted to something that is not we own.

Therefore, the moral teachings expressed in this unen-unen are to avoid being the envy of other people things. Moreover, corruption can occur due to jealousy as internal factors, who want to have what is owned by others such as wealth or material, power, and social recognition [13]. This envy can appear in humans since childhood. Therefore, if this moral message can be taught in a period of pre-conventional, it is hoped that it can become a guide for children to not take the rights of others for their interests in the future.

3.2. Narima Ing Pandum

- narima ‘accept’: tampa kalawan panuwun (Poerwadarminta, 1939:621)
- ing ‘in’: ancer-ancer nelakake dunung (Poerwadarminta, 1939: 172)
- pandum ‘offer’: pepesthen (Poerwadarminta, 1939:463)

This unen-unen consist of three vocabularies namely narima, ing, and pandum. Narima 'accepts' is a verb that means to receive. Ing 'in' is a preposition in unen-unen. The pandum means something that has been given or has become God's provision. The concept in unen-unen is a suggestion that humans as creatures of God should accept what has become His provision. The concept of anti-corruption contained in it is about to understand one's potential so it does not live in a way that exceeds its potential and abilities. By understanding self-potential and everything according to different measures between people, it is expected to reduce the tendency of corruption in a person. Especially those who do not have satisfaction with what they receive, will be easier to commit acts of corruption due to external factors [3].

Moral teachings from this Unen-Unen are about the acceptance of God’s provision for himself. Recognition can lead to other good qualities, such as understanding self-potential so they can fight according to their abilities and not exceed the limits. The concept of accepting does not mean stopping one's efforts to be better, but recognizing what is intended to be and being able to fight as much as possible for his abilities. Understanding this morality can be taught in conventional times and will develop in the post-conventional stage.

3.3. Aja Ketungkul Marang Kalungguhan, Kadonyan lan Kamareman

- aja 'do not': ora kena (Poerwadarminta, 1939:3)
- ketungkul ‘focused’: ora ndangak (Poerwadarminta, 1939: 615)
- marang ‘to’: tumuju (Poerwadarminta, 1939: 295)
- kalungguhan ‘position’: pepangkat (Poerwadarminta, 1939: 279)
- kadonyan ‘mortal life’: apa-apa kang gegayutan karo donya (Poerwadarminta, 1939: 74)
- lan ‘and’: karo (Poerwadarminta, 1939: 259)
- kamareman ‘satisfaction’: wis nrima (lega) atine (Poerwadarminta, 1939: 296)
The *unen-unen* above is a phrase consisting of seven vocabulary words. *Aja* is a symbol that means prohibition for a particular action. *Ketungkul* means focusing or fully concentrating on a particular action. *Marang* is a preposition in the *unen-unen*. *Kalungguhan* is a meaningful symbol of position. *Kadonyan* is about the world and all things related to the world. *Kamareman* can mean satisfaction with something. The concept of anti-corruption in the *unen-unen* is not to prioritize the world. Corruption is an action to obtain satisfaction such as position. *Kalungguhan* 'position' is considered as one of the factors causing corruption, because with this position humans can take advantage of people opportunities. *Kadonyan* 'worldliness' and *kamareman* 'satisfaction' is always the root of temptation for greedy humans. This is supported by Wattimena (2012: 120) by stating that every human being seems to be helpless and weak when faced with power and wealth.

Moral teachings in this *unen-unen* are about life that should not focus on position, world things, and self-satisfaction. To get maximum results in an effort to prevent corruption, this moral message will be better if introduced early in the pre-conventional period (instrumental orientation stage) by teaching children not only to pursue personal gain or satisfaction. When children reach a religious orientation stage in adulthood (post-conventional), they have an awareness of life other than life in the world, so it is not best to focus on a world that can disappear at any time.

3.4. *Anutupi babahan Hawa Sanga*

- *anutupi* ‘close’: *mineh* (Poerwadarminta, 1939: 617)
- *babahan* ‘hole’: *bolongan ing bebatur* (Poerwadarminta, 1939: 23)
- *hawa* ‘lust’: *kareping ati* (marang piala) (Poerwdarminta, 1939: 166)
- *sanga* ‘nine’: *wilangan 9* (Poerwdarminta, 1939: 544)

Symbols in this *unen-unen* are phrases consisting of four words, namely *anutupi, babahan, hawa* and *sanga*. *Anutupi* 'cover-up' is a series of meaningful phonemes covering. *Babahan* 'hole' means a hole. *Hawa* 'lust' means the lust that exists in humans. *Sanga* 'nine' means the number of nine holes in the human body.

These nine holes are holes in the human body, consisting of two eye holes, two noses, two ears, mouth, rectum, and genitals. All these holes have roles in human life and are believed to be the beginning of the temptation to commit corruption, such as ears that want to listen to praise for what is achieved or owned. The concept of anti-corruption in the *unen-unen* is humans can keep nine holes in their bodies. Excessive desires can precede corruption and motivated by the intention of them to exceed the limits of their own abilities. This desire can be triggered by lust that comes from nine holes or to fulfill mere satisfaction. Therefore, the concept of anticorruption in this *unen-unen* means that in living life, humans must always be aware of all disturbances and temptations to do what is not good and immoral. Because attraction can occur to everyone, and can only be conquered by each of them [15].

*Anutupi babahan Hawa Sanga* taught us that as a human being should always maintain the lust of world’s temptation. This moral message can be taught in pre-conventional times where children are still learning to sort out right and wrong. During this time, parents, especially mothers, can teach their children the understanding of the nine holes in their body and try to protect them by doing the right thing. Mothers can teach children to defend their views to avoid jealousy over other people's property from the two holes in their eyes. Mothers can teach children to keep two ear holes to listen to good things and not be tempted to do bad things when they heard. Mothers can teach children to use one mouth hole to speak well. For anal and genitals, the mother can teach them that it should always be protected so they are not used for different actions to have personal satisfaction.
4. Conclusion

Javanese Unen-unen contains noble and applicable values to answer various intergenerational problems. One of the issues that got a solution from the unen-unen is corruption. Corruption is an immoral act that can occur due to internal and external factors, which are detrimental to society. Cultural approach is one of the efforts to prevent corruption. Unen-unen can be used to prevent acts of corruption based on the Javanese cultural approach. Unen-unen makes the concept of anti-corruption was obtained through cultural approach. The moral teaching can be taught early from the pre-conventional stage and starts from the nearest environment such as family (mother). By utilizing local wisdom to deal with corruption in Indonesia, it is expected to form anti-corruption generations. This anti-corruption generation has an anti-corruption moral and understands from an early age so it can reduce the number of corruption in Indonesia.

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