LINGUISTIC AND VISUAL REPRESENTATION OF PAKISTANI CULTURE IN AMERICAN VISUAL NARRATIVES: A SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS OF MS. MARVEL WEB SERIES

BY

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THESIS AND DEFENSE APPROVAL FORM

The undersigned certify that they have read the following thesis, examined the defense, are satisfied with the overall exam performance, and recommend the thesis to the Faculty of Arts & Humanities for acceptance.

Thesis Title: Linguistic and Visual Representation of Pakistani Culture in American Visual Narratives: A Semiotic Analysis of Ms. Marvel Web Series

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Candidate of **Master of Philosophy** at the National University of Modern Languages do hereby declare that the thesis **Linguistic and Visual Representation of Pakistani Culture in American Visual Narratives: A Semiotic Analysis of Ms. Marvel Web Series** submitted by me in partial fulfillment of MPhil degree, is my original work, and has not been submitted or published earlier. I also solemnly declare that it shall not, in future, be submitted by me for obtaining any other degree from this or any other university or institution.

I also understand that if evidence of plagiarism is found in my thesis/dissertation at any stage, even after the award of a degree, the work may be cancelled and the degree revoked.

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ABSTRACT

Title: Linguistic and Visual Representation of Pakistani Culture in American Visual Narratives: A Semiotic Analysis of Ms. Marvel Web Series

Western media has frequently linked Muslim identities with extremism, terrorism, or cultural marginalization. However, the depiction of Pakistani culture in Ms. Marvel web series comes as an exception. This research examines cultural representation of Pakistan in Ms. Marvel web series, aiming at both linguistic choices and visual signs. The study investigates the way cultural connotations are fabricated and conveyed through linguistic and visual signs. The sample of the study consists of the linguistic instances accompanied by 25-40 relevant scenes from the web series. The methodology of the study is based on qualitative research, specifically content analysis, to explore the representation of Pakistani culture in the selected Web series. The data is analyzed in the light of Hall's (2005) Representation Theory and Peirce's Semiotic Model (1955). The findings indicate that *Ms. Marvel* depicts Pakistani cultural identity through the deliberate use of Islamic expressions, Urdu phrases, and culture specific references, strengthening the Pakistani contexts. Visually, *Ms. Marvel* integrates religious symbolism, family structures, traditional clothing, and historical memories to shape reliable yet globally reachable representation of Pakistani culture. However, it also involves critical refrains, for instance, surveillance, and racial profiling predominantly through the depiction of American government authorities and their subjective conduct towards Muslims and South Asian communities. These instances mirror the experiences of many diasporic communities, emphasizing the ongoing structural discrimination. Despite the fact that the series strives for validity, it still holds certain stereotypical demonstrations, particularly in its portrayal of otherness and mysticism related to Muslim identity. However, the study concludes that *Ms. Marvel* bids a layered and nuanced depiction that both redefines and challenges traditional representations of South Asian Muslim identities in Western media, even though delicately criticizing the sociopolitical constructions that remain to marginalize them. The study contributes to the ongoing debate on the representation of Pakistani culture in Western media by presenting a nuanced analysis of both linguistic and visual aspects in a popular web series produced in America.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Culture and media are fundamentally interconnected, with media reflecting and also constructing cultural values, ideologies and identities. In the modern era, globalized media channels play an essential role in fabricating and broadcasting cultural signs across borders. Through television, films, and digital series, prevailing narratives about the cultural groups are shaped and promoted, often persuading public opinion and challenging or reinforcing stereotypes. Media then is not simply a neutral channel, but instead a cultural site of meaning-making a process where meanings are created, contested and negotiated. In this context, examining a mainstream web series like *Ms. Marvel* turn out to be crucial, as it contributes to the international debate about cultural representation of Pakistan, within the wider context of western media production and global viewership.

Conversely, language serves as a key vehicle for the preservation and expression of culture. It transmits embedded meanings, hierarchies of values, and worldviews distinctive to the cultural background from which it ascends. According to Hall's (2005) theory of representation, language is not only a replication of reality but a structure via which cultural meanings are created and exchanged. Language (through dialogues, expressions, idioms, and code-switching) serves as an important signifier of identity and also one of the primary markers of cultural authenticity within media texts. Within *Ms. Marvel web series*, the incorporation of Islamic greetings, Urdu phrases, familial honorifics, and culturally explicit language offers the understanding into the representation of Pakistani culture through language and how it is communicated to worldwide audience. Therefore, evaluating linguistic signs within the web series is essential to understanding the construction and representation of culture.

Culture and media have become a central site of academic examination, most notably in analysis of how marginalized communities are represented in both realms. A common statement that captures the interconnectedness of language and culture is, Language is Culture; Culture is Language (Yerian et al., 2024). They are closely related, but their relationship is complex. Language and culture are interconnected and they evolve together. Moreover, when people are learning a language, each element is

essential for establishing the foundation of meaning. As Kadarisman (2015) states that language is the mirror of a culture. The relationship between language and culture has been of interest to researchers. In this regard, Whorf (1956) have shown that the "conditions of meaning and of thinking about meaning are not as simple as words". The relationship is bidirectional, meaning that while language represents culture, it also constructs it. Language is, therefore, not only a part of culture but a carrier of cultural ideas, beliefs, and values (Hymes, 1962). Thus, the emergence of culture in language has led to studying it with the consideration of culture. According to Pennycook (2006), culture is language-based using an integrated set of signifying and semiotic systems such as rituals, dancing moves, graffiti strokes, fashion and apparel trends, postures and gestures used for taking pictures are some examples of these systems. Speakers and writers do not merely act culture, they make it together with others. As culture is partially transmitted through language, it should not come as a surprise that media, as part of culture, are an influential force (Hall, 2005). Some media genres, such as film, television, and new media, contribute to the representation of nations, often in a stereotypical way. However, recent films illustrate a new trend where culture is being represented in a more positive light.

The rise of web series as a genre has had a resounding impact on the changes to media. It allows for a different premise of storytelling and cultural representation due to the alternative objectives of web series in being independently created and produced. Web series appear to be more flexible as cross-feed connections between series episodes are frequently based on themes/documents than plot development; such flexibility undoubtedly allows web series to defy traditional cultural representations more effectively (Jenkins, 2006). "Ms. Marvel" is the first Pakistani-context-based American television mini-series directed by Bisha K. Ali. The directors have worked closely with Marvel Studios to develop it, with the co-creator of Kamala Khan, Sana Amanat also serving as an executive producer alongside Marvel Studios' Kevin Feige, Ali, El Arbi, and Fallah. This series was released on Disney Plus in 2022. It touches upon the theme of culture, religion, and power. It has been viewed by people to be one of the most accurate Muslim representations of all time. It is based on a comic book series Ms. Marvel that has been developed in different volumes by the Marvel studio since 1977 till 2014. In this first Pakistani context based Web series that is released in the international media, the protagonist (Kamala) is seen to have adopted the

characteristics of a quintessential Pakistani American. The researcher has been able to choose this series because it has a captivating plot. It has shown how the life of Kamala as a Muslim minority living in America is. Kamala has experienced some very unpleasant behaviours from her friends, has been bullied several times (Almas, 2023), and also has frequent arguments with her parents about different aspects of their culture and religion. Almost all of the episodes of the series have elements contributing the representation of Pakistani culture. Prominent elements of Pakistani culture depicted in Ms. Marvel are listed below:

- Pakistani Music
- Dressing
- Religion
- Culture
- Language
- Theme of Partition
- Pakistani setting (two of the episodes are filmed in Karachi)
- Paintings

This research is an attempt to add to this emerging discussion by revisiting the representation of Pakistani culture in American visual narrative forms, both linguistic and visual. This study, therefore, aims to investigate the linguistic and visual markers of Pakistani culture in *Ms. Marvel* as it is the first ever American web series that has context dependence over Pakistan. The researcher aims to inspect the linguistic choices (representation of Pakistani culture) made in various contexts during the web series with focus on representation theory (Hall, 2005). The study also intends to investigate the linguistic and visual signs in the web series through semiotic analysis (Hall, Nixon, & Evans, 2024). Ms. Marvel (2022) is an example of a web series in which Pakistani culture is introduced through lexical and visual signs mainly. This web series presents a positive image of an American Muslim Pakistani girl. The use of Pakistani culture and language in Ms. Marvel web series seems to shatter the stereotypical images related with Pakistan and Pakistanis. This study investigates how this series represents Pakistani culture through its language and visuals. Moreover, this study aims to provide an ample understanding of how media demonstrations promote intercultural dialogue and offer insights into cultural identity. By investigating the visual and linguistic

dimensions of *Ms. Marvel*, this research seeks to illuminate the broader implications of cultural representation in media.

1.1. Background of the Study

It was not until the Immigration Act of 1965, which allowed many Asians to enter the United States that this foreign group began to thrive in the Midwest of the USA. By 2050, Asians are expected to constitute up to 33.4 million of the USA's ethnic population, versus 10.7 million in 2000 (Zhang, 2010). Since the arrival of first Asian immigrants in the United States, the number of immigrants has significantly increased. Specifically, 268,000 of the 720,000 new immigrants that arrived in the United States in 1995 were from Asia and Pacific islands (National Research Council, 1997).

Asia, on the other hand, is still the continent with the greatest number of emigrants, and South Asia is one of the leading in numbers, with the majority coming from Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh. Out of South Asian immigrants in the United States, Pakistanis are the second biggest ethnic minority. In fact, according to the population count conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau ongoing since 2010, its population has surged from the year 2000 to the year 2010 and has even doubled since. They predominantly reside in the states of Texas, Virginia, Illinois, Maryland, New Jersey, and New York, of which 25% are found in New York City, where they are the sixth largest Asian subgroup (Migration Policy Institute, 2024).

Unfortunately, Pakistanis have been regularly accused of being closely associated with the heinous attacks of extremist Islamic terrorism, including suicide bombing, bomb blasts, and mosque, and other religious shrines' bombings (Yousaf, 2017). There have been 376 different terrorist incidents of rocket attacks, bomb blasts, and suicide attacks against the state on the land of Pakistan since the day of the tragedy thousands of miles away in the United States of America occurred on September 11, 2001. More than 5114 innocent citizens were brutally killed in these terrorist attacks. It also explains that more than one suicide bombing incident occurred in both 2002 and 2009 and according to Yousaf (2017), under such conditions wherever the Pakistanis live, they have negative perception with them.

The perception has also been confirmed by several of the studies conducted by BBC World. The BBC 2011 country rating poll was conducted across 27 countries and the results of the study show that Pakistanis have been passing through a worst negative image conundrum. Because, according to a BBC world service Glob Scan survey (2014), Pakistanis are equally hated with Iranians by around the world public (BBC World Service/GlobeScan, 2014). According to the poll, globally, 50% of the population had negative perspective about Pakistanis. The most recent issuing of country rating poll survey was done by BBC Global scan in 2017, in which 1800 respondents were involved from 19 countries of the west, under which 58% of the westerners have negative perceptions about Pakistanis (BBC World Service & GlobeScan, 2017).

The media has been constantly promoting the stereotypical portrayal of a certain ethnic group, which has served as a strong influence on the formation of people's perceptions all around the world and does not let them change (Sides & Gross, 2013). Currently, it is also functioning as a turning of a signal into a message. Furthermore, it is also used as a way of transmitting messages to people all around the globe (Hart, 1997). In other words, people will, in turn, form opinions about that specific ethnic group based on the representations they see in the media, mostly ignoring the group that makes up the vast majority.

Moreover, movies or online series have become popular with viewers lately. It should also be noted that a movie or web series may be perceived as a cultural product as it shows the cultural beliefs and practices in the actual world. Also, it becomes a powerful art combined with social importance and conviction. A movie has two sides: one, when a film is broadcast, and second, what viewers perceive out of it (Cloete, 2017). Meanwhile, when, for instance, a movie is devoted to a certain ethnic group such as Pakistanis, its transmission may target some stereotypical characteristics of that group. For example, this ethnic group may be shown in a film as: fundamentalists, extremists, less adaptable and rigid. As a result, the viewers will hold the misconceptions about Pakistanis more strongly (Sides & Gross, 2013).

The web series under consideration in this study is Ms. Marvel produced in 2022. This work depicts Pakistani culture in a positive light. It is a web series based on Kamala Khan's life produced by Disney+. The series depicts how adherence to

Pakistani culture shapes the character's personality; however, it also depicts her existential crisis by presenting Ms. Marvel in relation to two dominant cultures: Pakistani culture, and the "mainstream" American culture. It features a young Pakistani and Muslim girl in Ms. Marvel whose super powers get accidentally activated and takes her heroic form.

Selecting *Ms. Marvel* web series for this study is both intentional and academically significant. In contrast to other popular superhero narratives, *Ms. Marvel* represents a crucial moment in Western media in which a Muslim Pakistani-American girl, Kamala Khan, is spotlighted not only as a superhero, but as a cultural representation navigating heritage, faith, identity and migration. This web series, produced by Marvel Studios and circulated worldwide via Disney+, turn out to be a rich platform to analyze how Pakistani culture is both linguistically and visually represented within an international media landscape.

From the perspective of Hall's Representation Theory (2005), *Ms. Marvel* offers a fertile ground for examining how meanings around "Pakistani culture" are fabricated, circulated, and contested through linguistic and visual signs. Additionally, applying Peirce's semiotic model (1955), allows for a refined understanding of the signs, symbols, and dialogue that carry cultural meaning mainly in the diasporic context.

Significantly, the series does not represent Pakistani culture as an ordinary backdrop, but keenly embeds features such as historical references (Partition of India), Urdu phrases, religious expressions, traditional attire, and diasporic conflict within its storyline. These features make the series a suitable and appropriate selection for discovering the intersection of media, language, and cultural representation. Therefore, this study frames *Ms. Marvel* as an ideological text that does not only reflects but also shapes global ideas on Pakistani culture rather than just an entertainment product that makes it an academically significant artifact for scholarly analysis.

The original Ms. Marvel title, released in 1968, featured an embodiment of the "blonde, blue-eyed, all-American girl", also identified as Carol Danvers. However, when Marvel Comics upgraded Carol Danvers to become Captain Marvel, the first version of that character, it created another image for the new Ms. Marvel. Thus, by

2013, Ms. Marvel was reborn in the face of Kamala Khan, a 16 year old Pakistani American living in New Jersey.

Kamala Khan's parents are from Karachi, but their move to the United States was made before she was born. Muslim culture dominates in Kamala's family: her brother turns out to be a Salafi Muslim; her best friend is depicted in a hijab, and Kamala often spends time in a mosque; her source of inspiration is the Qur'an, which is illustrated in several scenes. Hence, the shift between Carol Danvers as Ms. Marvel and Kamala Khan as Ms. Marvel is clearly distinguishable.

This effort on the part of the comic industry to diversify the representation of superheroes has made quite a splash, both in the media and the academia. The representation of Kamala Khan as Ms. Marvel is of particular significance because it appears to contest the long-standing Orientalist narrative of the 'oppressed Muslim woman', which was used to justify both the violence of western hegemony over the 'Orient' as well as how the 'War on Terror' has been sold, the backlash against multiculturalism and the rise of populism (Khalid, 2017). In stark contrast to the Orientalist narrative of the 'oppressed Muslim woman', Kamala Khan has been lauded as ''a real-world emblem of protest against Islamophobia', and 'a young, female Muslim superhero of our times'.

On the other hand, the Muslim Community has accused the western media of Islamophobia, because of how it portrays them: they are shown to be aggressive, barbaric, submissive wives, or they really struggle with their religion because it is seen as a burden (Kottak, 2016). In the latest *Spider- Man: Far from Home (2019)* movie, a Muslim character has been shown wearing the Hijab, and she is not a terrorist but actually an ally in the movie. Though in Marvel's *Iron Man (2008),* Tony Stark is kidnapped by terrorists that are not "explicitly" Muslim, but they are clearly stereotyped brown skinned, bearded men. Women and children are also shown as helpless and forced to marry.

Then, there is *Black Panther (2018)*, a movie that made history with its unprecedented description of African descent and Black culture. There is so much to admire how wonderfully it was written and its diverse cast. But when it came to portraying Muslims, the only option given to them in the movie was when the prince

saved Nakia from a group of Muslim guys traveling in a caravan who had kidnapped the women in headscarves.

In short, the present study examines the Muslim characters of "Ms. Marvel" and how their depiction is related to the current topics of cultural (mis)representation. This research investigates the cultural connotations associated with numerous signs in Ms. Marvel by studying its linguistic and visual components as signs with the help of Hall's (2005) representation theory. Conclusively, this study is intended to strengthen the broader understanding of how media representations influence socio-cultural discourses about citizenship and cross-cultural dialogues.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

American visual narratives have long been challenged for their stereotypical representation of Muslims, mainly in the post-9/11 era, where mainstream media has frequently linked Muslim identities with extremism, terrorism, or cultural marginalization. Such representations have backed Islamophobic perspectives and the oppression of Muslim communities. *Ms. Marvel* web series (2022), released on Disney+, denotes a substantial cultural moment by presenting a Pakistani-American Muslim female superhero, Kamala Khan, into the Marvel universe. Even though the series has been broadly praised for demonstrating Muslim and South Asian identities more optimistically, a deeper investigation is essential to identify whether it authentically deconstructs prevailing stereotypes or continues to sustain them through a progressive lens.

Therefore, this research aims at examining how Pakistani culture is visually and linguistically portrayed in *Ms. Marvel* through lexical choices, dialogues, and cultural expressions. By applying Hall's theory of representation (2005) and Peirce's Semiotics (1955) this study strives to explore the role of linguistic and visual signs in the construction of meanings and cultural representation. It also examines how these depictions mirror the experiences of the Pakistani Muslim diaspora and whether they offer resistance or uphold the already existing ideological narratives in Western media.

1.3. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are:

i. To identify both linguistic and visual signs representing Pakistani culture in *Ms. Marvel* web series.

ii. To analyze how linguistic signs contribute to represent Pakistani culture in the web series.

iii. To explore how visual signs contribute to represent Pakistani culture in *Ms. Marvel.*

iv. To examine if these representations reconstruct, challenge, or uphold existing stereotypes of Pakistani Muslims in mainstream Western media.

1.4. Research Questions

The study seeks to answer the following primary questions:

i. What semiotic sign types have been used in Ms. Marvel web series?

ii. How do the linguistic signs contribute to representing Pakistani culture in the selected web series?

iii. How do visual signs contribute to representing Pakistani culture in *Ms. Marvel*?

The following are the subsidiary questions:

i. How do the linguistic signs reconstruct, challenge, or uphold existing stereotypes of Pakistani Muslims in mainstream Western media?

ii. How do the visual signs reconstruct, challenge, or uphold existing stereotypes of Pakistani Muslims in mainstream Western media?

1.5. Significance of the Study

This research holds significance in enhancing the existing body of literature representing identity, culture, and media narratives, predominantly within the framework of Western representations of Muslim populations. By concentrating on *Ms. Marvel*, a Disney+ web series, the study may highlight the way linguistic and visual signs are deliberately used to form the perceptions of the audience.

The outcomes of this research may provide awareness into whether current media productions similar to *Ms. Marvel* function as reframed-narratives to existing

Islamophobic generalizations or continue to strengthen prevailing ideological assumptions. Moreover, the study may assist researchers and media specialists by offering a detailed understanding of the way representational elements and semiotic operate within widespread culture to form insights of marginalized identities.

Additionally, the study may inspire future studies to analyze marginalized cultural expressions in conventional media, possibly assisting more authentic and inclusive narratives in global media. Time and additional academic contribution may conclude the wider impact and relevance of this study across linguistic, media and cultural studies.

This research is also relevant to raising awareness about the problems of stereotypes and their overcoming. By considering how the Pakistani culture is linguistically and visually represented in Ms. Marvel, the researcher intends to contribute to the sustained academic debates on cultural stereotypes. Moreover, it identifies the changing dynamics of cultural representation and allows creating a new method of learning and understanding other populations. Thus, the purpose of this study is to make a small step towards providing a more reasonable and fair representation of the Pakistani culture and the role of its representation in the American cultural environment.

1.6. Delimitation

The following points indicate the delimitation of the present study:

- The present study only aims to deal intensively with the linguistic and visual representation of Pakistani culture as employed in American web series, Ms. Marvel. Any other semiotic signs have not been considered for this study.

- To explain how the representation of meaning works through language, there are three different approaches. They are: the reflective approach, intentional approach, and constructionist or constructivist approach. From these three approaches, the researcher will only apply the third approach, or constructivist approach to this study. Other two approaches are not being analyzed.

- The study is only delimited to four or five scenes from each of the six episodes of Ms. Marvel web series which depict Pakistani culture. No other theme or idea has been incorporated in the analysis of this research.

1.7. Organization and Structure of the Thesis

The current research begins with chapter 1, which gives an introduction to the topic, problem statement, research questions, theoretical framework, significance and delimitation of the study. It includes the definitions of the key concepts. It further introduces the particular genre, which is web series and gives note on the theories that will be used for this study. Moreover, it includes significance and delimitation of the study.

Chapter 2 provides the review of related literature on Ms. Marvel web series. The chapter provides the background to this research study. It also describes the genre of the web series and the role of the culture in laying the background of this research study. It also introduces the former related studies, which have critically reviewed the marvel comics and series.

Chapter 3 'Research methodology' provides the methods which are used for the research. It describes the research methodology and data collection techniques of the current research. The chapter describes the research methods that have been used for the present study. It also includes the sample of the study. Moreover, this chapter also explains the way the data was collected and further explained. The chapter also discusses the theoretical framework for the study. The study applies the Representation theory (Hall, 2005) and Semiotics (Pierce, 1955). This chapter also provides the explanation of how the data will be analyzed and interpreted.

Chapter 4 provides analysis of the data, its interpretation and description. Moreover, data presentation is accomplished in two steps. The first step is where the data is analyzed using semiotics and the next step is where the representation has been discussed.

Chapter 5 is the last. It concludes everything and completes the study. It holds the summary of the entire research and the conclusions drawn from the study findings. The recommendations and future implications are also mentioned in it.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter contributes in providing a holistic review of the existing literature associated to the representation of Pakistani culture in the *Ms. Marvel* web series. It delves into key theoretical and analytical frameworks, comprising Hall's Representation Theory (2005) and Peirce's Semiotics (1955), to analyze the linguistic and visual features that create cultural identity. The review evaluates previous researches on the representation of culture in media, concentrating on role of language as a prime vehicle for transmitting cultural values, social norms, and traditions. Moreover, it focuses on the research gaps and frames *Ms. Marvel* within comprehensive discussions of cultural representation in Western media, highlighting the importance of language in affecting cultural narratives.

2.1. What is Culture?

A collection of people's shared thoughts, practices, values, behaviours, and artefacts that shape their way of life are collectively referred to as their culture. Language, religion, customs, the arts, cuisine, social mores, and customs are only a few of the many components that make up this culture. History, society, and geography all influence culture, which is dynamic and changes over time. People use it as a lens to understand the world and how they fit into it (Hall, Nixon, & Evans, 2024).

The following are the essential components of culture (Harry, 2012):

- Material culture includes things like apparel, tools, structures, and artwork.
- Language, values, conventions, and beliefs are examples of intangible elements that make up non-material culture.
- Social systems include things like the government, education, religion, and the family.
- Symbols are things, motions, or pictures that have common meanings.
- Cultural practices are daily activities, customs, and rituals that represent the identity of a group.

Culture is a nuanced and multidimensional phenomenon, reflecting the collective beliefs, values, customs, language, and ways of living (Hofstede, 2001). It impacts the

way human beings identify the world, intermingle with others, and build their selves. Generations often inherit culture through the channels of language, traditional practices, and societal institutions (Geertz, 1973). According to Hall (2005), culture is a system of demonstration through which significance is formed and substituted within a civilization. This definition highlights the part of language and symbols in influencing cultural identities.

According to Schein (2010), culture is divided into three tiers: artifacts (observable symbols, clothing, and rituals), espoused values (shared ideologies and norms), and underlying assumptions (core beliefs and perceptions. Furthermore, Edward T. Hall (2005) led the idea of high-context plus low-context cultures, highlighting those cultural influences play a pivotal role in shaping communication styles. High-context cultures, for instance those in South Asia, depend comprehensively on implicit communication and cultural cues, in contrast to low-context cultures which favor explicit and direct communication.

Reflecting its dynamic nature, culture evolves with globalization and technological progress. Scholars discovered over 160 definitions, highlighting culture's adaptability to historical and social contexts (Heyes, 2020; Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952). In today's world, media, migration, and digital communication constantly shape cultural expression (Tomlinson, 1999).

Culture is generally witnessed as a process of allegorical meanings that are integrated in societal practices. As indicated by Williams (1983), culture is not solely the art but the whole life, the social norms of a community, encompassing every aspect from language and attitude to social organizations and material elements. This perspective extends the comprehension of culture, past conventional patterns of expression to introduce social and financial pursuits that specify a community.

Bahbha (1994) reinforces the significance of cultural blending proposing that cultural distinctiveness is changeable and always in the course of becoming. Bahbha's (1994) post-colonial standpoint confronts the settled concepts of culture, rather spotlighting how cultures amalgamate and shape one another through immigration, colonization and internationalization.

Globalization has profoundly affected cultural dynamics, contributing to both the propagation and intermingling of cultural protocols beyond borders. Appadurai (1996) claims that globalization is redesigning cultural identities, with people steering diverse cultural realms through what we refer "scopes" (ethno scopes, media scopes, techno scopes).

Likewise, Harry (2012) addresses the idea of globalization where holistic cultural conditions are localized and modified to fit the defined needs and frameworks of local groups. This process permits the collaboration of global and regional cultural features result in the invention of exceptional cultural individualities that manifest both global and regional influences.

Cultural identity is a progression and adaptable process often incorporating a negotiation among diverse cultural influences. As reported by Hall (2005), identity is fabricated through a phenomenon of contrast where, individuals specify themselves in connection to what they are not. The finding is especially suitable for entities in cross cultural or diasporic circumstances where they steer multiple connections simultaneously.

2.2. Representation of Culture in Media

Cultural identities are shaped and reflected in large part by the media. In addition to reflecting society, it provides a forum for the establishment, upholding, or questioning of cultural norms and values. Cultural aspects are portrayed in the media as part of representation, which frequently shapes society views and public perceptions (Hall et al., 2005).

Media assists as influential tool in structuring and indicating cultural identities. Intellectuals have examined how media depictions can both strengthen and challenge societal principles and stereotypes. To illustrate Merskin (2011) emphasizes the pivotal role media performs in constructing implications around minority units, often nurturing biased representations. Similarly, Entman (2007) analyzes how contextualizing in media can affect power structures and public perspective of different cultures. There are certain genres of media that play vital role in the representation of culture.

2.2.1. Songs

Songs have remained a medium for conveying and transmitting cultural narratives. Study implicates that music can both retain cultural heritage and facilitate as a channel for challenging prevalent cultural narratives. Although, the commercialization of music frequently directs to the appropriation and falsification of cultural elements, promoting concerns about credibility and reverence for the emerging cultures (Sommier, 2014).

2.2.2. Movies

Movies are persuasive in shaping views of distinct cultures. Studies have manifested that Hollywood movies, specifically, have a history of describing cultural stereotypes, which can strengthen misconceptions and prejudices. In contrast, independent and global films often aspire to propose move nuanced and genuine descriptions of cultures, delivering audiences with eclectic perspectives (Sommier, 2014).

2.2.3. Web Series

The launch of web series has unveiled new channels for cultural representation. These mediums often enable for more innovative freedom and the possibility to explore undervalued stories. For instance, Sommier (2014) highlights the function of minority language, social media in furnishing spaces for multiple cultural reactions, challenging established media narratives.

2.2.4. Documentaries

Documentaries play a vital role in cataloging and illustrating cultural realities. They have the power to teach audiences about various cultural practices and matters. However, the approach of the filmmaker and the thematic directions made can remarkably influence the depiction of the culture being logged, sometimes inducing partial or biased representations (Sommier, 2014).

Media plays a crucial and essential role in the demonstration and spreading of cultural values and identities. Hall (2005) debates that media performances as a "site of cultural representation," where meanings are created, contested, and secured. Over several forms, such as television, movies, ads, and social media, cultural histories are molded and conveyed to audiences globally (Shohat & Stam, 2014).

Illustration in media can impact public activities and contribute to the creation of labels and biases. Lacey (2009) highlights that media illustrations are not mere considerations of authenticity but are made through choice, edging, and conceptual positioning. For example, new media often frame ethnic groups within specific tales that bring into line with central sermons (Van Dijk, 1991).

Scholars such as Douglas (2014) and Bhabha (1994) discuss the idea of "othering" in media representation, where demoted cultures are often represented through unusual or clichéd lenses. This adds to the reinforcement of cultural orders and power subtleties. Equally, positive representation can stand-in cultural gratefulness and inclusivity (Hall, 2005).

The arrival of digital media has prolonged chances for cultural self-representation, allowing demoted groups to test prevailing tales and present dependable racial expressions (Couldry, 2012). Social media stages, in particular, offer spaces for various cultural voices to be heard and shared worldwide (Papacharissi, 2015).

2.3. Representation of Pakistani Culture in Media

The illustration of Pakistani culture in media has progressed over the years, reproducing the country's diverse legacy, civilizations, and societal values. Pakistani media, including television productions, movies, and social media content, often represent cultural themes such as family values, religious beliefs, and social norms (Shahzadi & Ahmad, 2018). However, there have been constant debates about the legitimacy and precision of these illustrations.

In Pakistani television dramas, cultural illustration is often balanced on traditional family arrangements and social issues such as matrimony, honor, and gender roles (Mohiuddin et al., 2018).). While some scholars debate that these representations offer comprehension into Pakistani society, others resist that they reinforce outdated beliefs and edge broad-minded tales (Chaudhary, 2021).

Pakistani movies have also played a momentous role in traditional representation. Movies such as *Bol* (2011) and *Khuda Kay Liye* (2007) have spoken socio-cultural issues while representing essentials of Pakistani culture, containing language, clothing, and music (Malik, 2013). Though, the impact of Bollywood and

Western media has led to mongrelized illustrations that balance traditional and modern cultural elements (Raza et al., 2022).

The over-all media representation of Pakistani culture is often molded by geopolitical descriptions and stereotypes, commonly representing the country through a lens of clash and immoderation (Mao & Ahmed, 2017). Nevertheless, Pakistani content creators on digital platforms are inspiring these descriptions by showcasing the productivity of Pakistani culture through food vlogs, travel biographies, and cultural storytelling (Shah & Makoni, 2024).

2.3.1. Studies on Representation of Pakistani Culture in Media

Numerous studies have observed the illustration of Pakistani culture in media, converging on themes such as uniqueness, sex, and globalization. For example, Yousaf et al., (2021) revealed a content investigation of Pakistani television dramas, emphasizing frequent themes of patriarchy and cultural tradition. Their conclusions advise that although dramas reproduce societal values, they frequently strengthen gender labels and outmoded household dynamics.

In a study by Saeed et al., (2021), the verbal and pictorial illustration of Pakistani culture in news media was investigated, enlightening that typical worldwide media exits often describe Pakistan through a security-centric lens, disregarding its national multiplicity and legacy. The reading called for more stable and several symbols to trial prevailing typecasts.

Raza et al., (2019) discovered the impression of Pakistani movies on traditional observations, observing that movies with durable traditional descriptions contribute to nationwide uniqueness materialization and traditional mediation. They debated that the Pakistani movie production has the prospective to restyle universal observations through reliable storytelling.

Moreover, Bashir et al., (2024) observed the illustration of Pakistani beliefs in alphanumeric media, highlighting the role of social media influencers in encouraging traditional culture and countering undesirable labels. The study found that platforms like YouTube and Instagram have become influential tools for traditional appearance and global commitment.

2.4. Pakistani Culture in Western Media

The illustration of Pakistani culture in Western media has been a topic of extensive academic inquiry, as it repeatedly reflects broader geopolitical narratives and cultural perceptions. Western media outlets, together with news organizations, films, television series, and digital platforms, perform a vital role in shaping global perceptions of Pakistan. Nevertheless, scholarly research proposes that these representations commonly depend on stereotypes, often representing Pakistan through a narrow lens of violence, religious extremism, also socio-political instability, overshadowing the country's rich cultural heritage and diversity (Said, 1978; Ahmed, 2017).

2.4.1. Dominant Themes in Western Media Representation

Scholars have recognized numerous recurring themes in Western media interpretations of Pakistan, including:

An important body of literature specifies that Western media mostly links Pakistan with security concerns, terrorism, and political instability (Galtung & Ruge, 1965; Saeed et al., 2016). In their study, Saeed et al., (2016), evaluated Western news coverage of Pakistan post-9/11 and discovered that media narratives habitually focused on issues regarding terrorism, nuclear threats, and religious extremism, sidelining cultural and social characteristics of Pakistani life. Likewise, Ahmed and Mao (2017), argues that such interpretations have added to a global opinion of Pakistan as a "troubled state," strengthening negative stereotypes that unclears its cultural richness.

Western media demonstrations often portray Pakistan through an "orientalist" lens, as theorized by Said (2014), where Pakistani culture is outlined as exotic, backward, and in contradiction of Western modernity. Bhabha (1994), highlights that such depictions create a dichotomy between "us" (the West) and "them" (Pakistan), raising cultural misunderstandings and supporting colonial era stereotypes. In Western movies and television shows, Pakistani characters are repeatedly described as either losses of harassment or culprits of fierceness, abandoning the complexity and multiplicity of Pakistani cultural characteristics (Shaheen, 2010).

Western broadcasting repeatedly embodies Pakistani women through the lens of cruelty, centering on topics such as forced marriages, honor killings, and boundaries on private freedoms (Abbas, 2022). Although these concerns happen, researchers dispute

that such illustrations present an unfinished and often embellished opinion of Pakistani society, overlooking the assistance, flexibility, and successes of Pakistani women (Hamza & Shirazi, 2024). For example, the representation of Malala Yousafzai in Western media, while emphasizing her inspirational story, has also led to an oversimplified awareness of Pakistani women as fatalities of patriarchy (Alavi, 1991).

The central theme in Western media is the representation of Pakistan as a faithfully conventional and narrow-minded society. Investigation by Hussain (2015) established that Western news exits frequently highpoint matters associated to religious activism while supervising Pakistan's multicultural and various religious civilizations. This discriminatory illustration supports undesirable observations and subsidizes to Islamophobic speeches in the West.

2.4.2. Studies on Representation of Pakistani Culture in Western Media

Iqbal (2017) showed a content examination of major Western news passages, revealing an unequal focus on security-related issues associated to cultural exposure. The research endorsed more composed reporting to pledge the negative impact on Pakistan's global image.

Raza et al., (2023) examined the illustration of Pakistan in Hollywood films, concluding that Pakistani characters were often labelled as antiheros or oppressed personalities, supporting negative discriminations among Western viewers.

Khan and Farooq (2021) discovered the role of documentaries and travel shows in redesigning observations, noting that manufactures such as Anthony Bourdain: Parts Unknown provided a more confident and reliable portrayal of Pakistan's cultural assortment and generosity.

Western widespread media has a recognized history of representing Muslim individualities through generalized and often Islamophobic stereotypes, predominantly in the post–9/11 perspective (Shaheen, 2010; Alsultany, 2012). These representations have often linked Muslims with cultural backwardness, terrorism, and monolithic narratives, a crucial concern is highlighted in the present study's problem statement. Even though some development has been made, such demonstrations remain persistent today (Boccato, 2022).

2.4.3. Implications of Western Media Representations

The way Pakistan is represented in Western media has momentous inferences for cultural mediation, transnational relations, and national uniqueness. Falsifications can spread cultural misinterpretations, disturbing tourism, economic speculation, and the understandings of the Pakistani dislocation (Rizvi, 2005). Nevertheless, precise and diverse representations can substitute multicultural understanding and advance Pakistan's global image.

The depiction of Pakistani culture in Western media is multifaceted and often molded by geopolitical contemplations and pre-existing labels. Although undesirable portrayals persist to govern conventional descriptions, recent modifications present more dependable illustrations in digital media and entertainment offer a promising counterpoise. Researchers (such as Nasir, 2024; Rasool, 2024; Khattak et al., 2021) highlight the need for more comprehensive and precise storytelling that imitates the productivity and multiplicity of Pakistani beliefs.

2.5. Studies Conducted on Ms. Marvel Comics and Web Series

The impact of "Ms. Marvel" also extends to its pedagogical possibilities. Scholars and educators have observed that the series can be used as a teaching tool to foster conversations about identity, culture, and representation (Patel et al., 2021). Viewers can learn more about the challenges of growing up as a minority in a multicultural society by following Kamala's journey. This instructional value is especially significant for developing cultural sensitivity and empathy in younger audiences, who make up the majority of superhero media consumers.

According to Rizvi (2005), the authors were attempting to provide more relatable leads for readers from different backgrounds. In this modern era, superheroes cannot only be seen as humans with white complexion, the notion of all comic-book heroes being simple to read superhero comics was ended by such a change and also forced creators into more careful depictions for minority characters. Pustz (2012) further elaborates on this nuanced depiction, arguing that Kamala provides a complicated and humanizing narrative for the present-day audience.

Moreover, the Marvel Universe has added even more diverse faces to its roster of superheroes with heroes like Miles Morales (a biracial Spider-Man) and America Chavez (Latina superhero). Characters like Kamala, provide unique storytelling viewpoints continue to grow and change as the experiences of their audience become more diverse in terms of origin (Brown, 2019). As a whole these characters, dissimilar as they are on the surface level alone, help to make for a more interesting and robust superhero genre according to Brown (2019).

This series depicts nuanced generational conflicts, mainly between Kamala and her parents. Her parents, firmly entrenched in their cultural and religious beliefs, have frequent conflicts with her more liberal Westernized perspective. The broader generational divide that immigrant families may face are these conflicts (Ali et al., 2020). The series covers intertwining story-lines within the parent and child dynamics, understanding how its cross-generational divide illustrates both: struggles with identity negotiation for immigrant families & that themes of communication are fundamental in bridging familial gaps (Jamil & Kumar, 2021).

Rehman and Mehta (2020) claim that the series often uses color or visual tricks to depict different types of alienation and belonging, what is changed when depicting Kamala's powers as they are linked with her ethnicity. In such a way, it is possible to admit that such powers are not only aesthetic and some of the original super-powers, but they are the parts of the girl's identity as a superhero. The visual features used while describing her powers are the solid evidence of the integration of her heritage with her super heroic personality, proving that the series is keen on the recognition and respect of her ethnicity's traditions.

Meanwhile, Mahmutović and Lovec (2024) looks at how Kamala's powers are illustrated through a transnational superhero iconography. Her story has a supernatural element to it, the origins of which are rooted in Islamic mythology and South Asian folklore making her one-of-a-kind titular superhero Furthermore, cultural myths are intertwined with supernatural power and contribute to a rich character that appeals across demographics.

Ruthven (2022) explains, while the superpowers of traditional superheroes are typically attributed to scientific experiments gone awry or extraterrestrial/hyper

dimensional power transfers, Kamala uses a combination of genetic mutation and cultural myth-making. Born from both, these dual origins find a brand-new superhero genesis that combines the beauty of modern science fiction with timeworn mythological themes.

Elder-Vass (2012) draw attention to the ways in which discussions on "Ms. Marvel" on Twitter touch on representational issues related to gender, race, and religion. These conversations influence public opinion and aid in the social construction of reality. The "Ms. Marvel" writers participate in these discussions and use fan input to guide their narrative and character development.

Chetty et al., (2020) carried out an in-depth evaluation between religion, race, and gender in Ms. Marvel comics, emphasizing how the humorist paints the challenges encountered by a Pakistani- American Muslim female superhero. Their research highlights culturally defined realities of religious dogmatism, and gender inequities portrayed in the narrative.

Mahmutovic (2022) contributes to a more raised representation of Pakistani Muslim identity executed into conventional Western media. Time magazine defines the web series as "groundbreaking," emphasizing its authentic Partition history, depiction of traditions, and subtle cultural references (Time, 2022).

Cooper-Cunningham (2020) probed the subjects of race, gender, and nationality in Ms. Marvel comics, offering unconventional reading that analyzes how the episodes unsettles binary encoding of identity and establishes counter-hegemonic politics. The study implies that Kamala Khan's role challenges established gendered and radicalized talks widespread in post-9/11 America.

2.6. Research Gap

Despite the substantial array of literature on the representation of Pakistani culture in media, considerable research gaps exist that this study intends to address. The already existing body of literature mainly directs attention to broad themes for instance the stereotypical representation of Pakistan in Western media, gender-related dilemmas, and security-driven narratives. (Ahmed, 2017; Saeed, 2016; Shirazi, 2019). However, there is a prominent lack of broad studies that investigate the linguistic and

visual fabrication of Pakistani cultural representation within current Western media, mainly using a dual lens of Stuart Hall's Representation Theory (2005) and Charles Sanders Peirce's Semiotics (1955). The present study addresses the subsequent specific gaps:

Existing literature often focus mainly on visual depictions of Pakistani culture in media or present a general discourse analysis, for instance settings, clothing, and symbols (Iqbal, 2017; Khan & Farooq, 2021). However, this research puts a great emphasis on linguistic representation, discovering the use of language to construct meaning and cultural identity. This emphasis provides a deep understanding of how cultural references, a dialogue, and linguistic choices form insights of Pakistani culture in the Western media, an aspect that has not been adequately explored.

Earlier studies tend to examine media representations by employing either a cultural discourse perspective or a semiotic analysis distinctly (Said, 1978; Hall, 1997). This study, by incorporating Hall's Representation Theory (2005) with Peirce's Semiotics (1955), proposes a more comprehensive perspective that evaluates both linguistic elements and symbolic meaning. This multidisciplinary method provides more profound insights into how cultural representations are shaped and interpreted, filling a gap in the literature.

However, some studies have investigated the demonstration of Pakistani culture in Western news media and films (Raza et al., 2023; Khan & Farooq, 2021), there are limited studies focusing on contemporary media content for instance television series produced by Western media that aims to portray South Asian culture more accurately. This research, aiming on the Ms. Marvel web series, adds new perspectives into how current Western media represents Pakistani cultural values and identity.

Although existing literature showcases stereotypical depictions of Pakistan in Western media (Shaheen, 2010; Rizvi, 2005), there is constrained discussion on how fresh Western media fabrications attempt to stabilize cultural validity with spectators' appeal. This study analyzes whether Ms. Marvel flourishes in accurately demonstrating Pakistani culture through both language and visuals, therefore contributing to the current debate on commercialization versus authenticity of cultural narratives.

Several studies have targeted on specific elements of Pakistani culture, for instance gender or religion roles (Hussain, 2015; Shirazi, 2023), without reflecting on the wider cultural complexity, comprising humor, traditions, language, and familial relationships. The present study strives to fill this gap by providing a multidimensional analysis of the representation of Pakistani culture through several linguistic and semiotic components in Ms. Marvel.

In short, the current research fills a significant gap by offering:

- A language oriented analysis of the representation of culture.

- A dual framework incorporating semiotics and cultural representation.

- An emphasis on recent Western media fabrications representing Pakistani culture specifically rather than traditional representations.

- Insights into the stability between cultural validity and the expectations of Western audience.

- An in-depth analysis of Pakistani culture transcending stereotypes, addressing its richness and diversity. By focusing on these gaps, the present study provides a distinctive contribution to the current discourse on media representations of Pakistani culture, proposing both practical and theoretical implications for cultural representation, media studies, and cross-cultural communication.

CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The current chapter discusses the methodology adopted for the study along with the theoretical framework, research design, research design and sample of the study. The present study uses a qualitative research methodology, specifically content analysis, to explore the representation of Pakistani culture in the Web series. The content analysis technique was selected for the study because it allows for a systematic analysis of textual and visual data and ensures that a rigorous and objective approach is used to analyze the data (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

3.1. Theoretical Framework

According to Hall (2005), representation is the process in which meaning is created by the use of language. It is central to the process of how we make sense of and come to know an object or event. There are also two central and related reasons for that: first is the language as the medium in which cultural meanings are formed and communicated; second is that language is the main source of how we make sense of the world and our place in it. Therefore language constitutes the system by which we classify and specify the world and make it meaningful to ourselves as well as to others (Barker, 2004). In other words, here language contains signs in the form of codes, to signifiers/to the language: sounds, but also written words, electronic images, music, and all objects which function in consciousness or in the world to represent sites and their corresponding signified These signs are the ways in which we say something about our concepts, ideas or sensations to others (Hall, 2005).

Representation operates through two interconnected systems: first, a system of mental representation. It is the 'concept' which is formed in our mind function which together classifies and organizes the world into meaningful categories. We can have a concept of something in our mind – something called a primordial reference and we also know its meaning. However, we cannot communicate the meaning unless a second system of representation, the system of language, is called it is made up of signs which are organized into code. The capacity of the language to produce limitless amounts of connected semantic concepts depends on codes. The codes are a part of our culture, our

shared meanings or our coding, which we learn and also internalize later we become a part of some culture (Hall, 2005).

To begin with, there are three different approaches to explaining how the representation of meaning through language works. The reflective approach, the intentional approach, and the constructionist or constructivist approach. First, in the reflective approach, the word is like a mirror that reflects the true meaning of the object, person, idea, or in the world. The poet Gertrude Stein said, 'A rose is a rose is a rose', it's a rose refers to the plant with thorns and blooms growing in the garden. Here, language function entirely on reflection. This is the reflective approach. It works through reflection or imitation of the truth that is already there and fixed in the world. In other words, signal can also be known as a mimetic approach (Hall, 2005).

Second, in the intentional approach. The meaning is located with the speaker or the writer. He or she impose the meaning on the world by saying so, via language. A word means what the author intends it to mean. Language is about the act of communication and this depend upon shared linguistic conventions and shared codes. Language can never be wholly a private game. A writer's, or speaker's, private intention meaning, it is intended to be conveyed to others, should have to get incorporated in the rules, codes, and conventions of language to be share through, and understood by, other people. Since language is, right through, a social system. It follows that the private thoughts of the writer or speaker have to negotiate will all the other meaning for words or images that have been stored up in language. The reflective and the intentional approaches assume that men's relation to the world is expressed somehow in or through language (Hall, 2005).

Thirdly, a constructionist or constructivist approach. It acknowledges the public or social character of the language. Here, things do not mean; we construct meaning by using representational systems, concepts, and signs. For Constructivists, the material world does not convey meaning. The language system presents our concept, but they do not deny the existence of the material world. It is social actors who use the conceptual systems to their culture and the linguistic and other representational systems to construct meaning to make the world meaningful and to talk about the world meaningfully to others. In other words, constructionists use signs, and they organize into languages to communicate meaningfully with others. In this case, language use

signs to symbolize, stand for or reference objects, people, and events in 'real word'. In addition, language can refer to imaginary things and fantasy words or abstract ideas (Hall, 2005).

From the three approaches above, the researcher has applied the third approach to this research where the researcher uses constructivist perspective. Here, the researcher has analyzed how Pakistani Culture is represented in the media of web series based on the construction of the filmmaker to deliver the meaning to the viewers. Since the media of web series contains language in the form of dialogues and scenes, the researcher will use Ms. Marvel web series to find the meaning or idea by analyzing the representation of Pakistani culture through the dialogues and scenes in it.

3.2. Research Paradigm

The researcher employed an interpretive paradigm for this research to analyze the linguistic construction of cultural representation. According to Creswell & Tashakkori (2007), the aim of this paradigm is to clarify the subjective reasons and meanings behind social actions. With this intent, the researcher investigated the subjective experiences and perceptions of the language used by the characters in the web series. Additionally, it is noted that beyond subjectivity, the interpretive paradigm thrives on uncovering hidden and significant meanings (Ma & Ma, 2022). This paradigm facilitated the study of the underlying meanings of linguistic and visual signs used in the Ms. Marvel web series.

3.3. Research Design

The data for the study is based on the linguistic and visual signs found in the web series. Linguistic data includes the dialogue, narration, and input of characters in the series. Visual data includes the character's appearances, their setting, costumes, and the imagery used. To analyze linguistic data and understand the originally indented connotations of visual data semiotic analysis has been used. Based on Hall's (2005) representational research, this study has also looked at how language and visual cues create, support, and/or refute stereotypes about Pakistani culture.

Content analysis, a qualitative research methodology in which the data being analyzed is in the form of words and not numbers, has been the chosen approach for conducting this research. To understand the representational aspects, Representation

Theory and Semiotics Approach are used to analyze the representation of Pakistani culture in American Narrative.

Therefore, by linking semiotic analysis, and content analysis, this research aims to come up with a conceptual understanding of exactly how Pakistani culture is embodied in *Ms. Marvel* and the probable effect of these representations on the perception of the audience.

The results are provided in a descriptive format, elucidating the representation of Pakistani culture in *Ms. Marvel* web series and the effects they have had on viewers.

3.3.1. Procedure of the Research

The web series *Ms. Marvel* (2022), consists of six episodes, functions as the main data source. Purposive sampling is implemented to select dialogues and scenes that mirror features of Pakistani culture. To prevent randomness and uphold significance, only those linguistic and visual signs were selected in which language use (Urdu/English mix), Islamic expressions, cultural markers, family structures, religious practices, and socio-political themes were foregrounded. Two data sets were formed.

Linguistic Data: Lexical choices that have culturally rich language, for instance Islamic greetings, Urdu expressions, and idiomatic phrases.

Visual Data: Screenshots emphasizing cultural features like architecture, traditional attire, religious practices, and symbolic objects (e.g., prayer spaces, the bangle, partition references).

The analysis is conducted through theoretical and analytical lenses:

Analytical Lens

Charles Sanders Peirce's Semiotic Model as Analytical Framework (1955). Signs are classified as:

- Icons
- Indices
- Symbols

Theoretical Lens

Stuart Hall's Representation Theory (2005) is used to examine the way selected signs circulate ideologies, construct meanings, and also challenge or reinforce prevailing stereotypes about Pakistani Muslims, mainly in Western media narratives.

Procedure

i. The scenes or dialogues are distinguished and categorized into Peirce's three sign types.

ii. For linguistic data, lexical choices are made, observing cultural representations.

iii. Each linguistic sign is analyzed highlighting the way language contributes to the representation of Pakistani culture.

iv. Tables are also created episode wise to shape the data.

v. For visual data, screenshots are taken, and cultural features in them are defined and inferred using both semiotic and representational frameworks.

By merging semiotic analysis with Hall's representation theory, the study allows a refined understanding of the way Ms. Marvel contributes to the prevailing discourse of Muslim demonstration in Western media.

3.4. Sampling

In the study, a purposive sampling technique was utilized. The strength of this method is that it is useful when the need is to reach a focused sample quickly and when proportionality is not a major concern. Therefore, this method depends on the expert judgment in selecting cases or selects cases with an explicit purpose in the mind. The sample for visual analysis comprised 4 to 5 scenes with obvious manifestations of Pakistani culture from each of the six episodes of the Ms. Marvel web series. This resulted in a total of 24 to 30 scenes containing visual signs that mirrored Pakistani culture. The linguistic data encompassed the most significant linguistic signs representing Pakistani culture within *Ms. Marvel*. Linguistic signs were extracted from each episode to ensure a comprehensive analysis.

3.5. Analytical Framework

Semiotics (Peirce, 1955), an analytical framework is used to analyze the linguistic and visual elements of Ms. Marvel. Semiotics, according to Charles Sanders Peirce (1955), consists of three parts sign, object, and interpretant. The sign represents an

object, giving rise to an interpretant, which is the meaning that the interpreter gives to the sign, object, or all three. Hall (2005) further explains these elements by classifying signs into icons, indexes, and symbols.

Charles Sanders Peirce formulated an alternate, more sophisticated view on signs than a simplistic dyadic model which consists of a signifier and a signified. According to Peirce (1955), a sign is not merely a representation of an object; it is a triadic relation. In Peirce's model, a sign consists of the following three elements: a representamen, an object, and an interpretant:

Representamen refers to the sign itself, which consist of sounds, images, words, or another form in which the sign is encased and perceived.

Object is that which the sign is about; the thing, the process, or the concept which we refer to when processing a sign.

Interpretant is the effect or the logic which has been produced by the sign in the mind of the interpreter and has guided the understanding or the action of the interpreter.

For example, the word "tree" pronounced by a speaker is the representamen of the word. The actual tree that is to be thought about is the object; and the mental image or the concept which has appeared in the mind of the person who has heard or read this word is the interpretant. Peirce also divided signs by their relation to their object:

Icons are the signs that resemble their objects. For instance, a portrait of a man is an icon of this man. So is a photo.

Indexes (signs) have a physical or a casual connotation to their object. For example, the smell of mushrooms is an index of having mushrooms in the fridge. An index can also have a spatial connotation, such as a footprint being an index of someone having been somewhere.

Symbols are of the nature of an agreement. These signs function only in the context of a cultural agreement on how these signs are used and understood. Persian word "گرگ" means "wolf" in English, while the word "wolf" itself employs a symbolic connotation, that is "wolf" is a symbol for an animal with Latin name "Canis lupus".

Peirce's (1955) triadic model is a very useful tool because it allows the researchers to explore deeper rigors of the meaning and how signs work in culture. By using this model and applying the classification of signs, this study has analyzed the visual and verbal sign systems of Ms. Marvel and see how those contribute to the representation and communication of the Pakistani culture identity.

3.5.1. Relating Hall (2005) & Peirce (1955) for Linguistic and Visual Analysis

To guarantee a comprehensive insight of cultural representation in *Ms. Marvel*, this research incorporates two main theoretical perspectives: Stuart Hall's (2005) Representation Theory and Charles Sanders Peirce's Semiotic Model as revisited by contemporary scholars (Lacková, 2023). This dual framework permits for a refined analysis that captures both the construction of signs and the cultural meanings they express.

Peirce's triadic model containing icons, indices, and symbols serves as an instrument to categorize and interpret the signs rooted in both language and visuals. This contains traditional clothing, culturally embedded language, religious expressions, and items that grasp semiotic significance.

In the meantime, Hall's Representation Theory (2005) supplements this by diverting focus to the production, interpretation, and circulation of meaning in cultural dissertation. According to Hall's lens, representation is not a reflection of reality but a site where meaning is keenly constructed and questioned. This model reflects how lexical choices, visuals, and signs are rooted within power dynamics and ideological

structures, making it ideal for analyzing how *Ms. Marvel* represents Pakistani cultural in a globalized media space.

Together, Peirce and Hall permit for a multi-layered analysis, Peirce (1955) assists categorize the way linguistic and visual signs operate structurally, whereas Hall (2005) proposes tools to understand their political, cultural, and ideological implications. This fusion supports the investigation of the way *Ms. Marvel* not only signifies Pakistani Muslim culture but also negotiates and arguably redefines it within Western media. Through this combined lens, the research critically analyzes whether the text reinforces, subverts, or re-signifies current stereotypes and prevailing narratives.

3.5.2. Hall (2005) and Peirce (1955): A Linguistic and Visual Representation

Both Hall's theory of representation (2005) and Peirce's semiotics (1955), can be effectively used to analyze both linguistic and visual representations. First, when analyzing language, the researcher has utilized Peirce's semiotics to analyze the different types of signs media use in the language to produce meaning. In a word, we could see, for example, whether and how politicians mix iconic signs which could be metaphors or similes, indexical vegetative signs or statistics or data, and symbol signs which could signify "nation" as an encompassing whole in their speeches. Second, the researcher has used Hall's theory of representation (2005) to see how representations of different people and cultures are formed through the linguistic and visual cues used within Ms. Marvel web series. By so doing, the researcher was able to analyze, for example, what kinds of discourse media use to present, for instance, immigrants, Muslims, or people of colour.

When analyzing visuals, firstly, the researcher has employed Peirce's semiotics that helped to analyze what signs the creators have used in visuals to communicate, how they occur, depict, or are denoted. Consequently, the researcher inquired, for example, how pictures use iconic signs which can be close-ups or wide shots, indexical which can be props, objects, or costumes, and symbolic which can represent religion, nationality, etc. signs in their photos. Secondly, Hall's (2005) theory of representation is used to analyze the ways the visual signs present in the

images are used to represent people and cultures. In short, both Hall's theory of representation (2005) and Peirce's semiotics (1955) have been applied to analyze both linguistic and visual representations.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter provides a comprehensive examination of cultural representations in the series. The study makes use of Hall's (2005) Representation Theory in addition to Charles Sanders Peirce's (1955) semiotic framework, which includes icons, indexes, and symbols.

4.1. Content Analysis

Textual analysis is based on significant linguistic signs representing Pakistani culture throughout the series.

4.1.1. Linguistic Analysis of Episode 1: "Generation Why"

"Generation Why," the first episode of Ms. Marvel, explores the protagonist's upbringing in America and the influence of her Pakistani-Muslim heritage. Both linguistic and visual elements illustrate this contradiction, thereby presenting a multilayered depiction of Pakistani culture. The incorporation of Urdu phrases, religious utterances and familial exchanges is vital for the formation of cultural significance.

This section employs Charles Sanders Peirce's Semiotic Model (1955) of icon, index, and symbol to analyze the construction of meaning in culturally specific contexts. It employs Stuart Hall's Representation Theory (2005) to study how these signs contribute to the negotiation, construction, or reinforcement of Pakistani identity within a diasporic setting.

Episode 1 is the story of Kamala Khan, a Pakistani-American teen in Jersey City. The language, symbol and cultural signifiers subtly introduce various aspects of Pakistani culture like family respect, religion, food, which are seen through the lens of inter-generational conflict that occurs as she grapples with her dual identity. So, in a way these signs are not only representational but are cultural tools for making meaning.

Table 1: Semiotic Categorization of Cultural Signs in Episode 1

No.	Type of Sign	Examples	Interpretation
1	**Icon**	"Kamala beta", "Bacchi", "Salwar kameez" (Marvel Television & Ali, 2022).	Direct cultural imagery representing typical forms of address and traditional clothing
2	**Index**	"May Allah forgive you", "Amma ji, kaisi hain?", "Asalaam alaikum", "Wa alaikum salaam", "Bismillah before you start the car" (Marvel Television & Ali, 2022).	Phrases rooted in religion and kinship, pointing to social norms and spiritual grounding
		"Is this from Nani? Must be things for the baat paaki", "Family car your father earned with his hard-earned money" (Marvel Television & Ali, 2022).	Culturally linked to marriage customs, economic values, and family pride
3	**Symbol**	"Obedience to parents", "Conflict with Western culture", "Halal Guys", "Some gora boy named Rob in Belgium" (Marvel Television & Ali, 2022).	Abstract notions representing moral codes, hybridity, East-West tension, and halal culture as identity markers

Note. Signs are categorized using Peirce's triadic model (Icon, Index, Symbol), with cultural and religious interpretations derived from linguistic and contextual cues.

4.1.1.1. Interpretation and Theoretical Application

Icons

Icons are signs in semiotics that resemble what they signify. Their appearance usually resembles something of what their name signifies.

"Kamala beta." - Muneeba Khan (Kamala's mother)
Ms. Marvel, Season 1, Episode 1, 00:02:15

"Bacchi."- Muneeba Khan (Kamala's mother)
Ms. Marvel, Season 1, Episode 1, approx. 00:03:00

"Kamala beta" and "Bacchi" are semiotic vehicles, and auditory sign-superimposition of standard South Asian family structures. These signs do not only reflect culture (Hall, 2005) but reproduce it, by allocating meaning to parent-child roles in South Asian households and influence the perception of viewers.

"Shalwar Kameez."- Muneeba Khan (Kamala's mother)
Ms. Marvel, Season 1, Episode 1, approx. 00:05:12

Shalwar Kameez refers specifically to the traditional Pakistani clothing. According to the Representation Theory by Hall (2005), it indicates the traditional Pakistani attire. It resembles the apparel worn in Pakistan and other Asian countries both aesthetically and culturally. The term "shalwar kameez", is practically iconic that when it is mentioned, a certain kind of apparel comes to mind. Since shalwar kameez is a popular garment in South Asian society, it instantly conjures up images of Pakistani customs and cultural legacy.

Indices

In semiotics, indices are signs that are directly and causally related to the thing they represent. They often make use of a cause-and-effect relationship to point to or imply the existence of something.

 "May Allah forgive you"- Muneeba Khan (Kamala's mother)
Ms. Marvel, Season 1, Episode 1, approx. 00:04:35

"Remember to say Bismillah before you start the car."- Muneeba Khan (Kamala's mother)
Ms. Marvel, Season 1, Episode 1, approx. 00:08:45

"Amma ji, kaisi hain?"- Yusuf Khan (Kamala's father)
Ms. Marvel, Season 1, Episode 1, approx. 00:05:20

"Salaam alaikum."- Kamala Khan
Ms. Marvel, Season 1, Episode 1, approx. 00:06:10

"Wa alaikum salaam."- Sheikh Abdullah
Ms. Marvel, Season 1, Episode 1, approx. 00:06:12

The indexical expressions (May Allah forgive you / "Bismillah before you start the car") index religious and ritualistic grounding of the activities of daily living itself. They are not free-standing statements, rather indications of more fundamental socio-religious premises reflected by the audience as evidence of faith-based behaviors. For example, "Salaam alaikum" and its counterpart "Wa alaikum salaam" indicate politeness and connections on spiritual level that was more common in culture, sense of Muslim community in particular.

Symbols

In semiotics, symbols refer to signs having an arbitrary or conventional relation with the object they denote. They are also culturally dependent, and packed full of meaning - usually enmeshed in centuries-old cultural behavior.

"Obedience and respect to parents."- Sheikh Abdullah (Mosque Leader)
Ms. Marvel, Season 1, Episode 1, approx. 00:13:10

"Maybe we'll actually get a Halal Guys this time."- Kamala Khan
Ms. Marvel, Season 1, Episode 1, approx. 00:14:00

"She was getting very comfortable with some gora boy named Rob in Belgium."- Kamala Khan
Ms. Marvel, Season 1, Episode 1, approx. 00:07:20

Symbolic signs of Peirce already appear in the ideological background. The line about Kamala getting "very comfortable with some gora boy named Rob" is a nod to such tensions between Western freedom and traditional demands. The "Halal Guys" might sound like a casual nod to a food truck, but really it stands as a symbolic reminder of diasporic adaptation, holding on to Islamic dietary codes amid a Western way of life. Through Hall's (2005) lens, this is an indication that identity is always being negotiated, rather than fixed.

The first episode is set up as the staging ground for the portrayal of Pakistani culture via a selective adaptation of signs and symbols. The interweaving of the written signs, considered through a semiotic and representational framework, exposes multiple layers of identity within a transnational, multicultured context. According to Hall (2005), these meanings are made, not found, so that they make Ms. Marvel an intentional cultural text to mine for academic purposes.

4.1.2. Linguistic Analysis of Episode 2: "Crushed"

In the second episode of *Ms. Marvel* web series, the biculturalism, intergenerational conflict, and Pakistani cultural identity is explored. It illustrates how semiotic mediators such as language, tradition, religion, and public spheres assist individuals in understanding their surroundings and identifying themselves. The linguistic and visual signs of this episode are analyzed through the lens of Hall's (2005) Representation Theory, which emphasizes that meaning is actively constructed and not merely reflectively passive and Peirce's semiotic triad- icon, index, symbol.

Tied into this episode are the overlapping threads of religious festivals (Eid), individual expression (through clothing and language) and inherited trauma (partition), all of which Kamala has to contend with on her journey of self-actualization. And the mosque, the heirlooms, the headscarf, Urdu and religious phrases, are all resisting symbols, badges of honor, heritage symbols against prejudice.

Table 2: Semiotic Categorization of Cultural Signs in Episode 2

No.	Type of Sign	Examples	Interpretation
1	**Icon**	"Kamala beta", "Zamzam water", "Eid Mubarak", "Mosque feels like home", "Nani's old things" Marvel Television & Ali, 2022).	Literal and cultural representations of Islamic rituals, family language, and religious/cultural objects
2	**Index**	"Balance between expectations", "Mosque division", "It's Kamala,	Points to social expectations, gender roles, and dual-identity

No.	Type of Sign	Examples	Interpretation
		actually", "Fun? What will people think?" (Marvel Television & Ali, 2022).	pressures within diasporic Muslim families
3	**Symbol**	"Wearing the hijab", "MosqueLife hashtag", "Partition memory", "Learning Urdu", "Halal/haram reference" (Marvel Television & Ali, 2022).	Abstract notions of cultural pride, generational identity, faith, and moral boundaries

Note. Sign categories are informed by Peirce's model and supported by Hall's theory of representation.

4.1.2.1. Analysis and Theoretical Integration

Iconic Signs - Tangible Reflections of Faith and Heritage

"Kamala beta"- Family dialogue

Ms. Marvel, Season 1, Episode 2, approx. 00:02:15

"Zamzam water"- Kamala Khan

Ms. Marvel, Season 1, Episode 2, approx. 00:10:30

"Eid Mubarak"- Community greeting

Ms. Marvel, Season 1, Episode 2, approx. 00:21:45

Physical Expressions of faith, belief and history "Zamzam water," "Eid Mubarak," and "Kamala beta" are three iconic South Asian cultural expressions that everyone can recognize and connect with. Peirce (1955), contends that these signifiers evoke the things they signify. These symbols are not merely signifiers of culture but are contextually solidified and relatable representations that Hall explains, resonating with the South Asian and Muslim community.

"These are Nani's old things"- Kamala Khan
Ms. Marvel, Season 1, Episode 2, approx. 00:05:50

Some very ordinary things suddenly transform into iconic lighthouses of diasporic memory when Kamala feels emotionally overwhelmed at seeing Nani's stuff and notes: "These are memories" and in this manner the culture turns to heirlooms and lore.

Indexical Signs: Indirect Reflections of Social Reality

"The mosque division…"- Dialogue on gendered spaces
Ms. Marvel, Season 1, Episode 2, approx. 00:12:10

The reference of "division" is a traditionally coded sign for religious practice and gender roles. It refers not to a physical barrier alone but to the whole ideological construction. This dialogue negligibly opens a discussion on gendered space in Muslim societies. Although not obviously critical, it mirrors inner cultural disputes, particularly among new generations, about equivalence and reform within religious societies. According to Hall (2005), the sign draws from mutual cultural meanings but also contests hegemonic descriptions. By asserting this observation in a normalized way, the series contributes to give voice to underrepresented intra-community concerns. This marks the storyline more than representational. It turns out to be reflexive.

"It's Kamala, actually"- Kamala Khan
Ms. Marvel, Season 1, Episode 2, approx. 00:03:30

Indexical cues link specific terms to underlying social contexts. For example, the teacher pronouncing Kamala, Camel-ia, reveals the cultural fight to survive in majority Western spaces. Lines like "As a bicultural, I have to straddle both worlds" and "Actually, it's Kamala" give hints to the struggle with internalized oppression of having two identities.

"Fun? What will people think?"- Muneeba
Ms. Marvel, Season 1, Episode 2, approx. 00:14:55

Muneeba's question "What will people think?" a cultural sign to honor culture and community surveillance looks at the decency of female behavior. Every one of

these signals is the subtext of Kamala's world: The implicit rules, expectations, and taboos of how things work here.

Symbolic Signs: Abstract Cultural and Moral Codes

"Wearing the hijab"- Kamala/Nakia discussion
Ms. Marvel, Season 1, Episode 2, approx. 00:16:40

"#MosqueLife"- Nakia
Ms. Marvel, Season 1, Episode 2, approx. 00:16:45

"I want to learn Urdu"- Kamala Khan
Ms. Marvel, Season 1, Episode 2, approx. 00:11:30

Episode 2 shares richly metaphorical consequences. Nakia can be seen as not only challenging the archaic stereotype of the oppressed Muslim woman by stating "Wearing the hijab is such a personal choice", but also by representing the cultural and religious identity, freedom, and individuality. Hashtags like #Deen and #MosqueLife form part of the new digital activism, reinterpreting historic spaces in a modern day context from young Muslim adults who are claiming their cultural and religious identity through social media.

And in her inner voice, Kamala says, "Will our traditions change when your generation roads?" This very question is reminiscent of Hall's argument that cultural identities are not fixed, but develop and change.

"The Partition memory…"- Nani's recount
Ms. Marvel, Season 1, Episode 2, approx. 00:10:15

Partition trauma speech is also a powerful symbol. Transforming a historical trauma to a story of survival and resilience, "We lost so much but gained," Nani reflects, connects the self to history.

Episode 2 builds on this cultural foundation to explore Pakistani identity through family, faith, and reflection. An apparently endless trove of cultural and semiotic material, the episode weaves an intricate tapestry of iconic images, indexical signifiers, and symbolic narratives. Navigating multiple peripheries: The dialogic

construction of identities in hybrid cultural contexts. This study literally deconstructs preconceptions and illustrates how dialogically constructed identities exist between and beyond boundaries in cultural environments characterized as hybrid by anchoring in the triadic model of communication proposed by Peirce and Hall's theory of representation.

4.1.3. Linguistic Analysis of Episode 3: "Destined"

Ms. Marvel Episode 3: "Destined" Expand the series cultural and symbolic environment. It expands on subjects such as expressions of faith, diasporic identity, and the transfer of memory from generation to generation. In this episode, Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic triad icon, index and symbol is used by Hall (2005) Representation Theory to analyses functions of visual, and verbal that both refer to, and re-construct Pakistani cultural values and traditions.

What stands out in this episode is the exploration of Kamala's relationship to her ancestral roots, mediated through her maternal lineage. Cultural symbols, religious practices, wedding ceremonies, and heirlooms (such as the bangle) are presented in visual and verbal forms. These placards are a statement of identity, memories, and promise defiance of the Western imperialism. "The Noor" is both Kamala's familial history and a beacon of inner light and power for those who wrestle with their self-image.

Table 3: Semiotic Categorization of Cultural Signs in Episode 3

No.	Type of Sign	Examples	Interpretation
1	Icon	"Shalwar kameez", "Ma sha Allah", "Waah", "Noor", "Ammi", "Mehndi ceremony" (Marvel Television & Ali, 2022).	Represent familiar cultural items and expressions, visually and phonetically tied to South Asian/Muslim life

No.	Type of Sign	Examples	Interpretation
2	Index	"Living between two worlds", "The mosque is a place of reflection", "Take off your shoes before entering" (Marvel Television & Ali, 2022).	Point toward societal norms, generational expectations, and diasporic tensions
3	Symbol	"Noor as ancestral power", "Family legacy", "Train vision from Partition", "Judgement of Muslims" (Marvel Television & Ali, 2022).	Represent deeper cultural meanings—faith, heritage, identity, and societal roles

Note: Categorization based on Peirce's triadic sign model.

4.1.3.1. Analysis and Theoretical Integration

Iconic Signs: Cultural Embodiments in Language and Objects

"Shalwar kameez"- Muneeba Khan
Ms. Marvel, Season 1, Episode 3, approx. 00:05:10

"Mashallah"- Nani
Ms. Marvel, Season 1, Episode 3, approx. 00:06:45

"Waah"- Kamala Khan
Ms. Marvel, Season 1, Episode 3, approx. 00:07:00

"Noor"- Nani
Ms. Marvel, Season 1, Episode 3, approx. 00:10:20

"Ammi"- Kamala Khan
Ms. Marvel, Season 1, Episode 3, approx. 00:03:35

"Mehndi ceremony"- Narration/Reference to wedding
Ms. Marvel, Season 1, Episode 3, approx. 00:12:10

In this episode, visual and verbal signaling such as "shalwar kameez" and "mehndi" and the usual familial terms like "Ammi," and "beta," are signifiers. These are at least some of the things that represent Pakistan culture as far as ritual, clothes, and care are concerned. According to Peirce, an icon is a sign that resembles what it represents, and these images are all icons.

As Nani said, "This bracelet was your great grandmother's; it's part of us, locked in the culture and key to the memories passed down through generations." These offerings not only show accurate portrayals of South Asian practices in Western media but also help in normalizing them.

Indexical Signs: Contextual Pointers to Cultural Realities

"Living between two worlds"- Kamala Khan
Ms. Marvel, Season 1, Episode 3, approx. 00:14:50

 "Take off your shoes before entering"- Nakia's advice
Ms. Marvel, Season 1, Episode 3, approx. 00:05:55

Episode 3 is particularly rich in indexical indicators suggesting robust social contexts. That line by Kamala, "It is hard being Pakistani-American" sums up the ongoing internal battle these diasporic kids face with their hybrid identities. Likewise, we learnt cultural norms and courtesy such as Islamic discipline when found, "Remove your shoes before entering" refers to an insight into widespread religious observances.

Symbolic Signs: Deep Cultural and Ideological Constructs

"Noor as ancestral power"- Nani explaining
Ms. Marvel, Season 1, Episode 3, approx. 00:11:45

Symbols represent a more abstract set of values and beliefs than icons or indexes. The episode is centered at the metaphor of faraqa "Noor" which is implicit and inherited power, introspective spiritual history, strength, and inner ancestry. That light, which becomes a metaphor for cultural pride and ancestral identity, becomes an expression of the Noor, or "The Noor reminds us of our roots", according to Nani.

"Family legacy"- Nani
Ms. Marvel, Season 1, Episode 3, approx. 00:13:30

"Train vision from Partition"- Nani's vision reference
Ms. Marvel, Season 1, Episode 3, approx. 00:15:10

The train serves as a collective symbol of suffering within Pakistani/Indian history, suggesting generational pain. The diffusion of this visualization to Kamala situates her identity as embedded in ancestral legacy, not just in her American experience. Instead of pulling down Kamala's Muslim identity into a Western stereotype (terrorism or oppression), this instance deepens it with historical depth and cultural continuity.

"It's frustrating how people label us as 'good Muslims' or 'bad Muslims.' Our faith is personal and not for others to judge."- Nakia
Ms. Marvel, Season 1, Episode 3, approx. 00:16:05

Things like "Family is everything" or "There is no good Muslim and bad Muslim," represent values stored by family and expressions of personal faith. Everything mentioned aligns nicely with Hall's hypothesis that identity is constructed through cultural links and that meaning is produced, not simply delivered.

Episode 3, is built on the themes of personal, cultural, and supernatural elements. Kamala's story arc deepens through a delicate weaving of personal, cultural, and supernatural threads. From Pierce semiotics (1955), which reveals how language and image carry powerful cultural meanings whether it's embedded in clothing, items or religious identifiers. In Hall's feminist approach, these are not neutral sign-giving but again actively contribute towards constructing a cohesive, vibrant, and historical Pakistani-Muslim identity. The episode portrays cultural symbols as less background information and more human parts that play a role in the process of identity formation.

4.1.4. Linguistic Analysis of Episode 4: "Seeing Red"

In this episode, Kamala goes to Karachi, Pakistan, a point of no return in the halfway mark of the series where viewers and characters are taken to a realm full of liveliness, self-discovery, and remembrance of family. This begat the episode, wherein

we watch how the triadic sign model of Peirce- the icon, the index and the symbol- work together to support the process of diasporic people reconfiguring their identities through language and images. Simultaneously, Hall's Representation Theory assists us in understanding how these markers function not merely as reflections of culture but as systems of meaning making and sites of identity negotiation.

This episode dives into both the actual and metaphorical sides of Kamala's journey. Karachi transcends its role as a canvas, becoming a metaphor for postcolonial legacy, spiritual renaissance, and familial bonds. From Nani to the local vendors to the Red Daggers, she discovers her heritage; its food and fashion, its mythology and religion. Taffazul further explains how being in this setting helps her meld her identities as a Pakistani and an American.

Table 4: Semiotic Categorization of Cultural Signs in Episode 4

No.	Type of Sign	Examples	Interpretation
1	**Icon**	"Paani poori," "shalwar kameez," "biryani," "Noor," "Partition train whistle," "ancestral jewelry" (Marvel Television & Ali, 2022).	Concrete visuals or sounds tied directly to Pakistani identity and tradition
2	**Index**	"Meri Urdu itni achi nahi hai," "Karachi is so vibrant," "Partition changed everything," "Tell me more…" (Marvel Television & Ali, 2022).	Signs that point to Kamala's internal evolution, intergenerational dialogue, and diasporic longing
3	**Symbol**	"Djinn folklore," "Noor as power," "ABCD identity," "old inscription," "currency confusion," "representing	Abstract representations of heritage, belief, hybridity, and cross-cultural negotiation

No.	Type of Sign	Examples	Interpretation
		Jersey" (Marvel Television & Ali, 2022).	

4.1.4.1. Analysis and Theoretical Integration

Iconic Signs: Visual Culture and Ancestral Connection

"Paani poori"- Moments in Karachi street scene

Ms. Marvel, Season 1, Episode 4, approx. 00:06:30

"Shalwar kameez"- Muneeba Khan

Ms. Marvel, Season 1, Episode 4, approx. 00:05:45

"Biryani"- Kamala Khan

Ms. Marvel, Season 1, Episode 4, approx. 00:07:10

"Noor"- Nani/Red Dagger Leader

Ms. Marvel, Season 1, Episode 4, approx. 00:08:50

"Partition train whistle"- Nani's memory cue

Ms. Marvel, Season 1, Episode 4, approx. 00:09:30

"Ancestral jewelry"- Nani referencing heirlooms

Ms. Marvel, Season 1, Episode 4, approx. 00:10:05

Icons are signs that stand for (or represent) the things or concepts they refer to. Landmarks abound in this episode of traditional dishes such as biryani and paani poori, jewelry that has been handed down generations and mythical entities like Noor. Kamala's words saying, "This bangle feels like it's unlocking something inside me," is simple, yet serves as a visual and emotional cue. As part of the Marvel superhero

paradigm, these symbols are a way of rooting Kamala's abilities in South Asian religion and history and celebrating cultural identity. Or rather, as Nani wisely reflected upon: "It is a reminder of the Partition". The sound a train makes becomes a motif of anguish for Partition. There are memories associated with that sound. Those symbols elicit visceral emotions of collective memory, an invisible thread tying loosely familiar, yet history-rich objects.

Indexical Signs: Contextual and Emotional Anchors

"Meri Urdu itni achi nahi hai"- Kamala Khan
Ms. Marvel, Season 1, Episode 4, approx. 00:12:15

Indice is a common term that can be interpreted as any indicator of a link between a signifier and its cultural context. Not only does this Urdu dialogue, "Meri Urdu itni achi nahi hai, lekin main seekh rahi hoon" illustrate Kamala's attempt to actively reconnect with her roots but it also demonstrates the unbridged linguistic gap that exists between generations.

"Karachi is so vibrant"- Kamala Khan
Ms. Marvel, Season 1, Episode 4, approx. 00:11:20

"Partition changed everything"- Nani talking about family history
Ms. Marvel, Season 1, Episode 4, approx. 00:09:00

Also, none of them are really markers of her metamorphosis, emotionally; what is, though, are the comments about Karachi being alive and how it was before, the chat about Partition, idealistic Kamala asking about family stories. These indices signify not just her maturation but also the greater experience of youth in diaspora, caught between traditional knowledge and modern realities.

Symbolic Signs: Beliefs, Identity, and Hybridity

"Djinn folklore"- Nani explaining Djinn stories
Ms. Marvel, Season 1, Episode 4, approx. 00:11:55

Symbols have a meaning that is broader than their literal definition, and rooted in ideology or culture. In this context, "The Noor" becomes a symbol of resilience, of

family knowledge, of eternal life. The Clandestine and the Djinn mythos reframe Kamala's powers into something mystical and tied to South Asian cosmology instead of confining her powers to the realm of science fiction through elements of mythology and symbolism.

"Sometimes I feel like an ABCD, not fully fitting in either world."- Kamala on being an American-Born Confused Desi

Ms. Marvel, Season 1, Episode 4, approx. 00:13:20

Kamala then confesses, "Sometimes I feel like an ABCD: as if I don't belong fully in either world—my hyphenated identity." ABCD (American-Born Confused Desi) is a cultural shorthand for displacement, hybridization and the process of identity negotiation. When she answered, saying, "Even over here in Karachi, I try to rep Jersey," it only further highlights the tenuousness of belonging and increases the pressure of expectations.

Moreover, the inscription that Kamala interrogates Nani on the meaning of, becomes a symbol of ancestral wisdom and protection, thus supporting Hall's argument that representational signification is far from innocent, rather it is imbued with power, memory and identity.

The show uses Karachi in order to expose Kamala's cultural awareness, so the fourth episode is spent revealing Karachi. Through this semiotic lens, semiotic, particularly when it is subsequently viewed through Peirce's semiotic lens, opens the relevant dimension in which language, cuisine, style, and folklore become active signs of identity instead of passive, contextual images. In conclusion, Hall's Representation Theory (2005) helps to explain this process of these cues both enforcing and challenging cultural readings, allowing the viewers, entraining Kamala to be able to embody transnational personae. This episode is not a simple exercise in memorization of culture like a good immigrant; it's an act of reclamation.

4.1.5. Linguistic Analysis of Episode 5: "Time and Again"

In Episode 5, we get a glimpse at the Partition of India in the 1940s, a traumatic yet a very significant time in South Asian history; one of the heaviest episodes of Ms. Marvel, both historically and emotionally charged. By employing Charles Sanders

Peirce's triadic model of signs, which categorizes them as icons, indices, and symbols, and revealing the complicated interplay between collective trauma and individual memory in shaping cultural identity, this episode illustrates how we have always existed together. Including these indicators into the language and imagery of the episode serves to reflect the families' lineage, customs, and histories of trauma, this is not a one-off instance of violence either.

Blending memories, culture substitutes, and folklore politics, her story eventually reverts to Aisha, Kamala's great-grandmother, and examining her history, creating a dynamic tool for diasporic youth to reconnect with their roots. The ripples of Partition are visible in this episode, in terms of language, but also in memory. Through Kamala, the viewer shall see family, food, and oral history turning into carriers of culture and semiotic carriers for the culture.

Table 5: Semiotic Categorization of Cultural Signs in Episode 5

No.	Type of Sign	Examples	Interpretation
1	**Icon**	"Fresh fried paratha," "Calling Ammi and Abbu," "Visits from Nana Abbu and Nani" (Marvel Television & Ali, 2022).	Tangible, memory-laden elements that visually and emotionally resemble cultural reality
2	**Index**	"Every Pakistani family has a Partition story," "Riots across the country," "Religious unrest" (Marvel Television & Ali, 2022).	Signs that indicate historical trauma, communal memory, and national identity formation

4.1.5.1. Analysis and Theoretical Integration

Iconic Signs: Everyday Life and Nostalgic Affection

"Fresh fried paratha"- Kamala or family dinner scene

Ms. Marvel, Season 1, Episode 5, approx. 00:04:40

"Calling Ammi and Abbu"- Kamala memories of family gatherings
Ms. Marvel, Season 1, Episode 5, approx. 00:05:15

Icons serve a similar purpose as they represent the things or events they stand for. Episode one then illuminates diasporic home life through Kamala's recollections of her mum, once again, eating freshly fried loose paratha, and calls made to her parents (Ammmi and Abbu). Many of those who are around the world also find it difficult to stay away from the cultural symbols such as food and family meetings and these symbols reflect this feeling.

Indexical Signs: Partition and Cultural Trauma

"Every Pakistani family has a Partition story"- Family conversation about heritage
Ms. Marvel, Season 1, Episode 5, approx. 00:07:30

Unlike these representative devices, indices have a relationship with their referents, either a causal or an associative connection. "Every Pakistani family has a Partition story Kamala," That's a pretty robust indexicalíty. Instead of merely concentrating on her family's past, it hints at an entire national trauma that is still shaping Pakistani identity today. And her writing allows the otherwise faceless event of Partition to be more family story across generations.

"Religious unrest"- Reference to broader socio-political tension
Ms. Marvel, Season 1, Episode 5, approx. 00:09:10

"Riots across the country"- Narration or dialogue on unrest
Ms. Marvel, Season 1, Episode 5, approx. 00:08:45

The state where it is never and always "religious unrest" and "riots and violent outbreaks" is eerily illustrative of where people had to flee their homes, and thousands were butchered in 1947. These symbols signify that the family of Kamala is more than imaginary, they are the voices of millions of South Asian families that were reshaped, altered, or resurrected at that time. Hall's Representation Theory explains that these signs are not simply representations of reality, but rather they are narratives that are constructed with political, emotional and cultural agendas.

This episode demonstrates that memory itself forms a sort of semiotic system. Through visual memory, sensory triggers (like food), and verbal affirmations, a cultural history that Kamala never experienced directly but that is inextricably part of her identity is reaffirmed. Peirce's semiotic paradigm reflects such an interplay between symbols and indices in the diasporic present instant and connects both semiotic realms to the past cultural and historical heritage of the homeland.

Historical memory, then, directly feeds into cultural identity, a connection that Kreel also makes in the fifth episode of Ms. Marvel. The episode presents a layered representation of Pakistani culture experienced, remembered, and passed down through indexical traces of national trauma and symbolic markers of family and food. The semiotics of Peirce provides clarity on the multilayered semiosis of the signs and Hall's Representation Theory uncovers the way signs help construct, maintain and communicate the cultural consciousness. The episode highlights the power of narrative, and by the end, is a tribute to the resilience of legacy.

4.1.6. Linguistic Analysis of Episode 6: "No Normal"

The show repeats this impression at its utmost symbolic and emotional apex in episode 6 as Ms. Marvel's nominal heroine,   Kamala Khan, develops the whole version of herself, mutually as a Pakistani American Muslim girl and as a superhero. Through the use of cultural expressions, and identifiers through language, the program skillfully knits these components together to present the community solidarity, histories of Pakistan, and resistance to racial profiling.

The sixth and final episode, set in Jersey City, does not turn away from Pakistani culture, but instead intensifies and bends it in. The traditional pashmina, the halal food, Kamala Khan's clothes, and even the communications within the mosque, all symbolize resilience, sense of cultural pride, and continuity. Simultaneously, the narrative creates a social interpretation on what many Muslim diasporas know all too well: racial profiling, systemic racism, and surveillance.

Table 6: Semiotic Categorization of Cultural Signs in Episode 6

No.	Type of Sign	Examples	Interpretation
1	**Icon**	"This pashmina shawl feels so comforting and familiar.", "This outfit represents who I am, both as Kamala and Ms. Marvel." (Marvel Television & Ali, 2022).	Visually and experientially mirror traditional attire, sacred spaces, and dual cultural identity
2	**Index**	"You're profiling us based on our race and religion." "These young people have done nothing wrong. You are not welcome to harass them in our mosque." "Do you know a young girl who wears a hijab? Brown skin. Super strong." Sheikh Abdullah: "You need a warrant. This is a mosque." (Marvel Television & Ali, 2022).	Direct links to Islamophobia, cultural discrimination, and collective defense through community. The language reflects an institutional bias constructing the mosque as a space of potential threat. The Sheikh's calm but firm reply asserts religious dignity and legal boundaries.
3	**Symbol**	"This veil is not just a disguise… it is a symbol of modesty and protection." "This music makes me feel so connected to my culture." "Halal food from our favorite restaurant."	Based on cultural conventions and shared meanings representing identity, heritage, and resistance

No.	Type of Sign	Examples	Interpretation
		(Marvel Television & Ali, 2022).	

4.1.6.1. Analysis and Theoretical Integration

Iconic Signs: Visual Heritage and Dual Identity

Icons in this episode demonstrate the stability of family and Pakistani culture. For instance:

"This pashmina shawl feels so comforting and familiar."- Kamala Khan
Ms. Marvel, Season 1, Episode 6, approx. 00:04:25

In the dialogue, Kamala uses a physical object to represent inherited identity and emotional continuity. Semiotic analysis classifies the pashmina shawl as an **icon**, because of its tactile and visual resemblance to customary South Asian clothing. Through Hall's perspective, the shawl serves as a cultural marker that arouses ethnic pride and personal memory.

"This outfit represents who I am, both as Kamala and Ms. Marvel."- Kamala Khan
Ms. Marvel, Season 1, Episode 6, approx. 00:06:55

Likewise, Kamala's above mentioned statement strengthens the construction of a cross-cultural/hybrid identity. The costume, a combination of the shalwar kameez and superhero clothing, functions as an **icon**. It echoes Kamala's cultural heritage while concurrently representing her conversion and self-acceptance. According to Hall (2005), the outfit **contests dualistic constructs** frequently observed in Western media, which distinct Muslim characters from heroism. Kamala represents both, highlighting a liberated Muslim perspective that is multidimensional.

Indexical Signs: Racial Bias and Resistance

Indexical signs are mainly noticeable in the representation of recognized injustice:

"You're profiling us based on our race and religion."- Kamala Khan (to Agent)
Ms. Marvel, Season 1, Episode 6, approx. 00:12:30

When Kamala addresses Damage Control, the dialogue directly emphasizes religious and racial surveillance. The statement is an index of existing Islamophobia, and a sign of systemic inequality. Through Hall's lens, this instant demonstrates a direct counter-narrative to prevailing representations where Muslims are frequently doubted or othered. Kamala's resistance articulates the experience of being misconstrued and patrolled, predominantly in a post-9/11 Western media narratives.

"You need a warrant. This is a mosque."- Sheikh Abdullah
Ms. Marvel, Season 1, Episode 6, approx. 00:16:10

"These young people have done nothing wrong. You are not welcome to harass them in our mosque."- Sheikh Abdullah
Ms. Marvel, Season 1, Episode 6, approx. 00:13:10

Sheikh Abdullah's dominant dialogue marks an essential modification in representational power. The mosque, typically represented in conventional media as a secretive or suspicious place, becomes here a representation of security and sanctuary. The Sheikh's resistance reframes the mosque as a spiritual, safe, and communal space, thus regaining religious identity from suspicion and outlining Muslim governance as ethically decent and community-oriented.

Symbolic Signs: Veil, Justice, and Heritage

Symbols create meaning from shared cultural beliefs and practices, and this episode is loaded with symbolic language:

"This veil is not just a disguise… it is a symbol of modesty and protection."- Nani
Ms. Marvel, Season 1, Episode 6, approx. 00:11:20

The statement by Nani, directly challenges stereotypical representations surrounding the veil. The veil serves mainly as a marker of spiritual and cultural significance. Instead of being forced, it is preferred and appreciated, imitating modesty and tradition. This redefining line up with Hall's theory of representation by reframing

the veil as an instrument of empowerment rather than repression, particularly within Western media that repeatedly misrepresents Muslim female identity.

"This music makes me feel so connected to my culture."- Kamala Khan
Ms. Marvel, Season 1, Episode 6, approx. 00:08:50

Kamala's declaration highlights music as an index of cultural and emotional memory. Music turns out to be a sign of diasporic belonging, connecting Kamala to her origins even while navigating her American representativeness.

"Halal food from our favorite restaurant."- Muneeba Khan
Ms. Marvel, Season 1, Episode 6, approx. 00:09:05

Lastly, the statement of Muneeba Khan stabilizes Islamic practices in an American setting. While "halal" functions as an index of sacred compliance. Hall's theory supports explain how this instance struggles eroticization; it relocates Muslim identity as acquainted and relevant, not othered or threatening.

Ms. Marvel's sixth and the final episode offers a captivating semiotic representation of Pakistani culture, social issues, political issues and diasporic identity. According to Peirce's semiotics (1955), cultural aesthetics are mirrored in icons like identifiable phrases and traditional clothing, while community protection and racial profiling are signs of deeper socio-political realities. Signs, including as food rituals and the veil, represent pride, values, and belonging. Simultaneously, according to Hall's Representation Theory, these signs are not objective but in fact selected, shaped, and debated within several cultural and political contexts.

4.2. Discussion

The textual analysis of *Ms. Marvel* web series is done using the shared lens of s Peirce's Semiotic Theory (1955) and Hall's Representation Theory (2005). Through a reasonable classification of signs, (icons, indices, and symbols) the research explored the usage of language as an instrument of cultural demonstration, ideological expression, and identity construction.

The analysis shows that language in *Ms. Marvel* serves as more than just a discourse; it is a profound semiotic resource that encodes embedded meaning associated

to Pakistani culture, belief, and diaspora identity. The frequent use of culturally rooted terms such as "bismillah," "beta," "Nani," "Eid Mubarak," and expressions like "Allahu Akbar" and "Mashallah" serve as icons, clearly resembling everyday communication within South Asian Muslim families. These linguistic choices anchor the personality of Kamala Khan and her family in a culturally particular linguistic reality the audience can identify and relate to.

Indices refer to the the expressions that point out that cultural and religious practices are similarly significant. Phrases like "The mosque feels like home," "Don't forget to say Bismillah," and "This Zamzam water is sacred" indicate social structures, comprehensive cultural routines, and family morals that are crucial to the culturally grounded experiences of diasporic Pakistani Muslims. These lexical choices create a straight link among the imaginary world of the web series and the real-life social practices it pursues to mirror.

On the other hand, Symbols are used to express ideologies and abstract meanings. Dialogues such as "Our family went through so much during the Partition," "Being bicultural means I have to navigate both worlds," and "They're profiling us because of our race and religion" emphasize deeper themes of intergenerational trauma, identity negotiation, and systemic marginalization. These instances align with Hall's view that representation is not only reflective but constitutive, it frames how identities are perceived both within the community and in the comprehensive media discourse.

Although *Ms. Marvel* has been generally famous for its progressive and positive representation of Pakistani Muslim identity, the current textual analysis discloses that the series does not totally depart from the challenging patterns of depiction seen in Western media, particularly in the post-9/11 era. One of the greatest critical observations is the indirect yet powerful manifestation of surveillance and racial profiling embedded in the dialogues. When Kamala Khan's powers are exposed, she is instantly treated as a possible threat not merely as a superhero, but explicitly as a Muslim superhero. This skepticism is evident in the way official government agents raid the mosque to look for her, representing a transparent disregard for community boundaries and religious sanctity.

Such scenes resonate with the dominant post-9/11 Western media dissertation that often links Muslims with extremism, violence, or threat. Even though the series apparently promotes inclusion and diversity, the internal narrative continue to reflect existing Islamophobia, where Muslims persist under constant surveillance, scrutiny, and suspicion. These components strengthen the very stereotypes that have been central to Muslim characters in Western narratives.

As a result, while *Ms. Marvel* does thrive in challenging various surface-level stereotypes through its cultural depth and linguistic richness, it simultaneously retains deeper ideological structures that remain to frame Muslims through the lens of threat and 'otherness'. This dualism makes *Ms. Marvel* a significant site for critical analysis. It echoes both persistence and progress of the very representational challenges it pursues to overcome.

4.3. Visual Analysis

4.3.1. Visual Analysis of Episode 1

Detailed Analysis Using Charles Sanders Peirce's Semiotics

Signs are icons, indices and symbols in the semiotic theory of Charles Sanders Peirce (1955). There are in fact three quite distinct sorts of sign: icons, which resemble what they signify; indices, whose relationship to their meaning is one that depends on the principle of cause and effect; and symbols where the relationship between a symbol as used (e.g. language) & its wider social context is wholly learned or arbitrary. This is a helpful framework for analyzing the representations of Pakistani culture in the scenes from Ms. Marvel.

Figure 1: Aamir Khan Praying

Icons

The representation of a man in traditional clothing such as a kurta, and a beard, is an iconic illustration of a South Asian Muslim, which line up with shared visual demonstrations of the culture of Pakistan. The clothing and grooming are directly identifiable and provide pictorial cues about the culture of the character's and his religious identity (Peirce, 1955).

Indices

Raised hands, in the posture of prayer are indexical signs for Islamic worship. It is known as 'Dua' which means supplicatory prayers. This gesture symbolizes a beat of spiritual epiphany and piety, demonstrating the character's faith-based religious ritual and cultural background (Peirce, 1955).

Symbols

The religious manuscripts in the background, conceivably containing Islamic scripture, symbolize the significance of spiritual life and religious education in Pakistani culture. These manuscripts are not just fragment of the decoration but show the importance placed on religious understanding and the Quranic knowledge in home (Peirce, 1955).

Figure 2: Big Hulk and Little Hulk

Icons

Particularly from the Marvel universe, the Hulk outfits are recognizable components of Western popular culture. In current Pakistani diasporic culture, global influences are blended together as demonstrated by this juxtaposition of Western superhero images with a familial environment (Chakravartty & da Silva, 2012). The mother is dressed in a traditional Pakistani shalwar kameez, which is a common outfit. This outfit is a classic representation of what Pakistani women wear on a daily basis.

Indices

Kamala's parents talking about their concerns regarding her going to AvengerCon on her own and advising her to wear "a more modest costume" is an indexical sign of Pakistani parents expressing controlling parental behavior. According to Peirce (1955), indexical signs are a representation of "worldly" objects based on "associated properties." This implies that the world characteristics and associated properties of this particular scene are that Pakistani parents are particularly controlling toward their daughters, and they are generally protective and authoritative. In addition, the cultural characteristic represented by the associated property is that family bonding and different cultures' integration are of importance in Pakistani culture.

Symbols

Mother's making a hulk costume for the daughter herself in the picture. This activity is important because in Pakistan, women are more adept in sewing and artistic than men. But, moreover, it shows how protective mothers are in fulfilling their children's needs. Making the costume for her daughter also shows her affection.

Figure 3: Kamala Asks Her Parents to Go Out

Icons

The framed artwork placed over the fireplace displaying Islamic calligraphy is an epitome of Pakistan originated valuable art which depicts artistic culture and cultural identity. The Vases (and to some extent, the little figurines/red substance) on this mantelpiece are typical objects of South Asian pottery which can be seen in many Pakistani homes.

Indices

A living room family discussion scene is an indexical sign for cultural practice of involving family in decision making processes. This reflects the role of family sanction and social arrangements in Pakistani society, where personal choices (like those regarding marriage or attending late night parties) are often reached through a process that includes consultation with significant others, mostly parents (Peirce, 1955).

Symbols

This scene demonstrates a deep religious understanding, represented through Islamic calligraphy artwork in the background. Such work has so much significance in South Asian Muslim households, it reflects the kinds and values that a household is about culturally or spiritually (Peirce, 1955).

Figure 4: Kamala in traditional attire

Icons

The traditional dress worn by Kamala such as lehenga, churidar etc represent icons of South Asian wear which represents cultural norms and identity. Their clothing served as an external representation of their cultural origin (Peirce, 1955).

Indices

The scenery in a tailor shop adhered with fabrics and tailoring accessories are the indexical sign of cultural significant site for Pakistani women. Local tailor shops are remarkable social spaces where women sought to be fitted for making or altering their traditional clothing models and styles that address long-standing cultural values regarding the body shape (Peirce, 1955).

Symbols

The visually stunning fabrics are a representation of the aesthetic preferences in Pakistan, where pieces with colours and designs play a crucial role. The enduring nature of this scene also reflects the cultural importance of wearing traditional clothing as an aspect in retaining cultural identity and pride (Peirce, 1955).

Figure 5: Kamala Khan with Jewelry

Icons

Traditional jewelry such as bangles, earrings and necklaces are synonymous with Pakistani & South Asian culture. These decorations are most often shown to wear during culture festivals, weddings and other days of cultural importance that symbolize beauty standards on the grounds (Peirce, 1955).

Indices

In this way the act of jewelry shopping is emblematic, if not symptomatic - speaking to the social practice which requires adornment as a method for signaling culturally significant identity and belonging. This is an indexical sign and reveals the nature of these items in social rituals and celebrations (Peirce, 1955).

Figure 6: Khan Family at Dinner

Icons

A traditional Pakistani dinner that includes some dishes like biryani or curry comes as an icon to cultural practices associated with food. "The arrangement of this is a domestic one, and the scene upon which the sign is based is evidently that of eating a dinner in a family". This image emphasizes the importance of dining as a communal practice that holds together the family and the culture (Peirce, 1955).

Indices

The members of the family who are about to sit at the table or have already gathered, refer to the cultural practice of sharing meals. Peirce claims that "this sign is an indication of dining". Such practices are common for the Pakistani culture and turn dining into something more than simply eating: it becomes a socializing tool and a mean to express one's belonging to a culture (Peirce, 1955).

Symbols

The tableware, the plates and the cups people use are also culturally specific and are used a lot by Pakistani people. They symbolize "generosity of goods for the aliens and for the children". Such tableware and the whole set up of dinner are used to create a culturally hospitable atmosphere around dining (Peirce, 1955).

Figure 7: Zoe Zimmer Saved by Ms. Marvel

Indices

The act of rescuing Zoe Zimmer is an indexical sign of heroism and the character's role as a protector within the community. This action reflects cultural narratives about responsibility, bravery, and communal support (Peirce, 1955).

Symbols

The scene when Kamala Khan, the protagonist of Ms. Marvel, saves her frenemy Zoe Zimmer is one of the most quintessential moments that reflect her internalization of a core value typical to her culture and religion. The act could not have happened without the context; that is why the researcher will explain it with a reference to a particular religious teaching, the Islamic principle of the sanctity of human life and the necessity of helping others. Interestingly, based on the same principle, one can polarize Kamala's choice of friends, like-minded people and the most vulnerable ones.

To be specific, Kamala's decision to save Zoe is grounded in a well-known verse from Quran. The verse is:

"Whoever saves a life, it will be as if they saved all of humanity."
— Quran 5:32

The interpretation of this statement suggests that it talks about the unconditional value of a single life. Specifically, by saving one person, one saves all of humanity.

This principle emphasizes the sanctity and integrity of human life, even in the context of war. Therefore, one should take care of all people and treat them with compassion and dignity regardless of any quarrels and resentments. Being a practicing Muslim, Kamala Khan is necessarily going to be affected by these teachings. Even during the most pivotal and highly charged moments of her "frenemy" with Zoe, she will have no doubts as to who she is going to save.

In particular, the expression "frenemy" implies that Kamala and Zoe have a complicated relationship. However, despite this fact, when the protagonist has an opportunity to save someone, she opts for saving Zoe's life rather than doing nothing and listen to her thanking nobody for her rescue. This scene serves not only as a critical scene of the series but also as a brilliant example of Islamic values. By saving Zoe, Kamala proves that helping others is a fundamentally human tendency and this is what Islam teaches us, so everyone should treat one's friends and foes with compassion.

4.3.2. Visual Analysis of Episode 2

Figure 8: Muneeba Khan, Bruno Carrelli, and Kamala Khan at the Eid Festival

Icons

The most vivid icon of Pakistani culture is the clothing, in which the depicted personages are dressed. The kurtas and dupattas that Kamala and other citizens are wearing constitute a clear image of the peculiarities of the items of traditional attire. In addition, the viewer can also see that the place is set up for Eid celebration, with numerous colorful decorations and stalls.

Indices

Judging by the characters' attire and the type of holiday that is clearly being observed, one can view the event in the image as the celebration of Eid. The fact that Bruno, an American and presumably, non-Muslim character, is also wearing a kurta, an item of traditional Pakistani clothing serves as the index of the wide acceptance and accommodation of multiple minorities and non-minorities, too. It suggests that one of the major themes of the series is the coexistence of the representatives of North American cultures and the representatives of the Pakistani community, with an obvious cultural dialogue between them.

Symbols

In this sense, Kamala's dupatta stands for modesty and the character's firm connection to her South Asian and Muslim roots. For Bruno, the symbol was his kurta: the item of Pakistani clothing that indicated the cultural celebration of diverse heritage.

Figure 9: Najaf Serving Bruno and Kamala

Icons

The food stall with a neon sign "Halal" and a list of South Asian dishes as well as and dishes from Middle Eastern cuisine, is a kind of an image of the region's culinary culture that is presented in an American city. It is the icon of the street food culture, which is an integral part of the South Asian environment (Jamal, 2022).

Indices

The "Halal" sign indicates that the food stall is following Muslim dietary laws, which is rubric for determining membership or group identity. It is also a gastronomical indicator that the place accepts to observe religious rules and laws. It is background knowledge of the cultural scene in which the scene is taking place, that this street food stall is a place of cultural exchange. The interaction between Najaf and the customers is the practice of food exchange that is both communal and cultural. The background knowledge mentioned above makes it part of the South Asian cultural practices (Yousaf, 2022).

Symbols

The "Halal" sign is the symbol of faith and culture. It indicates membership as well as the commitment of the place and the community in observing the religious dietary laws. The different kinds of food are the symbols of cultural richness and exchange of culinary traditions. These are the symbolic references in terms of which the given community's wealth is interpreted (Khan, 2022).

Figure 10: Congregational Prayer (Salah) in the Mosque

Icons

The image shows a congregation of Salah to be in prayer. As Iqbal (2022) states, Salah is a prayer made by members on rows that are done facing the Mecca. Therefore, from the above image, Salah can be seen as an iconic way of Muslim praying.

Indices

From the picture, it is evident that prayer is well coordinated by the members and the Imam in charge. This gives a sense that these members are strong in their faith and hence they do things in one accord. Ali (2922) supports by arguing, "the prayer time gives the index of the culture and how the members of a given cultural believe in their God together''.

Symbols

The prayer rugs and the Mosque clearly symbolize the way in which Muslims handle their worship. The direction these members are facing, the Mecca, it also a symbolic way of how Muslims are united worldwide by worship. According to Siddiqui (2022), "it is a symbol of the way we should unite with our community."

Figure 11: Kamala and Nakia in the Mosque

Icons

The characters of Nakia and the mosque setting in the scenes from Ms. Marvel are notable examples of iconography of Muslim cultural and religious practices. The hijab, a typical headscarf of many Muslim women, is apparently depicted with Nakia's character for reasons of propriety, recognition, and respect (Rashid, 2022).

Indices

This scene witnesses typical cultural features in connection with gender-specific spaces and rules and about modesty inside a mosque. The main index referring to the

scene is precisely the mosque space. The presence of a girl in the mosque with Hijaab is an index of her belonging to a traditional religious community.

Symbols

The hijab is a symbol of modesty and religion. For Nakia, the hijab represents her choice and her right to following the cultural and religious norms. Kamala and Nakia's dialogue transpires the relationship between tradition and westernization and the modernity of cultural identity (Hussain, 2022).

Figure 12: Eid Festival

Icons

The decorations, and the sign as well as the utterance of "Eid Mubarak" is a clear icon of the holiday of Eid. The festive atmosphere is a clear index of the holiday in the South Asian culture setting (Nawaz, 2022).

Indices

In this scene, the sign "Eid Mubarak" decorated by wedding lights illustrates the festival of Eid. The scene is the index of a festive setting showing an idea of holding festivities, and family gatherings (Rafiq, 2022).

Symbols

The phrase, "Eid Mubarak", is a symbol of inviting and congratulating, which is customary in the festival of Eid. The symbol includes the whole culture, and the value associated with the festival. The festive atmosphere is a symbol of such a community that is vibrant and inclusive. The people are indulged in joy, and there are strong social and cultural experiences (Bashir, 2022).

4.3.3. Visual Analysis of Episode 3

Figure 13: Kamala in Headscarf

Icon

The scene shows Kamala Khan, among dozens of other Muslims in brightly colored headscarf at a gathering. The dupatta is an essential part of the South Asian culture seen worn in Pakistan and has multiple uses, mainly for modesty reasons. And of course, she wears the duppata overhead which most women in Pakistan does especially during religious or formal event. It is such a strong cultural representation of adherence to societal standards, respect and beliefs.

Symbol

In Pakistani culture, the act of covering their head with a dupatta is symbolic to modesty and respect. They are part of a wider cultural norm that expects women to dress modestly in the presence of others, especially when around people from different gender, religious and social contexts. This practice is based on cultural norms and, in some cases, religious teachings that to be modest-relative virtue (Rashid, 2020).

Figure 14: Mehndi Ceremony

Icon

The image shows Kamala Khan with mehndi on her hand. This is one of the icons because Lahore is famous for mehndi being purely Punjabi culture. Mehndi is an art and an old form of cultural tradition in South Asia, especially in Punjab, Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh. It can be noted from the image that Kamala Khan is somewhere attending a wedding. It is mostly used in weddings, which is used for signs of festivity and adornment (Siddiqui, 2019). It is applied the day or two before the wedding in Mehndi Nights.

Symbol

The most crucial element of the mehndi is the designs, which are not just for fashion. Some of the print designs, which are specifically used, flower designs, which are a sign of joy and beauty, or paisleys, which is a symbol of fertility, new life-start, growth, and prosperity. In Pakistani weddings, the color of mehndi is linked to the bride's future and the depth of love she has received from her in-laws. It is one of the traditional reasons provided in the text represented by the scene.

Figure 15: Conversation with Religious Figure

Icons

Kamala Khan is seen having some exchange with a traditional religious figure who from the attire seems like an Imam or Sheikh, holding prayer beads known as Tasbih. Muslims use the Tasbih to keep count of prayers and/or one of Allah's 99 names, which reflects Islam emphasizing remembrance (Dhikr) in faith (Khan & Ali, 2022).

Indices

This scene seems somewhat like a spiritual leader or something, which is basically representing Kamala taking suggestions and asking blessings from some religious authorities. In Pakistani culture, people often consult religious figures for personal and spiritual or moral problems because religion is a big part of life in Pakistan (Raza, 2021). This exchange emphasizes the admiration (or lack thereof) of religious leaders, who are believed to act as custodians in moral and ethical instruction.

Symbols

The rosary and the man's clothing: sacredness, piety & religious knowledge, these symbols hold significance in Pakistani culture as they represent respect for religious practices and the need to merge faith into day-to-day life. A visit to a religious figure can also symbolize reflection on one's life or in search of guidance, thereby locating his communal and personal aspects within the context of Pakistan (Haque, 2019).

Figure 16: Wedding Celebration

Icons

In the image, a bride and groom are wearing traditional Pakistani (Punjabi) wedding clothes. The bridal attire comprises of a richly embroidered dress, in the form of Lehenga decorated with embroidery along-with beads and sequin. The noticeable thing is that the bride is an American who is wearing a traditional Pakistani dress and getting married to a Pakistani guy happily. The groom is wearing a Sherwani, which is traditionally longer robe or coat with a turban. The groom is a very accurate representation of Asian men with long beard.

Indices

It is a regular Pakistani wedding steel that lasts for days with numerous traditions and events taking place in it. Over the top dresses and tit-bits of jewelry add on to how important this event really is, these people are not marrying each other but their entire families! In Pakistan, weddings are one of the largest social gatherings as they become a matter of social status and honour through considerable spending on outfits purchased for wedding usage only; meal expenditures to sustain visitors happy (Nawaz, 2021).

Symbols

The richly decorated dress of the bride and the Sherwani of the groom are manifestations a cultural heritage, social status value attached to practices. The addition of red and gold colors are symbolic - red as love, prosperity; and gold is for wealth because the grandeur. It is adorned with lights, flowers and customary artifacts to

represent happiness community backing the event as well blessings for the newlywed couple (Khalid, 2018). The ceremony, laden with rituals and traditions acts as the performativity reflection of the retrieved social norms/values.

Figure 17: Wedding Dance

Icons

The image shows guests, including Kamala Khan, participating in a dance, dressed in vibrant traditional attire. The scene is dynamic, with colorful clothing and joyous expressions, reflecting the celebratory nature of the event (Malik & Shah, 2022).

Indices

Dancing, which is a fundamental component of Pakistani weddings and can be seen during the Mehndi or Baraat occasions. The dances may be spontaneous or part of a choreographed style such as line, square etc., but they serve the purpose in allowing devotees to express themselves and celebrate together through dance forms that reflect their state of joyfulness during these occasions. The enthusiasm of the children to partake in such dances indicates that these events appeal people from all age groups and this is one way how they bond well as a family, create memories with companions. (Hussain, 2020).

Symbols

In Pakistani culture, traditional Pakistani dance is a symbol of joy, unity, and cultural pride. The traditional and cultural roots are started with music, dance forms (like Bhangra/Dholki) bind the people to their ancestors hence offer them a sense of connectivity. All the ecstatic dresses worn during these dances represent the colors of

Pakistani folkloric practices which in return visually present a perceptual sense regarding their joy and cultural identity (Javed, 2019).

Figure 18: Nikah Ceremony

Icons

The image presents the Nikkah ceremony, which is the Islamic marriage contract. We see the bride and groom, who are sitting next to the religious figures performing the ceremony. The icon represents the event and the relationship since it helps to reveal the traditional elements of it. The setting up of the ceremony with flowers and the traditional clothing of the married couple and the main figure in white above all symbolizes the special meaning of the event in their culture and religion (Ahmed & Rizvi, 2021).

Indices

The Nikkah ceremony is one of the events of the Muslim wedding and the most important one in Islam. This ceremony marks the establishment of the wife with the husband's rights, along with the duties of the chosen one under the sacrament and within the framework of Sharia law. It is performed by the will of Allah and community representatives. The following takes place at the ceremony: the groom's speech that he will take the woman as his legal wife, the reading of the specified verses of the Qur'an and the official conclusion between the divorce and the marriage with the woman. It suggests that the ceremony needs the setting and the performing of the religious figures to point out the importance of the religious approval and the community's support of this union (Farooq, 2022).

Symbols

Nikkah is the legal and spiritual contract between a couple, blessed by their community and witnessed by religious authorities. Inclusions of the ceremony like reciting Quranic verses and traditional dress are acts to show unity between the couple, and how they both commit themselves not only to each other but also as Muslims. The decor associated with the ceremony which may include flowers and traditional motifs all connote beauty, purity and support for blessings in the future of a union (Sadiq, 2020). This ceremony is the embodiment of religious and cultural blend, a perfect demonstration on how marriage in Pakistani society has always been about merging two souls together into one.

4.3.4. Visual Analysis of Episode 4

Figure 19: Kamala Khan in a Karachi Market

Indices

The busy market filled with shops and colourful environment marks a symbol of Karachi local life. The availability of variety goods ranging from textiles to groceries is a sign that the economy has taken root in local communities and markets are bugs attracting large numbers of people which happens what Jafri (2022), defines them as cultural centers where different identities converge. It is a setting that also mirrors the cosmopolitan megalopolis of Karachi, one of Pakistan's biggest and most multicultural cities.

Symbols

The market is stocked with a diverse range of items including traditional clothes and handicrafts which symbolize the culture richness of Pakistan. These objects are

anything but purely commodities; they hold cultural significance as regional signifiers within the nation (Saeed, 2021). This symbolism is further implemented in how Kamala interacts with vendors that focuses on the typical practice of haggling and negotiation at Pakistani avenue traders.

Figure 20: Rickshaws in Karachi

Icons

The most powerful and specific element of the scene is the presence of rickshaws. Quite a popular vehicle in cities across South Asia, including Karachi, it has become an iconic mode of urban transportation. Thanks to the rickshaw's affordability and mobility in congested conditions, the scene shows viewers the city's transportation means by focusing on a particular vehicle type. In Pakistan, most rickshaws are vibrant and often represent other types of art. It means that the scene's iconic effect is not only the ability of the type of transport but also a certain demonstration of the local culture and expression of current popular styles of urban design in the country.

Indices

The scene's most potent index is the busy urban environment depicted in the frame. Overall, the environment shown in the photo seems sufficiently chaotic and crowded to grasp viewers' understanding or to divert their attention to some particular detail. As a result, the city's scene is filled with a sense of dynamism and urban life vitality, accompanied by day-to-day movement. Another indexical property of the photo is its insight into the socio-economic diversity of the city where different types

of activities take place simultaneously. For example, the work of the rickshaw driver and the parked expensive cars in the scene are both part of everyday life in this city.

Symbols

The variety of cultural symbolism in the scene is represented by the considerable number of different means of transport. Cars, motorbikes, and people who are more or less well-dressed all together convey the city's cultural diversity. It states, less wealthy citizens are traditionally transported by rickshaws in Pakistan. The traffic and chaotic environment in the photo can be seen as a sign that the city's inhabitants seek to address their own daily concerns to some extent and are able to cope with the overall state of affairs.

Figure 21: Kamala Shopping in Karachi

Icons

An iconic representation of the scene is Kamala's interaction with the market scene. Her barter with a vendor in the market has the connotation of the scene, as it presents the real activity that goes hand in hand with the shopping experience in Pakistan. The market scene is an iconic symbol because it is annotated social activity of the traditional way of shopping. Hence the market is not always a place for retail activity in Pakistan as the vendors engage in bargaining, which is predominantly an icon cultural activity in Pakistan.

Indices

The presence of the image of small shops and street vendors is indicative of the location of the activity. The scene being taken in a small business center is an indexical sign that the business of the town is under the control of small businesses and street

vendors. Similarly, the presence of the location in the city is an indexical reference that gives an idea about the size of the market. The size of the market contextually gives the idea of the available commodities and the ability of the market considered to meet the market demand, as numerous goods are displayed and on sale.

Symbols

The interaction of Kamala with the activity in the market and her interaction with the vendors symbolize the idea of cultural integration and identity. Kamala is an icon of a lady born to Pakistani parents but educated in American culture; the interaction with the local people and the investigation of the local goods make Kamala a clear mix of the two contexts. The investigation of goods that seems familiar to the lady raised in America is a concern of her identity, as she can discover the similar but different nature of the goods. Kamala is therefore seen trying to do away with her American nature and participating in their own culture. This indicates that everyone must be comfortable to know his roots (Nawaz, 2020).

Figure 22: Karachi Streets

Icons

The scene depicts a mix of colonial and local architectural styles, which can be considered iconic in terms of reflecting Karachi's cold history. But it appears a vestige of British rule, which governed the Indian subcontinent for centuries and left a legacy of colonial architecture on the territory of present-day Pakistan. The other local architectural styles are genuinely Pakistani in that regard, absorbing many adjacent influences and other local features in their design (Ahmed, 2021). Therefore, the

mixture of two styles in the picture is emblematic of the city's complicated history and its culture's complexity.

Indices

A busy city life scene is an index of Karachi's urban life. With the help of the details on the scene, there are many means of transportation on it, and there is a significant number of people in the street one may assert that the life of this city is quite vibrant and economically diverse. As it is a swiftly urbanizing scene, one may also guess what challenges Karachi faces in its process, such as congestion issues, and the necessity for public infrastructure development.

Symbols

In the picture, one may see the mix of new and old buildings located next to each other. Such juxtaposition is a classical symbol of the tension between tradition and progress. As it often becomes the case for forcibly urbanizing cities in the developing world, the destruction of old architecture takes place in parallel with the erection of new buildings on old sites. The scene, therefore, symbolizes the need to balance two opposite tendencies in urban development.
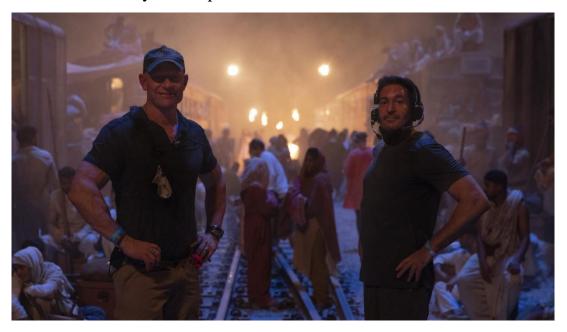
4.3.5. Visual Analysis of Episode 5

Figure 23: Historical Reenactment

Icon

An image with a train station, full of people in their traditional dress; is nostalgic for massive events during the history of Pakistan such as the partition era between India and Pakistan in 1947. The train station and the countless people present there automatically invoke a visual representation we are used to associating with mass-migrations at that time. The usage of this icon is a straight visual reference that directly associates viewers to the shared memory of those events surrounding the Partition and then the creation of Pakistan.

Index

The traditional attire worn by the people, alongside the chronological setting, serve as indices directing to a specific time period. Indexically, this scene suggests that it is the mid-20th century, the time of the partition. The old trains and the structural design of the station further placed this scene in a particular cultural and historical context, emphasizing the social and cultural context of the time.

Symbol

The flames and smoke at the back are very potent symbols. Together, in the context of the Partition, they convey chaos and ruination mark that era. In this way, the symbols were suitably representative of both the violence and chaos that accompanied mass displacement while also rendering events irremovable from Pakistan's cultural memory. As symbols, they serve as more than their literal representation but also stand in for the wider societal implications and emotional scars imparted by such a monumental historical event (Chandler, 2017).

Figure 24: Rural Life and Tradition

Icon

The couple in the second image is dressed up traditionally with the woman wearing a dupatta and man wearing a kurta. One of the many common iconographic images about village life which is a hallmark in Pakistani society and reflects how people still live, including dress customs. The above depictions are relatable as images of rural Pakistan, shedding light on clothing norms which stem from a certain culture.

Index

The agricultural locus with a garden or field (which also locates the rural / agrarian life style that is basic to light of Pakistan) the presence of such a setting signals to the importance and prominence agriculture has in Pakistan, signifying an agricultural based lifestyle deeply tied with land and traditional forms.

Symbol

Apart from a pleasing picture, the warm colors and sweet smiles on these two faces show an unsophisticated yet heartwarming face of rural life in Pakistan. The cement, ceramic and bricks represent the heritage of a family-oriented, agricultural community lifestyle that rural Pakistani culture is immersed in. The calm and relaxed faces of the couple serve as a symbol for a life that, though unstructured in appearance, is grounded on culture and family ties (Barthes 1977).

Figure 25: Mass Migration

Icon

The overcrowded train roofs in the third image embody what India and Pakistan experienced on trains during mass migration, as a result of Partition. Representative of the desperate journeys undertaken by millions, this image is seared into the history books of that region.

Index

The number of people and the packed nature in images, as they appear sitting on top carriages roofs tells us how urgently these masses were migrating. This not only demonstrates just how large the migration has been, but shows that there are no systems in place to deal with such a gargantuan movement of people. This indexical sign marks the time of great hardship and uncertainty.

Symbol

The dark, smoky effect reflects the environment within the picture that represents chaos and concern through which Pakistan was merged. It has a sense of darkness and the anxiety, danger that people feel who are on the run from violence looking for safety. The smoke too can be read as a sign of the loss and fragmentation, in which millions resulted affected, summarizing more emotional impact that had this historical event on society (Hall, 2005).

Figure 26: Community and Leadership

Icon

The man speaking to a crowd in the fourth image is clothed as one can expect at community ground, local leader of Pakistan village. The visual is a manifestation of the social dynamics and cultural norms at play in leadership and community engagement activities in Pakistani villages.

Index

The location, a village-market display of country-style merchandise, comprises an index that this is the kind of rural community we should expect. This is indicative of a traditional market system and social order that either witnesses the dominance of local leaders. It shows a familiar sight in Pakistani villages where local leaders are often seen interacting directly with the masses.

Symbol

The raised hand is called the signal, and it represents authority, respect for each other's voice in a society where decisions are made by commonality. It is a metaphor of the rural governance in Pakistan which though hierarchal but takes input from everyone's as well where mostly elders are selected or postmen based on their wisdom, experience and ability to guide community. The crowd's attention addressed a communal respect for leadership and group decisions-making, both quintessential components of Pakistani cultural norms (Peirce, 1955).

4.3.6. Visual Analysis of Episode 6

Figure 27: Ms. Marvel and Nakia Bahadir

Icons

Semiotically speaking, icons are signs that are similar to their referents (Peirce, 1955). In this scene, Kamala Khan's costume is the icon. Since the costumes of classic superheroes almost always look the same and are recognizable, the combination of colours pink, white, plain red and golden with a star and a mask visually represents Ms. Marvel. Ms. Marvel's outfit also includes "dupatta," a South Asian traditional scarf. The element of traditional homemade dress in an image of a modern-day superheroine illustrates Kamala's dual identity that of being an American teenage girl and being Pakistani Muslim. The combined choice of both traditional South Asian scarf and superhero outfit conveys the message of both the normalcy of her background and her extraordinary ability to protect the world against evil.

Symbols

The hijab of Nakia can be considered a major cultural and religious symbol of being Muslim. This Western symbol frequently identifies a Muslim woman in a crowded place. Underlined by the show, the episodic choice of the symbol sets Ms. Marvel a place among shows that represent the underrepresented, a multi-dimensional and feminist-focused-Muslim woman.

Figure 28: Ms. Marvel Surrounded by Authorities

Icons

The uniformed figures in this scene are archetypal police officers. Their inclusion visually indicates power, command and the threat of violence - common

tropes in superhero narratives (Mills, 2020). The uniforms identify the wearers as members of state power.

Indices

Kamala is surrounded by cops, so this situation definitely seems to be in a conflict or maybe it could just be a misunderstanding. It both signals the societal fears and prejudices normalized in people's minds, as well as real social issues that Muslim communities face on an everyday basis; over here being deemed "naturally" antagonistic due to stereotypical internal others rather than external actions. The people in back represent what we perceive society's views on this would be. This might register wider social shifts around fear, curiosity or the value of communal backing (or judging) in such situations.

Symbols

Law enforcement surrounding Kamala, a Muslim superhero can exemplify broader societal and stereotyping of Muslims. This humanizes a universal symbol of Islamophobia and the idea that, in some contexts, Muslims are seen as being guilty until they can prove their innocence. In turn, Kamala & the rest fulfilling an actual non-discriminatory humanistic role as protectors of Muslims and Non-Muslims symbolized a heroism that transcends cultural and religious borders for everyone everywhere. It questions the restrictive notions that frequently colour her identity, focusing instead on unifying sentiment of wider humanity.

Figure 29: Muneeba and Kamala

Icons

Muneeba wearing a "shalwar kameez" is iconic of the Pakistani culture. This kind of apparel is defined in the through-line with cultural roots (Syed & Ali, 2023). All of which plays to a theme in the series that involves generational and cultural ties within her family.

Indices

The interaction of Muneeba and Kamala, with the former helping her later in dress reflects a bond more nurturing and familial. In visual media, we need such physical interactions to show care and support (Bordwell & Thompson, 2019). This is a moment that highlights the intimate mother daughter relationship of family and cultural lineage.

Symbols

The dupatta or a scarf worn by Kamala is the sign and of cultural values, ideologies beliefs. In fact, the "dupatta" in South Asian culture represents modesty and respectability (Haddad et al., 2006). When Kamala uses the "dupatta" as part of her superhero costume, it represents how she incorporates cultural heritage into Ms. Marvel townsfolk.

Figure 30: Crowd Scene at Barricade

Icons

In the crowd, Kamala's parents are wearing traditional South Asian clothing 'shalwar kameez' and 'scarves' which is iconic to Pakistani Culture. This image emphasizes the cultural identity of this neighborhood amidst an American setting.

Indices

The fact that Kamala's parents and community members were there signifies a loving caring protective supportive community. This index speaks a lot about the societal values that underpin many Pakistani families and communities, which come closest to each other in times of uncertainty.

The police line rightfully reads "POLICE LINE DO NOT CROSS," suggesting the presence of a divide between law enforcement agents & members of its jurisdiction. This is a clear reflection of the conflict and unrest in that situation, which echoes many societal struggles about law enforcement and how different communities are treated.

Symbols

The mere presence of everyday people in Kamala's community, particularly those with different backgrounds is a statement to her solidarity and support. It is this which represents the connection and culture held within a community as well as collective resilience in face of oppressive pressures from outside forces.

The state activity against Kamala is one example of a way-large challenge referred to as Islamophobia, which results in Muslims being racially profiled. This speaks to a cultural/societal issue, where Muslims are automatically on the defensive and constantly having their actions misinterpreted.

Figure 31: Mosque Interior

Icons

The Prayer area, with prayer mats and Minbar (pulpit) an iconic representation of Islamic worship spaces. The architecture, which features arched windows and other decorative elements is typical Muslim style where it would be common for Pakistani mosques too.

A representation of the culture is made with some people who wear 'shalwar kameez' and 'hijab' trends which are specially for representing Pakistani Muslims.

Indices

The policemen are shown with their shoes in the mosque which could also be an index, since the Muslim believers should not wear their shoes inside. This act of disrespect could be an index of the general lack of understanding or disregard towards Islam and its cultural signifiers.

Symbols

The mosque is a place for Muslims to gather as well as worship. It is emblematic of a place to retreat and find sustenance from among community. For police to intrude this space and suggest that they might be there any second symbolizes a break of sanctuary, or clear violation of safe bubble.

The police is often viewed as detaining and surveilling or hypothetically maintaining surveillance over minority communities. In the context of this mosque scene, the police symbol could be used in order to discuss the power dynamics in communities, as well as the interactions between Muslim individuals and Western society in the context of the post 9/11 world. Police could also be used as a symbol of disrespect and disregard for Islam and Muslim values.

The scene represents the clash between some Islamic cultural practices and law enforcement techniques in a Western country. That collision results in misinterpretations and supports general prejudices like the idea that there could be criminal activities taking place at mosques.

To sum up, the semiotic elements introduced by Peirce, "Ms. Marvel" are able to create an extremely nuanced portrayal of Pakistani culture and faith. Iconic features like the clothing, housing or rituals also help in grounding it within a specific cultural context. For example, language could index not just a Pakistani or American cultural identity and sign system but also an experience of globalization. The series is studded with symbols, many of them religious and cultural in nature: references to Islam (including practices within the faith), somber appearances by an Imam, contrasted with that peppy rendition during the party.

This thorough semiotic analysis makes it clear why the series is not just about representing one face of Pakistan culture, but how in a dialogue with that face - respecting and responding to its agonies as well as ecstasies. These cultural and religious elements are not just there to add flair, but gives context for the story. Continuing on with character depth as well engaging plot in relation to a broader world view. This approach avoids the kinds of content that other comics might struggle with and instead presents a more authentic portrayal of Pakistani culture than is typically seen.

Also, with the infusion of signs from cultural hybridity, it raises questions about how culture changes within diaspora communities and identity as a whole. Most importantly, the characters cross-cultural worlds returning viewers from similar backgrounds to reconcile their Pakistani heritage with what it means raising a family in

America reflects the fluidity and evolution of cultural identities instead of monolithic notions of culture.

It is with this being said that the main purpose of Ms. Marvel holds true and firm as a cultural text, revealing Pakistani culture and religion through the means of Peircean semiotics. This is an essential filter to help groups of people besides its creators trying to make sense out of the concepts around cultural identity, religious import, & diasporic experience. This layered portrayal adds to wider dialogues on diversity, representation and the positive influence of true cultural storytelling in entertainment yet a subtle representation of existing stereotypes, connecting the Muslims of Pakistan a threat.

4.4. Analysis Based on Representation Theory (Hall, 2005)

To examine the demonstration of Pakistani culture in the *Ms. Marvel* web series using Stuart Hall's Representation Theory (2005), it's significant to emphasize on how the series builds meanings around religion and culture, particularly in the context of Muslim and identities. Stuart Hall's theory highlights that representation is a multifaceted process, it is not about exactly reflecting realism but about making meanings that form our perception or understanding of the world. It is a process through which meanings are produced and distributed via language, symbolization, and cultural practices.

4.4.1. Representation of Pakistani Culture in *Ms. Marvel* (Episodes and Scenes)

Family Dynamics and Cultural Practices

- Episodes: Several

- Scenes: Conversations at home, family gatherings, and cultural practices.

Representation Analysis

The series often focuses on the dynamics of the Khan family, showing the reality of the typical family structure of a South Asian-based family. Characteristics typical for the South Asian culture such as strong ties between family members, respect to the elders, and joint decision-making are often portrayed. Other cultural aspects,

including food, clothes, and language, are emphasized and illustrate that the Pakistani culture values family and community. These elements reinforce the positive aspects of the culture, but they may also be built on stereotypes that allude to the collectivist nature of South Indian communities.

Hall's (2005) Perspective:

According to Hall (2005), "representation constructs reality" by utilizing the cultural codes and conventions. Therefore, the representation of the Khan family appeals to the cultural codes and utilizes the familiar cultural codes and conventions to present the audience with the Pakistani culture. The viewers may, therefore, recognize the portrayal of their own culture if they are of the similar cultural background, or if they are not, they may recognize the unfamiliar culture by its familiar aspects. In this way, the representation both affirms the culture and risks being reduced to the collection of easily recognizable symbols.

Religious Practices and Islamic Identity

- Episodes: Several, particularly in scenes set in mosques or including religious discussions.
- Scenes**:** mosque scenes, Eid celebrations, prayer rituals, and discussions on Islamic teachings.

Representation Analysis

The series often shows Islamic practices which include Eid celebrations, daily prayers, and attending the mosque. It also deals with religious identity, especially through Kamala's constant struggle and how she copes with it. The mosque is depicted as a community center where the Muslims not only worship but also socialize with one another, reflecting on the social-cultural and religious influence of Islam in Pakistan. One can note that Ms. Marvel exposes the Islamic practices to normalize them by non-Muslims and reduce any form of mystification that can be associated with the religion.

Hall's (2005) Perspective

Hall's theory (2005), asserts that representation is the means of creating meanings and also the process through which the power is in a constant condition of negotiation. That is just evident from the fact that Ms. Marvel often shows how the

Kennedy Heights Teen Center is synonymous with the mosque and it even goes further to open windows so that we can see what is precisely happening in the mosque itself. The representation in the film shows how the Muslims are not just confined to attending prayers but they have social groups in which they participate in and through which they interact with one another. Representation, in this instance, aims to demystify the Islamic practices by showing them as they are and also normalize them in the eyes of the non-Muslim. The film, however, stills run the risk of close-mindedness since it shows a representative notion of what it means to be a Muslim.

Cultural Hybridity and Identity Negotiation

- Episodes: All through the series, mainly in Kamala's communications with peers and her superhero identity.
- Scenes: Kamala's interactions at school, her costume design and discussions about her culture.

Representation Analysis

The representation of Kamala's dual identity as a Pakistani-American teenager and a superhero represents cultural hybridity. In the series, the character struggles to balance her Pakistani heritage with her American home and highlight conflicts or synergies between the two. These aspects are visually represented in her superhero costume, which includes elements of Pakistani culture as well as modern fashion for superheroes.

Hall's perspective (2005)

According to Hall's (2005), perspective on representation, cultural identities are continuously negotiated instead of fixed. Kamala is an example of such dynamic identity as she is neither entirely American nor purely of Pakistani origin. Thus, the series introduces the author's concept that representations provide new identities and destabilizes the traditional notions of defining Pakistanis or Americans.

Community and Social Issues

- Episodes: Several, particularly episodes dealing with the societal challenges and mosque community.

- Scenes: interactions with law enforcement, community meetings, and public events.

Representation Analysis

In terms of representation analysis, the series is concerned with social issues such as Islamophobia, racial profiling and the status quo. The mosque as a society can be seen that its members support one another collectively and individually. The community, as shown here, seems tight-knit and together in order to remain stronger in the face of outside pressure.

Hall's Perspective (2005)

Hall (2005), suggests that a media representation may do both, "challenge" or "reinforce," power relationships. On the one hand, Ms. Marvel's narrative demonstrates social injustices, which "are a chance to do better" and shed light on the problems. On the other hand, the show may emphasize the aspects of disagreement and struggle, reinforcing the victimized image, rather than embracing with their vibrancy and independence of the community.

4.5. Findings

The findings are divided into three main sections, corresponding to the research questions. The first one outlines several semiotic sign types and the scenes in the series where they can be observed, together with examples of these signs. The second section is dedicated to discussing the meanings of the signs described along with their interpretations in the context of Pakistani, Islamic culture and the narrative of the series. The third and final section summarizes both the research's approach and its findings and attempts to answer research question 3 with the help of the analysis performed in the previous two sections.

4.5.1. Semiotic Sign Types in Ms. Marvel

The semiotic analysis of Ms. Marvel demonstrates to a variety of sign types, including icons, indices, and symbols, as identified by Charles Sanders Peirce (1955). The signs are skillfully used in the series to represent aspects of the Pakistani culture and the Islamic religion.

Icons

Icons in the series are the visual and linguistic elements and their context that depicts an object and, at the same time, may resemble it. For example:

Traditional Clothing: In the series, characters from Pakistan are depicted wearing traditional Pakistani attire. Shalwar kameez and hijabs from Episodes 1, 2, and 3 are the integral parts of the visual representation of the main characters in the series. Other characters, particularly the older family members, are portrayed in similar clothing, leaving the religious attire such as hijab and shalwar kameez to Ms. Marvel, a devout Muslim. In Episode 1, while a young Kamala is arguing with her mother about going to a party, her mother sews her shalwar kameez, thus indicating the connectedness of the family to the country of origin. In conclusion of the episode, the mother claims innovatively, clearly referring to the beginning of the episode as a Boss of Kamala the tailor. Meanwhile, Kamala in the similar clothing stops being herself and assumes the image of a superhero. Using the traditional attire is a direct icon of the family's homeland.

Architectural Styles: In the series homes, mosques/masjids are made having the Islamic architectural elements of a dome, a minaar, and a crescent which represent the Pakistani culture.

Food Items: Pakistani food common dishes like biryani, samosas and chai are promoted in specific episodes In Episode 2, Kamala and her friends order from a nearby Pakistani restaurant instead of eating their normal hot dogs, making visual the icon these foods become to represent cultural ties.

Indices

The indices in Ms. Marvel are associations, which point towards the cultural and religious contexts of meaning together. For example:

Family Gatherings: Scenes from family gatherings or celebrations like the one during Eid in episode 4 indicate community and familial ties at the center of Pakistani culture. The celebrations, the costumes and praying in groups for these auspicious days

of celebration only serve to remind people how much value culture holds in the life of Pakistani people.

Religious Practices: Episode 3 features communal prayers performed at mosques, emphasizing the role of religious practice in the characters life. This is highlighted even further with scenes showing Kamala's family praying daily at home.

Societal Expectations: Conversations about gender roles, marriage, and education are indicators of the cultural norms and beliefs that are common in Pakistani society. In Episode 5, Kamala's parents express worries about her future, which is in line with the social norm that parents should be involved in all significant life decisions.

Symbols

Symbols are conventional signs that acquire meaning through culture. Some of which, in the series include;

Crescent Moon and Star: Many times in Ms. Marvel, this Islamic religious emblem appears, including, Kamala's superhero outfit in the sixth episode. That is a symbol of her heritage and religion.

Dialogues Referencing Islamic Teachings: Some dialogues involve Kamala making reference to Islamic teachings or historical events, these references depict how she draws strength and direction from her faith such as Kamala Khan mentioning the verse from the Quran in Episode 3, are symbols of her belief and the moral guidance it provides.

Kamala Khan as a Symbol: She becomes a symbol to represent self-hyphenate representations for Pakistani Muslim women. Her character challenges age-old stereotypes and project a possibility of better representation.

4.5.2. Semiotic Connotations of Icons, Indices, and Symbols

The show's intention to present a nuanced representation of Pakistani culture and religion is reflected in the multilayered and complicated meanings of the semiotic signs employed in Ms. Marvel.

Icons

Dressing in traditional attire and eating ethnic food, all help to encourage authenticity, creating a sense of pride for your ethno cultural background. Those icons are not just frivolous additions; they help define the characters and advance the story, making it clear, it is a work of equal parts hilarious fantasy but grounded in cultural specifics. For example:

Clothing: Kamala and her family wear the shalwar kameez not only as a symbol of their Pakistani roots, but to emphasize that they are immigrants too in an American context.

Culinary indulgences: Authentic representation of Pakistani food in several sequences acts as a nostalgia trigger and gives the characters their roots to anchor on, into an alien setting.

Indices

Indices highlight the difference among Pakistani and Western cultural norms. For instance:

Cultural Expectations: Kamala's relationships with her family and community reflect her struggle to strike a balance between her ethnic heritage and her American culture. This conflict is most noticeable in the scenes where she balances cultural norms with her own preferences, as when she takes part in religious and school activities.

Religious Observance: The use of communal prayers and the rendering of religious events marks an element in their characters, conveying the significance of faith amongst them and depicting religion as a key influencer.

Symbols

Symbols carry deeper meaning as symbols of faith, identity and community. For example:

Islamic Teachings: Verses from the Quran and allusions to Islamic history are used in dialogue to strengthen the moral and ethical principles that direct the characters'

behaviour. The positive narrative that these symbols support helps refute the unfavourable prejudices that are frequently depicted in global media.

4.5.3. Representation of Pakistani Culture: Linguistic and Visual Signs

The Ms. Marvel series uses both visual and linguistic cues to depict Pakistani culture. This dual strategy guarantees that the depiction is thorough and understandable to a wide range of viewers.

Linguistic Signs

The inclusion of Urdu and Arabic words as well in English reflects the bilingual world many Pakistani families inhabit, even when overseas. The wide array of languages works as a cultural identifying stamp and is an important part when telling the personal background story for each character. For example:

Multilingual Dialogues: Episode 2 showcases a series of multilingual dialogues Kamala speaks to her parents in Urdu and English, which often happens in the typical immigrant family. The use of language not only works in making the characters seem real, it sets them apart and shows how they struggle to hold onto their heritage.

Cultural References: The dialogue in the series includes allusions to Pakistani history, music, and literature. These allusions give a deeper knowledge of the characters' cultural background and serve to contextualize their experiences.

Visual Signs

Pakistani culture in Ms. Marvel is visually diverse. The show often features South Asian aesthetics in its color palettes, set design and costumes. For example:

Eid Celebrations: Episode 4 demonstrates when Muslims celebrate Eid with traditional clothes, songs and food. People may begin to feel the vibrant colors and festive spirit, which visually narrates just how important this holiday is culturally.

Pakistani American Household: The layout and decor of Kamala's house as displayed throughout the season is in keeping with her heritage, featuring elements characteristic from South Asian culture. This care for minute details is what lays down a foundation of the cultural landscape within which these characters live and breathe.

4.6. Discussion

The analysis carried out in this research provides a refined investigation of the linguistic and visual representation of Pakistani culture in the *Ms. Marvel* web series. Based upon Hall's (2005) Representation Theory and Peirce's Semiotics (1955), the study precisely explores the role of language and visual semiotics to comprehend the way cultural components are represented in the series. The conclusion derived suggests that language plays an important role in the cultural representation like visual signs, stating that verbal discourse offers an in-depth insight into traditions, cultural values, and identity.

A thorough analysis of this conclusion requires an ample discussion of both the advantages and drawbacks intrinsic in such an assertion. Whereas, the findings of the study align with already existing literature on media representation, which highlights the strength of linguistic cues in determining cultural narratives (Hall, 1997; Said, 1978), it is crucial to consider the disagreement presented by researchers who highlight the potential of visual cues in determining audience opinions (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006; Barthes, 1977). Media, by its essence, is a multidimensional form of communication where both linguistic and visual features work interactively to create meaning.

The assertion of the conclusion that language provides a clear cultural representation finds support in various studies of cultural dissertation (Spivak, 1988; Bhabha, 1994), which claim that language serves as a crucial vessel for transferring cultural identity. The idiomatic expressions, dialogues, and culturally loaded expressions used in *Ms. Marvel* provide clear markers of Pakistani culture, such as references to religious practices, halal, and familial relationships. These linguistic signs unquestionably create a cultural framework that connects with Pakistani audiences, strengthening their identity and their sense of belonging. Moreover, the visual semiotics, through elements like architecture, traditional attire, and setting, also transmit embedded cultural messages that might not be caught through language only.

Moreover, present literature of media representation (Hall, 1997; Shohat & Stam, 1994) highlights that media functions within a worldwide context, where representation of culture is often subject to stereotyping and commodification. The

research acknowledges the genuineness of the representation of Pakistani culture but partially engage with the evaluation that such representations may still strengthen Western awareness of South Asian identity. Researchers such as Mohanty (1984) claim that media representations frequently get trapped of cultural essentialism, a consideration that should be critically questioned in future studies.

By analyzing the linguistic and visual cues, it has been perceived that Ms. Marvel web series proposes a dual perspective. From one perspective, the series portrays the culture accurately, representing authentic features of Pakistani lifestyle and traditions for instance Kamala Khan drawing inspiration from a Quranic verse to comfort others. This emphasizes the show's aim to present Islam serving a code for morality, compassion, and strength. It represents Kamala as a relevant, culturally embedded superhero who holds her traditions while coping with her identity in a Western society.

On the other hand, there lingers a stereotyped belief implanted in the narrative, as illustrated by the depiction of the American agent who observes Kamala as a destructive character. The way American agents respond to Kamala's powers instantly recognizing her as a threat and targeting towards spaces like the mosque proposes that pessimistic attitudes of Muslims are still profoundly deep-seated in western media narratives. This highlights a wider dispute of how Muslim spaces are frequently portrayed in Western narratives, emphasizing obsolete tropes in spite of the efforts at positive representation. This contrast stresses the tension between accurate representation of Pakistani culture and the preexisting stereotypes within the Western media landscape.

To conclude, though Ms. Marvel takes important steps towards a reliable representation of Pakistani culture, it still battles with some notable Western media preferences that frame Muslim characteristics through the eyes of mistrust and investigation. The findings underscore this contrast, showing both the elevation of the Muslim community's image and the domains where refinement is required to attain a more inclusive and deferential portrayal.

Though the research makes a persuasive argument for the importance of linguistic signs in cultural representation in *Ms. Marvel*, a balanced critical argument

requires recognizing the interplay among linguistic and visual components. The findings add considerably to the existing body of literature on media representation but would profit from a more comprehensive theoretical and methodological lens to improve their strength. Future research could adopt a multifaceted approach, integrating audience reception studies to evaluate the way linguistic and visual features are perceived mutually in shaping cultural identity.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The study focused at examining three significant points: firstly, to evaluate how the *Ms. Marvel* web series symbolizes Pakistani culture by both linguistic and visual features, secondly, to examine the choice of linguistic elements within the series and their contribution in determining cultural representation, and finally, to evaluate how these depictions effect the perceptions of the audience. The basic aim was to acquire a more profound and deeper understanding of how linguistic and visual signs together add to cultural representation in *Ms. Marvel.* To achieve this purpose, significant researches on the representation of culture in media, with a specific focus on Pakistani culture, were closely reviewed.

Previous researches had indicated the challenges of cultural credibility and stereotyping but, simultaneously, discovered certain gaps related to the interplay of linguistic and visual signs in constructing cultural identity. A key limitation recognized in earlier studies was the major emphasis on visual signs, often ignoring the linguistic features that play a critical role in shaping cultural narratives.

The study was based on the premise that the dualism present in *Ms. Marvel* web series where cultural originality co-occurs with stereotypical representations had not been addressed in depth before. To fill this gap, the present research undertook a comprehensive analysis of both the linguistic and semiotic components, using Representation Theory (2005) and Peirce's semiotic model (1955) to examine how cultural connotations are represented in the series. These frameworks were helpful in accomplishing the objectives of the study and added to an ample understanding of the representation of Pakistani culture in *Ms. Marvel.*

This research was organized around five research questions directed at understanding the linguistic and semiotic dimensions of cultural demonstration in *Ms. Marvel*:

The following are the primary questions:

  i.   What semiotic sign types have been used in Ms. Marvel web series?

ii. How do the linguistic signs contribute to representing Pakistani culture in the selected web series?

iii. How do visual signs contribute to representing Pakistani culture in *Ms. Marvel*?

The following are the subsidiary questions:

i. How do the linguistic signs reconstruct, challenge, or uphold existing stereotypes of Pakistani Muslims in mainstream Western media?

ii. How do the visual signs reconstruct, challenge, or uphold existing stereotypes of Pakistani Muslims in mainstream Western media?

The study brought out fascinating outcomes. As far as the first question is concerned, the study identified several semiotic signs, comprising icons, indexes, and symbols, through a comprehensive analysis. For instance, iconic signs such as customary Pakistani attire were used to indicate cultural representation and pride. Indexical signs, such as Kamala's repeated use of Urdu terminologies, pointed to her familial and cultural ties showcasing her cultural heritage, whereas, symbols like the *bangle* symbolized themes of connection, heritage and empowerment. These signs together shaped layers of meaning, contributing to the cultural depth of the narrative. Linguistic features such as expressions like "Allah Hafiz," *dua* (prayers), and orientations to customary values within conversations added profundity to these semiotic signs, highlighting cultural inclusion.

As for the second question, the connotations of the semiotic components were interpreted by examining their context within the web series. Icons for instance, the *dupatta* were connected to the traditional tenets of modesty. Indexes like language, food items, and familial gestures highlighted cultural practices. Symbols, such as Kamala's bangle and the Noor element captured intricate tales of empowerment and ethnic heritage. These perspectives contributed to the development of a genuine representation of Pakistani culture. Linguistic features, such as bilingualism in conversations, reinforced the hybrid identity of Pakistani-Americans and associated diasporic communities to their tradition. These components together facilitated in establishing an accurate and multi-layered representation of Pakistani culture.

For the third research question, linguistic and visual signs were analyzed to observe their role in the representation of Pakistani culture within the series. These signs were set up to complement each other in representing a holistic appearance of Pakistani culture. Language, predominantly the use of Urdu, assisted as a medium to express heritage, intimacy and cultural nuances. For example, Kamala's communications with her grandmother and mother with culturally loaded expressions and idiomatic expressions emphasized the cultural and emotional bonds within her family. Visual markers, such as traditional Pakistani architecture, portrayals of the *mehndi* ceremony, and community gatherings, mirrored cultural standards and collective identity. Together, these marks presented a nuanced representation of Pakistani culture, emphasizing the intersection of imagery and language in creating accurate cultural narratives.

Discussion

The linguistic and visual analysis of *Ms. Marvel* discloses a multifaceted interplay of identity, language, and ideology, where Pakistani culture is concurrently represented, conveyed, and negligibly challenged within the context of Western media. By applying Peirce's triadic model - icon, index, and symbol (1955), and Hall's Representation Theory (2005), this research understands the cultural markers that construct Kamala Khan's dual identity and the greater sociocultural associations of these depictions.

Through repeated use of culturally entrenched linguistic choices, for instance religious greetings ("Assalamu Alaikum," "Allahu Akbar"), Urdu expressions ("beta," "Bismillah," "Mashallah"), and references to familial roles and customary practices, the series builds a linguistic domain that grounds Kamala's Pakistani Muslim identity. These lexical choices function not only as markers of traditions but as constructive zones of cultural interpretation. They index entrenched sociocultural standards such as familial respect, honor, obedience, and spiritual belonging, thus grounding the plot in subjective experiences of the Pakistani Muslim diaspora.

Hall (2005) claims that meaning is fabricated through representational structures such as language, and this research asserts that claim by validating the way *Ms. Marvel* uses linguistic signs as a medium to convey a more refined and

comprehensive South Asian Muslim identity. Conversely, while the web series frequently resists prevailing Islamophobic narratives by foregrounding the cultural richness and humanizing Muslim characters, it also, in certain instances, echoes racial surveillance. Such as, Kamala's powers swiftly invites skepticism from law enforcement, stimulating a mosque search, an act that echoes with the securitization of Muslim bodies and post-9/11 racial profiling, as noted by Shaheen (2001) and Alsultany (2012).

These findings line up with existing literature that analyses Western media for stereotyping Pakistani Muslims, representing them as threats. *Ms. Marvel*, alternatively, subverts the stereotypical construction by offering a diasporic storyline that permits space for cultural pride, religious faith, and identity conflict to co-occur. However, the existence of certain ideological constructions, such as government surveillance and implied bias recommends that the web series does not completely escape the depictive boundaries of mainstream Western media.

Additionally, the figurative representations, for instance the Noor (light) is used as a metaphor for hereditary strength, or the mosque as a controversial place of both protection and skepticism determine how cultural and religious identity is visually and linguistically framed in such a way that both sustain and disrupt belonging. These features uphold Hall's perspective that representation is a progression of negotiation, where meaning is not fixed but reasonably produced through the discourse.

Through the exploration of these questions, this research demonstrated that the cultural narratives in *Ms. Marvel* are assembled through a symbiotic association between linguistic and visual signs.

This method offered a multifaceted, accessible, and authentic narrative that offered a deeper view of how Pakistani culture is represented.

5.1. Contribution of the Study

This research adds to existing body of literature by presenting the way linguistic and visual signs in popular media works not only to mirror identity but also to dynamically shape the way Pakistani culture is perceived globally. It showcases the contradiction

within representations that aim to be progressive yet continue to tether to prevailing ideological assumptions.

5.2. Limitations of the Study

This research has certain limitations regardless of its comprehensive insights.

- Some notable instances of cultural representation might have been overlooked because the analysis was limited to 25 – 40 scenes from the Ms. Marvel series.

- Moreover, concentrating on a sole media text confines the findings' generalizability to other representations of Pakistani culture in international mass media.

- Including texts from multiple/diverse forms of media in the study could lead to a more detailed understanding of cultural narratives.

5.3. Recommendations for Future Research

- Future researches can expand the analysis on the themes examined in this research by investigating the way South Asian cultures are represented in several genres and media.

- Comprehensive understanding might be gained by exploring how language mechanisms such as code-switching or specific cultural lexicons affect narratives.

- Comparative study on the way cultures are represented in Western and Eastern media can also provide perceptive viewpoints on cross-cultural narratives.

- Cultural studies may also get profit from observing how semiotic mechanisms influence the audience.

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