

## DIFFERENT INTERACTIVE FUNCTIONS OF RESPONSE TOKEN “khě” IN ORDINARY PASHTO CONVERSATION

**Salma Khatoon\***

Lecturer, Department of English, Kohat University of Science and Technology, Kohat  
[salmakhatoon@kust.edu.pk](mailto:salmakhatoon@kust.edu.pk)

**Sultan Muhammad**

Assistant Professor, Department of English, Hazara University Mansehra  
[sultan.muhammad@hu.edu.pk](mailto:sultan.muhammad@hu.edu.pk)

**Amjad Saleem**

Assistant Professor, Department of English and Applied Linguistics, University of Peshawar  
[amjad.saleem@uop.edu.pk](mailto:amjad.saleem@uop.edu.pk)

### ABSTRACT

*Listeners' participation and active listenership are expressed by using minimal response tokens by listeners. Listeners use different types of response tokens to participate in conversation and to help continue the smooth flow of conversation. This study explores various interactive functions of “khě” (ok) in everyday Pashto conversation by the native speakers of the language. This paper argues that “khě” is a multifunctional token which serves different functions in everyday Pashto conversation. In addition to being used as an acknowledgment token, it marks pre-shift and closure in a conversation. It is also used to make request and express surprise and threat. These functions depend upon the occurrence of response token “khě” in a sequential environment and prosody.*

**Keywords:** Pashto conversation, Response tokens, TCUs, Interactive functions, Sequential environment, Prosody

### INTRODUCTION

Conversation is an interactive process and is carried out in a collaborated manner by conversational partners. Successful conversation can only be carried out when both listener and speaker collaborate and participate in it. Participants in any interaction routinely make available their orientations and understandings of the moment-by-moment contingencies of unfolding actions (Beach, 1993). In any conversation, interaction is a highly organized phenomenon that is based on certain basic interactional competencies which are essential for conversational partners to communicate and interact meaningfully and coherently with each other. In any interaction, the participation opportunities for the individuals are ensured through a turn taking system (Sidnell, 2007). As far as conversation is concerned, it comprises of different Turn Constructional Units (TCUs) that vary in length and size. To ensure the ongoing flow of conversation, both speaker and listener need to respond to one another. This phenomenon of responding varies from longer responses to ‘little conversational objects’ or minimal response tokens (Gardner, 2001). Response tokens indicate that the listener meaningfully collaborates with the speaker.

Interlocutors use ‘verbal and non-verbal’, ‘behavioral tokens’ and ‘minimal verbalizations’ (e.g. ‘uh huh’, ‘okay’, ‘mm hmm’, ‘yeah’ and so forth) during interactions which help to manage the interaction (Schegloff, 1982, p.77). In order to maintain an interactive listening behavior, the participants need to use brief responses instead of lengthy, elaborate turns. In doing so, the co-participant helps the speaker achieve a fluent continuation and ensures ‘communicative economy’ of the talk (McCarthy, 2003). Indeed, listenership is an important part of interaction and response tokens play a significant role to maintain the interactional architecture of talk.

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\* Corresponding Author

Listeners select specific response token in a conversation for two reasons. One is the listener's behavior towards the activity and the other is the newness in the previous turn (Sohail & Pathan, 2013). Minimal responses are not used haphazardly; they are rather used in a regular and organized way (Beach, 1983). What listeners respond are often called as minimal responses, acknowledgment tokens, response tokens or back channels (Yngve, 1970).

This study investigates the interactive functions of the word “*khě*” in everyday Pashto conversation between the native speakers. The main aim of this study is to investigate various interactive functions of “*khě*” according to its occurrence in a sequential environment and to look at the variation in function of “*khě*” in relation to prosodic features.

### Research Questions

1. What are the interactive functions of *khě* in ordinary Pashto conversation?
2. What are the different functions performed by *khě* in relation to its sequential environment, place of occurrence in the turn, and prosody?

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This section presents review of the selected literature relevant to the study. Listeners in conversation use different types of responses to show their continued interest without disrupting the main speaker. These acknowledgment tokens are used to help promote the smooth flow of conversation. Listeners use variety of acknowledgment tokens not one because using one acknowledgment token frequently may signal the disinterest of the listener (Fries, 1952; Schegloff, 1982; Sohail, 2011).

### Response Tokens in English

Languages across the world make use of different acknowledgment tokens. Commonly used response tokens in English are ‘mm’, ‘hm’, ‘okay’, ‘right’, ‘really’, ‘oh’ and ‘yeah’. Fries (1952), for the first time, talked about the words such as ‘oh’, ‘yes’, ‘uh’, ‘huh’, ‘yeah’ and ‘I see’ used in English to show continued attention. The most commonly used acknowledgement tokens in English are ‘yeah’ (yes), ‘mm’, ‘hm’, and ‘uh’, ‘huh’ (Schegloff, 1982; Jefferson, 1984; Gardner, 2001). ‘Mm’, ‘hm’ and ‘uh’ ‘huh’ are typical continuers in English. They occur alone without any brief or subsequent topic utterances (Fujimoto, 2007). Continuers signal the willingness of the listener for the speaker to continue. ‘Yeah’ is different from ‘mm’, ‘hm’, ‘uh’, ‘huh’, though they can be used as continuers but mainly as acknowledgment tokens. ‘Yeah’ shows a greater degree of speaker incipency (Jefferson, 1984).

‘Yeah’ and ‘mm’ are the most common acknowledgment tokens in English. Generally, they have a falling intonation but they end with a rising intonation; they function as continuers (Gardner, 2001; Fujimoto, 2007). ‘Yeah’ is the most commonly used acknowledgment token in English, and is fundamentally an agreeing token (Gardner, 2001; Lambert, 2011). It is different from continuers as it does not signal the willingness of the listener to the speaker to continue. It has two different functions: first, it functions as a pre-shift token because the topic of the conversation may change after its occurrence; second, it signals the willingness of the listener to shift his or her role from recipient to the speaker (Jefferson, 1984). ‘Mm’ is a weaker acknowledgment token as compared to ‘yeah’ and it shows passive reciprocity and lesser involvement (Gardner, 2001). ‘Mm’, ‘hm’, ‘mm’, ‘uh’, and ‘huh’ are lexically empty and show passive reciprocity (Jefferson, 1984). Acknowledgment tokens signal the reception of prior turn and continuers give floor back to the core speaker (Gardner, 2001).

In addition to continuers and acknowledgement tokens, newsmarkers are also part of daily conversation. Typical newsmarkers are ‘oh’, ‘right’, ‘really’ and sometimes ‘did they’. These tokens display that the prior turn was newsworthy to the listener. ‘Right’ was one of the response tokens in a number of research studies by Gardner (2007). ‘Right’ serves different functions such as change of activity token, epistemic progression marker, newsmarker, confirmation marker and pre closure marker (Gardner, 2007). Gardner (2001) also found that there is difference in the use of ‘right’ in American, Australian, and British varieties of English. In American English, ‘right’ is mostly used as an agreement marker, not as a newsmarker. ‘Oh’ serves as a newsmarker (Gardner, 2007; Schegloff, 2007) and its functions differ according to its occurrence in a speech turn (Heritage, 1984).

### Response Tokens in Urdu

The commonly used response tokens in Urdu are ‘*sahī/thīk*’ (right), ‘*hām/jī*’ (yes), ‘*bīlku!*’ (certainly) and ‘*achā*’ (okay). Speakers use these response tokens to acknowledge the previous turn and signal the participant to help continue the flow of conversation (Sohail, 2011). She found that ‘*hmm*’ is the

weakest acknowledgment token and is lexically empty. It just shows the reciprocity of the listener. ‘Sahī’ (right) shows a positive response to the ongoing activity and an alignment with the previous turn. She found an interesting aspect of ‘sahī’ as being habitual. The response token ‘hām’ serves different types of functions depending on its type and its occurrence in a sequential environment. The selection of ‘hām’ depends on the relationship between speaker and listener. Sohail (2011) argued that ‘ji’ also functions as ‘thīk’ but the only difference is ‘ji’ is used in more formal settings. According to her, ‘bīlkuḷ’ is the strongest acknowledgment token. It indicates a greater degree of participation of listener in the conversation. One of the most commonly used response tokens in Urdu is ‘achā’ and it functions as a newsmarker in ordinary Urdu conversation (Sohail, 2011). Hassan (2015) studied different function of ‘achā’ in Urdu conversation and found that it functions as acknowledgment token and pre-closure marker. It is also used to express change of state. Khalique, Ishaq, and Sohail (2014) discussed various functions of ‘hala’ such as signaling weak agreement, strong agreement, pre closing marker and recipient marker.

### **Response Tokens in Pashto**

Response tokens in Pashto are largely unexplored. The present study aims to fill in this gap. Some of the commonly used response tokens in Pashto are ‘ji’, ‘khě’, ‘bīlkuḷ’, ‘thīk’ and ‘av’. However, no published research study exists on the interactive functions of any one of these response token in ordinary Pashto conversation. This study focuses on different interactive functions of the response token ‘khē’ as used by native speakers of the language as part of their everyday conversation.

## **METHODS AND MATERIALS**

As the study aimed at investigating various interactive functions of the word “khě” in ordinary Pashto conversation, Conversation Analysis (CA) methodology was used to collect and analyze the interactional data and report the results.

### **Participants**

Participants in the study were mainly close friends and family members. Some of them were speakers of different varieties of Pashto.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

The data consisted of 15 telephone recordings of native speakers of Pashto. Originally 25 calls were recorded but only those recordings were used for the purpose of the study in which instances of ‘khě’ were found. Data was collected from family members and close friends of both genders. Participants’ consent was sought by distributing a consent form to participate in the study. They were informed about the nature and purpose of the study before they were recorded. Every step was taken to ensure the anonymity of the data and was used for research purposes and was later deleted. Participants were asked to talk about any topic of their interest. The length of each conversation varied from person to person.

### **Data Analysis Procedures**

The recorded data was analyzed to find out different functions of ‘khě’ in Pashto language. The total running time of all 15 call recordings was 76 minutes and 25 seconds. Following McGregor’s (1992) conventions for data transcription, the recordings were transcribed in Pashto—the language of the participants. The recordings were carefully listened to; tokens and their different functions depending upon occurrence in a sequential order were identified. The whole data was then transcribed and also translated in English. Conversation Analysis (CA) provides the basic framework for analysis of the data.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The following sections present analysis of the selected fragments from the data, results of analysis, and discussion of the results related to different functions of khě.

### **‘khě’ as an Acknowledgment Token**

One basic function of ‘khě’ at turn initial position is that of an acknowledgment token. The listener signals his or her active listenership by uttering it and acknowledges the previous turn.

1. A: sě dy kvl  
What were you doing?
2. B: kapry mẽ vīnzly  
I was washing clothes.

3. A: hmmm
4. B: aparvn bhabhy raghly wa  
My sister in law visited yesterday
5. A: tasv karě?  
Did she visit your house?
6. B: av  
Yes
7. A:→ **khě** nvr svk v warsrě  
Who else accompanied her?
8. B: Ifrě av Mani  
Ifra and mani (0.3)
9. B: Ifrě dyr **khkūly** frak achaūly vĕ  
Ifra`s frock was very beautiful
10. A: kam klr ky vĕ  
Which colour?
11. B: wayt av rid  
White and red
12. A: **aghě** mĕ aghasty v wrtĕ  
I bought her that
13. B: → **khě** km zay ky?  
OK, where?
14. A: pyshawar ky  
Peshawar
15. B: → **khě**  
Ok

In this fragment two friends are engaged in a conversation. One is telling the other about the visit of her sister in law. In line 7, 13 and 15, speaker B acknowledges speaker A`s turn by responding with '**khě**'.

The fragment below is taken from conversation between two friends. The conversation starts with normal greetings with interlocutors asking about each other`s health. Speaker P asks about speaker Q`s daughter. Speaker Q tells her that she is not feeling well. She is upset because of the teacher`s punishment. She tells that Nimra is weak at Maths. This is a new piece of information for P and is acknowledged with '**kha**' in turn15.

1. P: asalam v alykūm  
Hello
2. Q: walykūmūsalam  
Hello
3. P: **bikhly ghayibĕ shawy** y(.) pata dy nĕ lagy  
You are totally out of scene these days
4. Q: av  
Yes
5. P: dĕ wly?  
Why?
6. Q: lagĕ masrūfĕ ūm  
I was a little busy
7. P: Hmm (0.2)
8. Q: sangĕ y?  
How are you doing?
9. P: thĭk thak (.) **khpl** wayĕ  
Fine(.) how are you?
10. Q: **khīr** dy  
Fine
11. P: Nimrĕ sangĕ dĕ?  
How is Nimra?
12. P: Nimrĕ bīmarĕ dĕ

- Nimra is sick.
13. Q: Ohhoo::: dē waly?  
What happened to her?
14. P: aghē myths ky lagē wīk dē nv tīchr panishmint warkry dy(.) Dē yaridaly dē  
She is not good at Maths. Teacher punished her. She is scared.
15. .Q: → **khē**  
**Ok**
16. P: Farhan av Nvman sabak ky takrē dy. Nimrē sarē lg mihnāt kvl ghvary  
Farhan and Nouman are good at studies. On Nimra I have to work hard.

**‘khē’ as a Pre-shift Token**

The fragments of conversations below exemplify the function of ‘khē’ as a pre-shift token:

1. C: sn dy kawl?  
What were you doing?
2. D: avs ralm dipartmnt nē  
Just came back from the Department
3. C: → **khē** stamk prabl̄m dy sangē dy avs?  
OK how is your stomach now?
4. D: kafy thīk dy  
Much better
5. C: → **khē** (.) tē tē ptē shtē abid ingajmint dy  
OK(.) you know Abid is getting engaged tomorrow.
6. D: rīkhtyē:::  
Really?:::
7. C: av wly tē tē ptē nīsh̄tē?  
Yes, don` t you know that?
8. D: nē mē tē khv pate nīsh̄tē  
No, I don` t know about it
9. C: mē tē vm vs pate vlagīdē  
I just came to know about it
10. D: hahha. Dē khē dē khv dīr zabardast nīvz dy  
Hahaa. It`s really an interesting piece of news.
11. C: av kanē  
Yes
12. D: → **khē** Hasnīn sangē dy?  
OK, how is Hasnain?
13. C: Hasnīn bīē bīmar shawy dy  
Hasnain is sick again

In the above fragment, two sisters are engaged in a conversation. The conversation starts with greetings and then C asks D about her engagements. D tells that she just came back from the Department. In turn 3, C uses ‘khē’ in order to shift to another topic. She doesn` t abruptly starts a new topic but uses a pre shift marker ‘khē’ to shift to another topic and starts inquiring about her health problem. Again when C starts talking about another topic (Abid`s engagement) again she starts her turn with prefacing ‘khē’ in turn 5. They talk about that engagement and D wants to inquire about C`s son health. She starts turn 12 by prefacing ‘khē’ to shift the topic.

1. K: km zay y  
Where are you?
2. L: University ky ym (.) vly  
At the university (.) why?
3. K: asy tps my kvlv  
Was just asking.
4. L: tē chrtē y  
Where are you?
5. K: zē avm university ky ym  
I am also at the university.
6. L: klasz dy kīgy?

7. K: Do you have classes?  
av  
Yes
8. K: stasv?  
And you?
9. L: zma vm  
Mine too
10. K: **khě**  
OK
11. L: → **khě** asif tě bě kly tě zy  
OK will you go to the village?
12. K: av vly?  
Yes. Why?
13. L: změ sě sizvně pkar dy mě wīl chy haghě rary  
I need a few things. I want you to get those for me
14. K: sě pkar dy?  
What do you need?
15. L: chy kvr tě lar shy bīě bě zě drtě khaīm  
I will let you know when you reach home.
16. K: thīk dě  
Ok

In the above fragment, ‘**khě**’ is used to signal pre shift to another topic. The conversational partners talk about their university and classes; however, when they want to make a shift, they use ‘**khě**’. In line 11 L shifts to another topic by uttering prefacing ‘**khě**’.

In the following fragment of conversation, one person asks the other that she was looking for her but she didn’t know about her whereabouts. They talk about this for a while and in turn 7 speaker M starts talking about the fee submission (sic). She shifts to another topic by uttering ‘**khě**’.

1. M: tě chrtě vy?  
Where were you?
2. N: la'brīry ky  
In the Library
3. M: zě khv la'brīry tě tly vm tě khv ně vy  
I went to the library but you were not there.
4. N: sě taīm?  
When was that?
5. M: 10 bgy  
10 o' Clock
6. N: hghě taīm zě kyfý tě tly vm  
At that time I was at the cafe
7. M: → **khě** tě khpl fee submit kv?  
Ok. Did you submit (sic) your fee?
8. N: ně sbě bě kvm  
No, I will submit (sic) it tomorrow

#### **‘khě’ as an Expression of Surprise**

The following three fragments show instances of the use of ‘**khě**’ to express surprise:

1. S: sangě y?  
How are you?
2. T: thīk ymě(.) tě sngě y?  
Fine (.) how are you?
3. S: thīk thak  
Fine
4. T: sě halat dy ? wakht sngě tīrīgy?  
How is life going on?
5. S: khě dy. Wakht tīrīgy  
It’s good. Time passes well.

6. T: nan sbě sě ky?  
What are you doing these days?
7. S: mate jvb mlv shwy dy kaně  
I got a job.
8. T: → **khě**::: matě khv ptě nīshtě  
Really?::: I don't know about it?
9. S: mě wīl tē tē wīm khv bīě taīm mlv ně shv  
I wanted to tell you but then got a little busy.
10. T: khv stě khv lě dě M.A result ně dy raghly bīě sngě  
But your M.A result is still awaited. How then?
11. S: av  
Yeah

The above fragment is from a conversation between two friends. It starts with normal greetings which lead to inquiring about each other's health. In turn 6 the speaker T asks speaker S about her activities. Speaker S tells her that she got a job; this takes T by surprise. She expresses her surprise by uttering 'khě' with a rising tone in turn 8. Turn 8 provides the reason for speaker T's surprise because speaker S is not yet done with her MA degree.

The fragment below is taken from the conversation between two friends. Speaker A in turn 7 tells speaker B about her cousin's engagement. Speaker B is surprised and expresses her surprise by uttering 'khě' with a rising tone. She further asks that since Sofia was already engaged to her cousin, how did she get engaged to someone else? Speaker B tells her that she rejected her cousin. Speaker B is surprised by it again which is expressed in turn 12 by uttering 'khě' in rising tone and lengthened vowel "a".

1. A: Assalamualiakum  
Hello
2. B: walaikumussalam  
Hello
3. A: sngě hal dy?  
How are you?
4. B: bīlklvl thīk thak (.) tē sngě y  
Absolutely fine. How are you?
5. A: zě vm thīk ym . tē tē ptě shty?  
Fine. You know what?
6. B: sě?  
What?
7. A: změ cousin Sofia angyjmynt vshv pāilt sarě  
My cousin sofia got engaged to a pilot
8. B: → **khě**::: dě klě?  
Really::: when?
9. A: nan  
Today
10. B: good::haghy khv khpl cousin sarě angjmnt ně v shvy?  
Good:: I think she was engaged to her cousin?
11. A: aghy ně y anker kry v tkīrībn dwě mīash<sup>ty</sup> mk<sup>hky</sup>  
She rejected him almost a couple of months before
12. B: → **khě**::: **dě wly**?  
Really? Why?
13. A: ptě ně  
No idea.

In the following fragment, speaker X asks speaker Y about her intended schedule regarding coming back home. Speaker Y tells her that she will come at the end of Ramazan. As she says this, speaker X expresses her surprise in turn 7 by uttering 'khě' with a rising tone. In the next turn she expresses her concern that it is rather difficult to take exam in Ramazan. When 'khě' is used to express surprise, it is uttered with a high tone and the final vowel "a" is lengthened.

1. X: 19 ně khv rmzan dy kaně

- It's Ramazan from 19th
2. Y: av  
Yes
3. X: tĕ bĕ kly tĕ klĕrazy?  
When will you come home?
4. Y: rmzan akhĭr ky  
At the end of Ramazan
5. X: wly:::?  
Why?
6. Y: zmĕ agzam dy rmzan ky  
My exams start in Ramazan
7. X: → **khĕ**::: dĕ sngĕ?rmzan ky khv agzam dĭr gran shy  
Really? It's very hard to take exams in Ramazan.
8. Y: gran khv dy khv semester late shvrv shwy vĕ  
Yeah, it's hard but our semester started late.
9. X: sahi  
Right

### '**khĕ**' as Closure

The following fragments show instances of the occurrence of '**khĕ**' at the turn-terminal positions and at the end of TCU to signal or mark closure. The following fragment from a conversation exemplifies this function:

1. K: km zay y?  
Where are you?
2. L: University ky ym (.) vly?  
At the university (.) why?
3. K: asy tps my kvlv  
Was just asking.
4. L: tĕ chrtĕ y  
Where are you?
5. K: zĕ vm university ky ym  
I am also at the university.
6. L: klasiz dy kĭgy?  
Do you have classes?
7. K: av  
Yes
8. L: Stasv?  
And you?
9. K: zmĕ vm  
Mine too
10. L: **khĕ**  
OK
11. K: **khĕ** Asif tĕ sbĕ sĕ ta'm fargh y?  
Ok Asif, when will you get free?
12. L: dvĕ bjy  
2 O'Clock
13. K: zmĕ sĕ sĭzvnĕ pkar dy mĕ wĭl chy hghĕ rary  
I need a few things. I want you to get those for me.
14. L: Sĕ pkar dy?  
What do you need?
15. K: chechy kvr tĕ lar shy bĭĕ avaiĕ bĭĕ bĕ drtĕ khaĭm  
Tell me when you get back home. I will let you know then.
16. L: Thk da thĭ dĕ  
OK
17. K: **khĕ** stĕ hghĕ scholarship sĕ avshv?  
OK what became of your scholarship?

18. L: Lists nan lgvly dy změ nvm vm shtě pky  
Lists were uploaded today. My name is there.
19. K: bīa khv mvbarak shě  
Congratulations!
20. L: → **khīr mbarak. Změ vs class dy khě**  
**Thank you. I have got to go to the class now, OK**
21. K: zě thīk dě allah hafiz  
OK. Bye
22. L: Allah hafiz  
Bye

In this fragment speakers K and L are talking about their classes and university. Speaker K asks about what time speaker L will get free. Then speaker K asks about the award of some ‘scholarship’ to speaker L. Speaker L tells that he has been awarded the scholarship. Speaker L has got to go the class and wants to close the conversation by saying that he has a class now. At the end of the TCU in line 20 speaker L utters ‘khě’ with a low tone. After that they say bye to each other. This shows that ‘khě’ at a turn terminal position, uttered with a low tone, is used to signal the closure.

The following fragment also exemplifies the use of ‘khě’ in the same function:

1. U: Chrtě tly w'y baba (.) mě phone kwlv tasv receive ně kv?  
Where were you dad(.) I was calling you but you didn't answer?
2. V: lg msrvfě vm bchy zkě my receive ně kv  
I was a bit busy that's why I didn't answer it.
3. U: Wly khīr khv dy kaně?  
Is everything alright?
4. V: av khīr dy Arsalan my hospital tě rawīsty dy  
Yeah . I had to take Arsalan for a checkup to the doctor.
5. U: Wly::: Arsalan lě sě shvy di?  
Why?::: What happened to Arsalan?
6. V: lvbv ky lg khvg shvy dy  
He got injured while playing.
7. U: Ohooo::: zīat khvg shvy dy  
Ohooo::: Is it a majot injury?
8. V: ně ně khv mě wīl doctor tě vkhīm  
No, no, but I still wanted to show him to the doctor.
9. U: khě  
OK
10. V: tě khplě thīk y?  
Are you OK?
11. U: av baba zě thīk ym  
Yes dad I am fine
12. V: → Thīk dě bchy . zě lg doctor plě wrzm **khě**  
**Ok dear. I have to go to the doctor now.**
13. U: thīk dě  
Ok

The above fragments of conversation begins with the speaker U's turn asking speaker V about not answering her call. Speaker V says that since he was in the hospital, he could not answer the call. The conversation continues and they talk about a wounded child. In Turn 12 speaker V says that he has to go to the doctor. At the end of the TCU, he utters ‘khě’ with a low tone to signal that he wants to close the conversation.

In the following fragment, speaker X1 inquires about the shirt. Speaker Y tells her that it is sold out. She is upset with that. Then she says that she has to go to the bank. She signals to close the turn by saying turn terminal ‘khě’.

1. X1: Tě tě chy mě km shirt yad kry v hghě dy ravrv?  
Did you get that shirt for me?
2. Y2: ně hghě khrs shwy v  
No, it was out of stock.

3. X1: Sě:::  
What?
4. Y2: av wīl y nan khtm shvl  
Yes, he said it got sold out today.
5. X1: → ohhh. Zě khīr dy mate bank tē tlal dy khě  
Ohh. It's OK. I got to go to the bank, OK.
6. Y2: thīk dě  
OK
7. X1: chy wapas shm bīē bē khbry kv  
I will talk to you later
8. Y2: thīk dě  
Ok

### 'khě' as Expression of Request

The following three fragments of conversation show another interactive function of 'khě', i.e., to make or express request. The following fragment from a conversation illustrates it well:

1. G: Tē vs sē kay hina?  
What are you doing now, Hina?
2. H: sē nē asy nastē ym wly?  
Nothing.
3. G: zē mamv plē zm lgē  
I am going to uncle`s home
4. H: Nv bīa:::?  
So:::
5. G: → tē zma kpry istry kē khě  
**Please press my Suit, OK**
6. H: zē wly vkm?  
Why should I do it?
7. G: please zē bē altē nē līt razm av shr mē lē university tē tlal vy  
Please I will get back late and I have to go to the university in the morning
8. H: hmmm (.) thīk dě  
Hmm ok
9. G: → khamakkhě avkē khě  
Please, do it, OK.
10. H: thk dě bīghmē shē  
OK, don` t you worry
11. G: Thank you.

In the above fragment, one friend tells the other that she is going to her uncle`s home. She wants her to press her clothes because she will get back late; also, she has to go to the class early in the morning in the university. In turn 5 and in turn 9 she makes the request which is signaled by turn terminal 'khě' with a lowered tone.

1. R: stē sbē paper shtē?  
Do you have paper tomorrow?
2. S: av  
Yes
3. R: paper bē sbē sn ta`m khtmīgy?  
When will your paper end?
4. S: 12 bgy  
12 O`Clock
5. R: 12 bgy bē khtmīgy  
It will end by 12 O`Clock
6. S: av jy  
Yes
7. R: zē bīē mskhvtv tē sarē khbry kvm(.) zrn hghē khalid gvrn kanē  
Right. I will talk to you in the evening. I am checking with Khalid
8. S: g

- OK
9. R: hghě tě zím wīm nv hghě bě tě lě pīs̄y raky  
I am asking him to give you money.
10. S: → hghě tě vūia chy shr wkhty mě lě raky **khě**(.) mě lě zrvry pkar dy  
Please tell him to give it to me in the morning, Ok. I need it.
11. R: zě thk dě zím haghě tě wīm  
OK I will tell him.

The above fragment is from a conversation between an elder and a younger brother. The elder brother asks about the exam and when it will be over. He then goes on to tell him that Khalid will give him money. In turn 11, speaker S requests him to ask Khalid to give him money early in the morning.

The following fragment has been taken from a conversation between two friends. Friend M first inquires N as to where she is. The conversation continues. At turn 15, speaker M asks about whether speaker N has deposited the fee or not. When she comes to know that she has not deposited the fee, she makes a request in turn 17 by uttering turn-terminal ‘**khě**’.

9. M: tē **chrtē** vy?  
Where were you?
10. N: library ky  
In the Library
11. M: zě **khv** library tē tly vm tē **khv** ně vy  
I went to the library but you were not there.
12. N: sn ta'm?  
When was that?
13. M: 10 b̄jy  
10 O'Clock
14. N: aghě ta'm zě kyfy tē tly vm  
At that time I was at the cafe
15. M: **khě** tē **khpl** fee submit kv?  
Ok. Did you submit (sic) your fee?
16. N: Ně sbě bě kvm  
No, I will submit (sic) it tomorrow.
17. M: → **změ aghě vm avkě khě**  
Please submit (sic) mine too, OK  
(0.2)
18. M: změ tbīt ně dy thīk zě ně **sh̄m** tly bank tē  
I am not feeling well. I can't go to the bank
19. N: thīk dě zě bě avkm  
OK, I will do it.
20. M: Thank you

### **‘khě’ as an Expression of Threat**

The instances of the occurrence of ‘**khě**’ at the turn-initial position with lengthened final sound in the following three fragments from a conversation indicate that Pashto speakers use ‘**khě**’ to express threat:

1. X2: mama Ibrahim tē avgvrē  
Mama, look at Ibrahim
2. Y2: wly sē ky?  
Why?
3. X2: Mama, mě tngavy  
Mam, he is teasing me
4. Y2: Sajjal zě ně ym vzgarē. Ma mě tngavy  
Sajjal, don't you see I am busy. Let me do my work.
5. X2: zě **khv** sē ně kvm .vgvrē mama haghě pē mě avbē tvīavy  
I am not doing. Look mama, he is throwing water at me.
6. Y2: → **khě**::: tasv dwarv tē zě **chl khīm** kanē. Tasv zmē **khbrē** ně avry  
OK, I will see u people now; you don't listen to me
7. X2: ně ně bs mama ně kv plīz

- No, no mama please.  
 8. Y: ně:: vs mě lě ghvsě raghly  
 No:: I am very angry.

In the fragment above, a daughter complains to her mother about her brother's annoying behavior. The mother asks them to behave themselves and let her do her work. However, they continue with their annoying behavior. The mother threatens them that she will see them both. This threat is signaled by uttering 'khě' with a lengthened final vowel in line 6.

The fragment below is from a conversation between an elder sister F and her younger brother E. In the fragment, speaker F inquires about speaker's E result. When she comes to know that he has got third position, she gets annoyed and in line 12 she says that she will see him when she gets back home. She utters 'khě' at the turn initial position with lengthened final sound.

1. E: Hello
2. F: Assalamolaikum
3. E: Wailaikumussalam  
Hello
4. F: sngě y?  
How are you?
5. E: thīk ym. Tasv?  
Fine, how are you?
6. F: thīk thak. Stě rīzlt ralv?  
Fine, what about your result?
7. E: av  
Yes
8. F: km pvzīshn dy?  
What position did you get?
9. E: Third
10. F: sě (rising tone)  
What?
11. E: jy  
Yes
12. F: → khě::: zě kvr tě rašhm tě ně bě zě tpvs vkm  
OK, let me come home. I will see you

In the fragment below, the teacher calls the student's father and complains about his son weak performance and bad behavior. The father gets disappointed with his son and gets annoyed. In turn 12 he says that he will teach him a lesson. This threat is signaled by turn initial 'khě'. All these examples show that 'khě' can be used to signal threat used by elders such as a father, a mother, an elder brother/sister, an uncle and sometimes by a teacher:

1. K: Assalam o alaikum  
Hello
2. L: Wailaikumussalam  
Hello
3. K: Ahmad plar khbry kvy?  
Is it Ahmad's father speaking?
4. L: v gy tasv svk khbry kvy?  
Yes, who is there?
5. K: zě Ahmad tīchr khbry kvm  
Ahmad's teacher speaking.
6. L: khě khě (.) sngě y jy khīrīt dy?  
OK! OK! How are you?
7. K: tthīk thak. Tasv sarě yv mslě dscs kvlě  
Fine. I wanted to discuss a matter with you.
8. L: jy jy vay  
Yes please.
9. K: Ahmad rz tr rzě stdy ky kmzvry kīgy  
Ahmad is getting weaker in his study.

10. L: sě. Dě klě ně  
What? Since when?
11. K: tq̄r̄bn yv m̄iasht vshv̄ě.av īchr sērē bdtamizi vm ki  
It has been a month now. He also misbehaves with teachers.
12. L: → **khě**:: dy nan waps shy dě tē zē lar khīm  
OK, let him come home I will teach him a lesson.
13. K: pē aram sarē y smjav ky  
Please don't be too harsh with him.
14. L: **khīr** bē shy  
Don't worry.

## CONCLUSION

This study explored different types of functions performed by ‘**khě**’ in ordinary everyday conversation of the native speakers of Pashto. Analysis of the interactional data indicated **khě** as one of the most important response tokens in Pashto. It performs different functions in ordinary Pashto conversation depending upon the context and sequential environment. It serves different functions depending on its occurrence within turns and TCUs. It occurs at the turn initial position, turn final position, and free standing. The findings showed that in Pashto conversation, ‘**khě**’ functions as acknowledgment token, surprise marker, pre-shift, and closure. It is also used to express request and threat. The free standing ‘**khě**’ functions as a continuer and acknowledgment token. At a turn initial position ‘**khě**’ performs various functions such as surprise marker, pre shift, and for showing threat. At turn final position it signals request and closure. Prosodic features such as rise and fall of tone and lengthening of final “a” vowel play significant role in determining functions of ‘**khě**’. Surprise is marked by high tone and lengthened final “a” vowel. Requests are made with low tone. Threat is signaled by lengthened final “a” vowel. Pre-shift and closure are signaled with flat tone.

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