

## The Word Ummi And Its Derivation In The Qur'an (Semantic Analysis)

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### Abstract

The word ummi originally meant someone who was not good at reading and writing which happened in the jahiliyah era or what is known as the age of ignorance, but this word has other meanings. Therefore, this study aims to find out the word ummi and its derivation in the Qur'an. In this study, the researcher used a qualitative type of research using a descriptive approach, which by being described in the form of words and language, in a special natural context and by utilizing various scientific methods. In this study, it was revealed that the word ummi and its derivation in the Qur'an when viewed from each verse of the Qur'an with all its derivations into two groups. The first group is some of the scholars of the book, found in surah al-Baqarah verse 78. The Second Group are people outside the scribes, which is meant those who are outside the scribes meaning people who do not believe in the books that are returned to the prophets who have received revelation from Allah SWT before the prophet Muhammad SAW.

**Keywords:** *Ummi; Derivation; Semantic; Ilmu Dilalah*

### Abstrak

Kata ummi awalnya bermakna seseorang yang tidak pandai membaca dan menulis yang hal ini terjadi pada jaman jahiliyah atau yang dikenal dengan zaman kebodohan, namun kata ini memiliki makna lain, oleh karena itu penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui kata ummi dan derivasinya dalam Al-Qur'an. Dalam penelitian ini peneliti menggunakan jenis penelitian kualitatif dengan menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif, dimana dengan cara dideskripsikan dalam bentuk kata-kata dan bahasa, pada suatu konteks khusus yang alamiah dan dengan memanfaatkan berbagai metode ilmiah. Pada penelitian ini diungkapkan bahwa kata *ummi* dan derivasinya dalam al-Qur'an jika dilihat dari masing-masing ayat al-qur'an dengan segala derivasinya ke dalam dua kelompok. Kelompok pertama ialah sebagian golongan ahli kitab, terdapat pada surah al-Baqarah ayat 78. Kelompok Kedua yaitu orang-orang di luar ahli kitab, yang dimaksudkan orang-orang yang diluar ahli kitab artinya orang yang tidak percaya akan kitab-kitab yang diturunkan kepada nabi-nabi yang telah menerima wahyu dari Allah SWT sebelum nabi Muhammad SAW.

**Kata Kunci:** *Ummi; Derivasi; Semantik; Ilmu Dilalah*

## INTRODUCTION

The present period of the Prophet Muhammad as a Prophet, known as the Jahiliyah period, and his people were also termed the Jahiliyahs.<sup>1</sup> According to the beliefs of Muslims and recorded in history, this term arose because they did not know literacy and had no ethics.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, literacy was famously a reproachful and taboo thing for people who lived during the time of Jahiliyah.<sup>3</sup> If it is true that people who lived during the Jahiliyah period could not read and write, then there is no wrong assumption that the Prophet Muhammad could not read and write, because the environment at that time was illiterate. However, this is different from Eva Nugraha's explanation, she explained, that none of the Jahiliyah recitations in the Qur'an are in harmony with the meaning of illiteracy.<sup>4</sup>

The Qur'an is a holy book of Muslims that contains various sources of Islamic teachings. Serves as a guide and guide for life to achieve the happiness of the world and the hereafter.<sup>5</sup> Therefore Muslims should learn the Qur'an early. The Qur'an descends on the Arabian peninsula and uses Arabic, so it is highly recommended that we interpret the language so that we can read, interpret, understand and carry out what is stated in the Qur'an.<sup>6</sup>

One of the contents of Islamic education is a science that begins with reading and writing skills and the development of other sciences.<sup>7</sup> One of the reading skills is reading the Qur'an. The initial effort in producing a generation of Islam with Quranic insight was to educate the age of the child and instill a high love for the Qur'an and strive to learn it properly and correctly. In order to get the virtue of reading the Qur'an.<sup>8</sup>

## METHOD

The type of research that is discussed in this study is a type of qualitative research. Qualitative research as the opinion of Amirul Hadi by quoting the opinions of Bogdan and Taylor is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words of people and observed behaviors.<sup>9</sup> Using this type of qualitative research is intended to be able to provide an overview of a phenomenon or symptom of a certain state, whether

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<sup>1</sup> Ahdi Ahdi and Hamdan Firmansyah, "Buy and Selling in the Perspective of Jahiliyah and Islam a Comparison Study a Review of Sharia Economic History," *International Journal of Nusantara Islam* 8, no. 2 (2021): 264–73, <https://doi.org/10.15575/ijni.v8i2.11987>.

<sup>2</sup> Jawwād 'Alī, *al-Mufaṣṣal fī Tārīkh al-'Arab Qabl al-Islām* (Baghdād: Jāmi'ah Baghdād, 1993), 38

<sup>3</sup> R. H. Tamimi, *Muhammad SAW dan Peletakan Dasar Peradaban Islam*, *Jurnal of Islam and Plurality*, Vol. 3, No. 1, (Juni, 2018), 40.

<sup>4</sup> Eva Nugraha "Konsep al-Nabi al-Ummi dan Implikasinya dalam Penulisan Rasm" *Refleksi Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin*, Vol. 12, No. 2, (2011), 102

<sup>5</sup> Jan Ali, "Islamic Revivalism: The Case of the Tablighi Jamaat," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 23, no. 1 (April 1, 2003): 173–81, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13602000305935>.

<sup>6</sup> Afdal Afdal, "Implementasi Metode Ummi Dalam Meningkatkan Kemampuan Membaca Al-Qur'an Siswa Kelas III B Ibnu Khaldun SD Al-Firdaus Islamic School Samarinda Tahun Pembelajaran 2015/2016," *Pendas Mabakam: Jurnal Pendidikan Dasar* (2016).

<sup>7</sup> *Jurnal Komunitas and Migas Indonesia*, "T He J Ournal of I Ndonesian" II, no. December (2006): 8–11.

<sup>8</sup> Didik Hernawan, "Penerapan Metode Ummi dalam Pembelajaran Al-Qur'an," *Profetika Jurnal Studi Islam* (2019).

<sup>9</sup> Ibnu Rawandhy N Hula, "Tafsir Tarbawi: Analisis Bahasa Dan Sastra Al-Qur'an Dalam Surah Luqman," *Jurnal Ilmiah AL-Jauhari: Jurnal Studi Islam Dan Interdisipliner* 5, no. 1 (2020): 121–46.

in the form of a state of attitude, opinion, or way that includes various aspects of the word *ummi* and its derivation in the Qur'an.<sup>10</sup>

The approach used in research is descriptive qualitative, which is a research approach carried out to understand the phenomenon of what the research subject experiences holistically by means of descriptions in the form of words and language, in a natural special context, and by utilizing various scientific methods. Because in this study there are several opinions in answering the formulation of the problem studied with theories.

## RESULT

The word *ummi* originally meant someone who was not good at reading and writing which happened in the jahiliyyah era or what is known as the age of ignorance.

**Table 1.** The word Ummi and its Derivation in the Qur'an

السورة	جمع	مفرد	رقم
البقرة : 78	امثون	الامئ	1
ال عمران : 20	الامئن	الامئ	2
ال عمران : 75	الامين	الامئ	3
الأعراف: 157	-	الامئ	4
الأعراف: 158	-	الامئ	5
الجمعة : 2	الامين	الامئ	6

The above data shows that the word *ummi* has two meanings, which refer to two groups.

## DISCUSSION

### 1. The First Group is Some of the Scriptures

They are called *ummi* because of their ignorance of the nature of the content and meaning of their own scriptures. This group has been clearly described by the Qur'an in sura al-Baqarah verse 78. The second group are people outside the Scriptures, they are the ones who never got the book of samawi handed down to the prophets before Muhammad Saw. Specifically, M. Quraish Shihab states that they were Arabs, especially the Meccans. He stated that the Arab society at the time of Jahiliah was generally not very good at reading and writing, more so the women, therefore they were called *ummi*. The first group of the word *ummi* and its derivation in the Qur'an is found in surah al-Baqarah verse 78;

<sup>10</sup>Siti Nuradni( Universitas Islam Negeri Syarif Hidayatullah) Adzkia, *STUDI TENTANG TARÁDUF DALAM AL-QUR'AN (Kajian Terhadap Kata Khalaqa- Ja'ala Dan Khauf- Khasyah )*, 2019.

Terjemahnya:

*Dan diantara mereka ada yang buta huruf, tidak mengetahui Al kitab (Taurat), kecuali dongengan bobong belaka dan mereka hanya menduga-duga. (Q.S Al-Baqarah:78).*

## 2. The Second Group of People Outside the Scribes

The Arabs of the jahiliyyah, are called *ummi* because they are not from the class of those who got the scriptures. Besides, the writing culture is not part of their tradition, for them writing is a disgrace. (Q.S. Ali Imran verses 20 and 75, and Q.S. al-Jumu'ah verse 2)

Q.S. Ali Imran verses 20 and 75

Terjemahnya:

*Kemudian jika mereka mendebat kamu (tentang kebenaran Islam), Maka Katakanlah: "Aku menyerahkan diriku kepada Allah dan (demikian pula) orang-orang yang mengikutiku". dan Katakanlah kepada orang-orang yang telah diberi Al kitab dan kepada orang-orang yang ummi[190]: "Apakah kamu (mau) masuk Islam". jika mereka masuk Islam, Sesungguhnya mereka telah mendapat petunjuk, dan jika mereka berpaling, Maka kewajiban kamu banyalah menyampaikan (ayat-ayat Allah). dan Allah Maha melihat akan hamba-hamba-Nya.*

The meaning of the above verse is that when the scribes debate you (O Apostle) about Tawhid after you have established hujjah to them, read to them, "Verily I am sincere to Allah alone so that I will not associate anyone with Him, nor will those who follow me from the believers, they are sincere to Allah and submit to Him". And say to them and the *musyrikin* of the Arabs and others, "verily if you convert to Islam, then you are on the straight path (*Hidayah*) and the truth. And if you turn away then the charitable calculation of your deeds to Allah, I have no obligation but to convey them whereas I have explained to you and I have established hujah-hujah to you, and Allah knows his servants, none of their circumstances are vague to him.

The word *Ummi* in this verse means a person who does not know to read. according to some interpreters, *ummi* is an Arab *musyrik* who does not know to read. Some others are those who are not given the al-Kitab.

Terjemahnya:

*di antara ahli kitab ada orang yang jika kamu mempercayakan kepadanya harta yang banyak, dikembalikannya kepadamu; dan di antara mereka ada orang yang jika kamu mempercayakan kepadanya satu dinar, tidak dikembalikannya kepadamu kecuali jika kamu selalu menagihnya. yang demikian itu lantaran mereka mengatakan: "tidak ada dosa bagi Kami terhadap orang-orang ummi. mereka berkata Dusta terhadap Allah, Padahal mereka mengetahui.*

What is meant by the *Ummi* people in the above verse is Arabs. In ali 'Imrān's letter: 75 explains the arbitrary behavior of the People of the Book. And among the *ahlu* of the book of the Jewish class there is one whom you entrust to him a great deal of treasure and he will hand it back to you without betraying it. And among them there is also one who, if you entrust him with one dinar only, he does not pass it on to you, unless you have expended all efforts to ask for it. And because of all that it was the corrupt belief that caused them to justify the treasures of the Arabs in vanity ways, and they said, "there is no sin and error upon us when eating their treasures, for Allah justifies them for us." And this is a lie to God, they say that with their lips, while they themselves know that indeed they are really lying.

They assumed that eating the property of the Arabs was lawful. The meaning of *al-Ummi* pronunciation contained in this verse does not have the meaning of people who cannot read and write, but rather has the meaning of Arabs. The book of Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Adzim by Ibn Katsir also explains that lafad *al-Ummi* means Arab.

Allah explained that it was He who sent to the arabs who were still illiterate, who at that time did not know to read and write, an apostle from their own circle, namely the Prophet Muhammad saw with the following task:

1. Recite the holy verses of the Koran in which there are instructions and guidance for obtaining the good of the world and the Hereafter.<sup>11</sup>
2. Cleanse them of misleading creeds, hypocrisy, and barbaric qualities of *jahiliyah* so that they are in the faith of obeying God, not submitting to misleading leaders, and no longer believing in their offerings such as stones, idols, wood trees, and so on.
3. Teach them the Bible which contains the religious sharia and the laws and wisdom contained therein.

The people of the Jewish and Christian classes and the *musyrik* could not have abandoned their *ijma* and agreement in obscurity until it came to them a clear description and a real *hujah*.<sup>12</sup> Whereas the scribes of the book, namely the Jews and Christians and the pagans, will not abandon the heretical beliefs and destroy *tauhid*, until they come to them waiting for the sending of the prophet and say: we will not leave our religion until the promised prophet is sent.

Meanwhile, what is meant by people who are outside the scribes means people who do not believe in the books handed down to the prophets who have received revelation from Allah SWT before the prophet Muhammad saw. They are a group of people who are always hostile to the scholars of the book because they do not know the human teachings taught in the bible. So that those who belong to those who are outside the scribes are those who do not accept the teachings in the *al-Kitab*.

M. Quraish Shihab in his book of interpretation, tafsir al-Misbah: The Message, Impressions, and Harmony of the Qur'an, several times states that the word *ummi* is taken from the word *um* (mother) in the sense of someone who is good at not reading and writing. It is as if a person's situation in terms of knowledge is the same as his state when he was born to his mother. This opinion is similar to the interpretation of the majority of interpretive scholars who interpret the word *ummi* with "*illiteracy*", in the sense of not understanding literacy. However, if you look at the context of the discussion of each verse, then the meaning is allegedly still not quite right.<sup>13</sup>

Reading and writing take precedence in contemporary times now that for someone who can't read and write then he is very stupid. Human dependence now on books and pens or it can be said that reading and writing things is very natural, so this is the opposite of the era of the Prophet Muhammad who only used strong memory and memorization. So in this day and age do not be surprised that the majority of the Quraish and the Arabs at the time of the Prophet Muhammad could not read and write, because according to the Quraish and the Arabs who could read and write were fools of his memory and memorization. The Prophet Muhammad was made from the class of those who could

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<sup>11</sup> Muhammad Farooq and Nagina Kanwal, *Summary of Holy Quran : An Ultimate Guide Series*, 2019.

<sup>12</sup> Reuven Firestone, "Muhammad, the Jews, and the Composition of the Qur'an: Sacred History and Counter-History," *Religions* 10, no. 1 (2019): 1–4, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel10010063>.

<sup>13</sup> Muhammad, "Al-Ummi Dalam Al-Qur'an; Studi Tafsir Tematik Terhadap Literasi Nabi Muhammad," *Tribakti: Jurnal Pemikiran Keislaman*, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.33367/tribakti.v3i1i.963>.

not read and write so that the Prophet Muhammad would avoid the ridicule and ridicule of the Quraish and the Arabs during the time of the Prophet Muhammad.

Historically, some argue, this *annabil ummi* was attached to the Messenger of Allah because when he was born he was already in an orphan condition. So the figure of *ummi* (mother) is needed by him and attached directly to him because his "mother" (caretaker) Kanjeng Nabi is directly from Allah Almighty through the angel Gabriel. However, this opinion is refuted by some *mufasir* because it only interprets "umi" from the physical meaning of mother. While linguistically, the word *al-ummi* comes from Arabic, *al-um* which means "mother". However, the word *al-ummi* has a broad, diverse, unique, debatable meaning, and is even an enigma in the history of human civilization. *Ummi* in *Lisanul Arab* is often referred to as a person who is taken care of by his mother himself at home, or mother/ mother. Various interpreters, linguistically, agree that *ummi* cannot read and write. However, the meaning of *al-ummi* should not be interpreted linguistically alone, but rather in history and its implied meaning. Why? Because the Qur'an surah Al-'Ankabut says the prophet Muhammad Saw never read any book or wrote it before the Qur'an was handed down.

## CONCLUSION

The word *Ummi* and its derivation in the Qur'an when viewed from each verse of the Qur'an with all its derivations into two groups. The first group is some of the scholars of the book, found in surah al-baqarah verse 78. Where this verse explains that most of the Jews were illiterate, and did not know the contents of the Torah other than the fables told by their priests. that is to say, in that era, it was also known as the *jahiliyyah* age or the dark age, where people in that era could not tell which was good and which was bad. they do something they love without having to think about the impact that will happen in the future. The second group is people outside the scribes, which is meant people who are outside the scribes meaning people who do not believe in the books that are returned to the prophets who have received revelation from Allah SWT before the prophet Muhammad saw. They are a group of people who are always hostile to the scholars of the book because they do not know the human teachings taught in the bible. So that those who belong to those who are outside the scribes are those who do not accept the teachings in the *al-kitab*.

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