

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Qur'an is the holy book of Muslims and serves as the primary source of religious guidance, moral values, and theological teachings. Beyond its religious significance, Qur'an can also be studied as a linguistic discourse because it employs language as the main medium for conveying meaning. Through its linguistic structures, rhetorical devices, and communicative strategies, Qur'an delivers messages that guide human understanding and behavior. Therefore, in addition to theological and exegetical approaches, Qur'an has increasingly become the subject of linguistic studies, including pragmatics, which examines how meaning is constructed and interpreted in context (Abdul-Raof, 2006)

One of the important contexts discussed in the Qur'an is eschatology, which refers to events related to the Hereafter, including resurrection, the Day of Judgment, accountability, reward, and punishment. Eschatological contexts are closely related to moral responsibility and divine justice because they depict the consequences of human actions and the process of judgment. In this study, the eschatological context is limited to selected Qur'anic verses that contain communicative acts performed by non-human entities. Thus, eschatology serves as the contextual boundary of the study rather than the primary object of analysis.

Within these selected eschatological verses, the Qur'an presents a unique phenomenon in which communication is not limited to human beings. Several verses depict non-human entities, such as human body parts, natural elements, angels, the Book of Deeds, and other non-human entities, as performing communicative actions. These entities are represented as speaking, testifying, reporting, questioning, responding, or directing others

in relation to eschatological events. For example, certain verses describe hands, feet, and skin as bearing witness against individuals, while another verse portrays the earth as reporting its events. These representations provide the textual data for examining how non-human entities function as communicative participants through their utterances.

From a linguistic perspective, the communicative role of non-human entities can be examined through pragmatics, particularly Speech Act Theory. Pragmatics studies language in relation to context and focuses on how utterances function as actions. (Austin, 1962) proposes that utterances do not merely convey information but also perform actions, while (Searle, 1979) further classifies these actions into various types of illocutionary acts. Through this framework, language can be analyzed not only based on what is said but also on what is accomplished through the utterance.

The application of Speech Act Theory is relevant to the analysis of non-human utterances because their communicative force can be understood through the context and function of the utterances. In selected Qur'anic eschatological verses, non-human entities are represented as performing utterances that contribute to testimony, reporting, accountability, judgment, and the affirmation of divine justice. Therefore, analyzing their illocutionary acts provides an opportunity to examine how non-human entities contribute to the communicative construction of eschatological situations.

Previous studies have examined Qur'anic discourse from various pragmatic perspectives. Likewise, (Mustaka, 2022) analyzed directive speech acts in Surah Al-Mulk and found that imperative expressions perform diverse communicative functions beyond issuing commands. Furthermore, (Nuralita, 2024) examined locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts in Qur'anic legal verses, demonstrating that Speech Act Theory provides an effective framework for understanding communicative intentions in Qur'an. In addition to pragmatic studies, (Rahman, 1980) and (Neuwirth, 2019) discussed Qur'an's eschatological discourse in relation to

accountability, divine justice, and moral responsibility. Although these studies have contributed significantly to the understanding of Qur'anic language and discourse, they primarily focus on divine speech, human communication, or general pragmatic phenomena. Research specifically examining speech acts performed by non-human entities in selected Qur'anic eschatological verses remains limited.

The present study is motivated by the distinctive representation of non-human entities as communicative agents within Qur'anic eschatological contexts. In the selected verses, entities such as body parts, the Earth, Hell, angels, and the Book of Deeds are portrayed as speakers performing meaningful illocutionary acts. Rather than functioning merely as literary personifications, these utterances contribute directly to the establishment of testimony, accountability, and divine justice on the Day of Judgment. This distinctive communicative phenomenon provides an opportunity to extend the application of Speech Act Theory beyond ordinary human interaction to the analysis of non-human speech acts in Qur'anic discourse.

Despite the growing body of research on Qur'anic pragmatics and Speech Act Theory, existing studies primarily focus on divine speech, human communication, or general pragmatic features of Qur'anic discourse. Consequently, the pragmatic functions of utterances produced by non-human entities in selected eschatological contexts remain underexplored. This gap indicates the need for a systematic investigation of how non-human entities perform illocutionary acts and how these speech acts contribute to the construction of accountability and divine justice within their eschatological contexts.

Based on this gap, the present study investigates non-human speech acts in selected Qur'anic eschatological verses using Speech Act Theory. The study aims to identify the types of illocutionary acts performed by non-human entities and to analyze the pragmatic functions conveyed through these speech acts within their eschatological contexts. The study does not

attempt to examine all Qur'anic eschatological verses; instead, it focuses on selected verses that contain relevant non-human utterances. Thus, non-human speech acts remain the central phenomenon of the study, while the selected eschatological verses provide the specific textual and contextual boundaries of the analysis.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the research background that positions Qur'an as a linguistic discourse and examines non-human utterances through a pragmatic approach and Speech Act Theory, this study is directed to address the following research questions:

1. What types of illocutionary acts are performed by non-human entities in selected Qur'anic eschatological verses?
2. What pragmatic functions are conveyed through these non-human speech acts?

1.3 Purposes of Study

Based on the formulation of the research problems, this study aims to:

1. Identify and classify the types of illocutionary acts performed by non-human entities in selected Qur'anic eschatological verses based on Searle's Speech Act Theory.
2. Analyze the pragmatic functions conveyed through the identified non-human speech acts within their eschatological contexts.

1.4 Significance of Study

This study provides a systematic pragmatic analytical framework for examining non-human speech acts in selected Qur'anic eschatological verses

1.4.1 Theoretical Significance

Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of Speech Act Theory as introduced by (Austin, 1962) and further developed by (Searle, 1979) by extending the scope of speech act analysis beyond conventional human-to-human communication. Within Qur'anic discourse, non-human entities can be represented as communicative agents that perform specific illocutionary acts. This study therefore demonstrates how Speech Act Theory can be applied to examine non-human utterances within particular textual and eschatological contexts.

In line with pragmatic perspectives that emphasize the role of context and communicative function in meaning construction (Levinson, 1983); (Mey, 2001), this study examines how the illocutionary force of an utterance can be identified through its function within a particular discourse context. By applying Searle's classification of illocutionary acts to non-human utterances in selected eschatological verses of Qur'an, this study contributes to scholarly discussions on speakerhood, communicative agency, and illocutionary function in religious discourse.

1.4.2 Practical Significance

Practically, this study provides a systematic pragmatic analytical framework for examining non-human speech acts in Qur'an, which can be utilized by students, researchers, and scholars in the fields of linguistics, pragmatics, and Qur'anic studies. This study emphasizes that selected eschatological verses of Qur'an function not only as theological or descriptive narratives, but also contain utterances that perform specific communicative actions.

Through the analysis of non-human speech acts, this study helps readers understand how pragmatic functions such as testimony, reporting, and the affirmation of truth are linguistically realized through the utterances of non-human entities in the context of the Day of Judgment. Furthermore, this

study may serve as a reference for future pragmatic research focusing on non-conventional speaking agents in religious texts. Thus, the findings of this study are expected to contribute to the understanding of how meanings of accountability and divine justice are constructed through the illocutionary functions of non-human utterances within selected eschatological contexts.

1.5 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study explains the relationship between the research object, the theoretical perspective, and the analytical focus employed to examine non-human speech acts in selected Qur'anic eschatological verses. This framework guides the study in analyzing how non-human entities are represented as communicative agents within Qur'anic discourse through a pragmatic perspective and Speech Act Theory.

This study focuses on selected Qur'anic verses that occur within an eschatological context. Eschatology in Qur'an refers to descriptions and situations related to the Hereafter, including accountability, testimony, judgment, reward, punishment, and the revelation of human deeds. Within these contexts, Qur'an portrays not only human beings but also non-human entities as participants in communicative interactions related to the process of divine judgment. In this study, however, eschatological discourse functions as the contextual boundary rather than the primary object of analysis.

The selection of verses is limited to Qur'anic passages that contain relevant non-human utterances or communicative acts within an eschatological context. The selected verses represent different eschatological situations and different types of non-human entities relevant to the research focus. Therefore, the selection is not intended to cover all Qur'anic eschatological passages, but to provide relevant textual data for answering the research questions.

The research specifically examines verses that represent non-human entities such as bodily organs, natural elements, and other non-human

entities as performing communicative actions. These entities are depicted as speaking, testifying, responding, or reporting information concerning human actions in the Hereafter. Such representations indicate that non-human entities in Qur'an function not merely as narrative elements but also as communicative participants whose utterances perform particular actions within the selected contexts.

To analyze these utterances, this study applies a pragmatic approach, particularly Speech Act Theory proposed by J. L. Austin and further developed by John Searle. Through this framework, the utterances produced by non-human entities are analyzed based on their illocutionary acts and pragmatic functions within the selected contexts. The analysis focuses on identifying the types of illocutionary acts represented in the selected verses and explaining the pragmatic functions conveyed through these utterances.

In this study, pragmatics functions as the primary linguistic approach used to understand meaning in relation to context. Within pragmatics, Speech Act Theory is employed to examine how utterances function as communicative actions. The study particularly focuses on illocutionary acts because they represent the communicative action performed through utterances. These theoretical concepts are then applied to analyze non-human speech represented in selected eschatological verses of Qur'an.

The unit of analysis is the non-human utterance rather than the Qur'anic verse as a whole. Therefore, a verse is included in the analysis when it contains a relevant utterance performed by a non-human entity. Verses that merely describe eschatological events without containing a relevant non-human utterance are outside the primary focus of the analysis. Accordingly, a single selected verse may contain one or more relevant utterances, depending on the communicative acts represented in the verse.

Based on this framework, the study seeks to explain how non-human entities in Qur'an are discursively represented as communicative agents and how their utterances contribute to the construction of meaning within

selected eschatological contexts. Thus, non-human speech acts constitute the central phenomenon of the study, while the selected eschatological verses serve as the textual and contextual boundaries of the analysis.

