CHAPTER III
TESTING LISTENING COMPREHENSION SKILL

3.1 Role of Comprehension in Language Learning

Comprehension is one of the four basic skills required to master a language. Comprehension is careful hearing of language. It implies understanding and recognition of sounds and grammatical patterns of language. It is actually preparation for speaking, because one who does not listen cannot understand the language and eventually cannot speak. As Lado (1961:206) suggests "auditory comprehension of a foreign language means recognition, control of the signalling elements of the language in communication situations". In other words, we can say that comprehension means to understand pronunciation, grammatical structure, recognition of vocabulary, and grasping the meaning of words in second or target language. By auditory comprehension we do not mean the elements of language that trouble the native speaker in his use of language. Here we include those language elements that native speakers understand by the mere fact of being native speakers of the language. To speak a language, a learner must have opportunity to hear it, till he understands the language. Understanding speech is more difficult as compared to writing because there are peculiarities of pronunciation. Every person has typical pronunciation
that differs from others. Furthermore, speech has some qualities which lack in written language eg. intonation, stress, pitch, juncture etc. Secondly, some times the speech may be too fast.

3.1.1 **Auditory Comprehension Problems:**

According to the theory not all the signalling units and patterns of the foreign language are equally difficult to master. The student tends to transfer the signalling system of the native language and as a result of those units and patterns that are different between the two languages, represent the learning problems. Testing the student on these problems is testing him in his mastery of the foreign language. These problems will occur in the pronunciation, stress, intonation, grammatical structure and the vocabulary of the language.

In preparation of auditory comprehension test, a linguistic description of native and target languages is needed in order to compare these descriptions to find out the differences. Because when we find the differences between native and target languages, we can predict the actual learning problems easily. As in the case of testing stress, pronunciation, intonation, grammatical structure and vocabulary, we need a list of important problems to be tested.
At least depending on the length and purpose of the test, most problems are selected on the basis of frequency of occurrence, range of usefulness and level of mastery.

As the learning problems differ from native speaker to native speaker, there should also be the difference in measuring the learning abilities. The problems of English speakers learning Urdu may be different from those of Urdu speakers learning English. The test design for these two speakers may vary in nature.

3.2 Techniques for Testing the Comprehension of Sounds:

The general technique for testing recognition of sounds of a foreign language, as suggested by Lado (1961:46) is that, "the examiner reads aloud one or more utterances, and he checks the students to find out if they have distinguished the problem sound or contrast. To test language in use, which is our aim, he checks only phonemic units and contrasts, since the moment he checks phonetic differences within a phoneme he is checking technical linguistic training rather than language use".

The voice of the examiner, which constitutes the stimulus containing the problem being tested, can be
presented live, directly by the examiner. But the case in which the teacher has evidence that his/her own pronunciation is not up to the standard he may use a recorded test instead of his own voice. A tape-recorder is at present the most satisfactory instrument for this purpose. Various techniques suggested by Lado (1961) for testing listening comprehension are discussed below:

3.2.1 Sound to Graphic Symbol:
3.2.1.1 Sound to Digits:

This technique has many variations. Essentially it consists of words that contain one sound or another of troublesome pair as the stimulus which the student must identify by the numbers 1, 2, or 3. The examiner tells the students to write 1 if they hear one of the sounds. The examiner then reads his list of words, pausing briefly after each to allow the students to write 1, 2 or 3. Reading each word once is enough. It approaches speaking and listening more than reading each word twice.

We can exemplify this technique through testing the contrast between Urdu /ʃ/ and /ɻ/ as in /paʃhə/ 'abandoned' and /paɻhə/ 'read' which is troublesome to the speakers of English and Arabic or many other speakers.
We prepare a list of ten words containing either /r/ or /rh/. Following is a set:

/dar/ 'to run' /paɾaː/ (abandoned or to lie down)
/parʰ/ 'to read' /paɾhaː/ 'have read'
/karaː/ 'hard' /saɾaː/ 'rotten'
/karhaː/ 'painted' /gaɾhaː/ 'dense'
/toraː/ 'to pluck' /moɾhaː/ 'seat'

The examiner tells the students to write 1 if they hear the consonant /r/ like that of /paɾaː/ 'to lie down' and to write 2 if they hear the sound like /rh/ as in /paɾhaː/ 'have read'. He then reads the ten words of his list, leaving brief pause between words to allow the students to write their response.

Following is the list of words which can be used while testing the comprehension of sounds of Urdu language.

a) /x/ and /k/ as in:
/xidamat/ 'service'
/kaːm/ 'work'
/xaraːb/ 'bad'
/kaːtib/ 'scribe'
/xarədım/ 'servant'
/kurta:/ 'an upper garment'
/xuddar:/ 'selfrestraining'
/kirdar:/ 'character'
/xud/ 'self'
/ka:mya:b/ 'successful'

b) /z/ and /j/ as in:
/zamin/ 'earth'
/jahā:/ 'world'
/jahil/ 'illiterate'
/zaxm/ 'wound'
/zalil/ 'disgraceful'
/jallil/ 'great'
/zindagi:/ 'life'
/jam:/ 'bowl'
/jamun:/ 'jamblin'
/zikr/ 'recitation'

c) /p/ and /ph/ as in:
/pal/ 'moment'
/phał/ 'fruit'
/pat/ 'side of the door'
/phaṭ/ 'broken or cracked'
Various items can be selected in order to test the listening comprehension among the various phonemes of Urdu language.

This technique is very convenient and valid for informal classroom use. Such tests can be prepared, administered and scored in a few minutes.

The limitation of this technique is that it may not be used beyond its effective range. Since the words have to be identified by digits, only two or three sounds can be tested each time.

3.2.1.2 Sound to Letters:

In languages where learning to write corresponds with learning to pronounce, a 'sound to written symbols' technique can be used to advantage for informal classroom testing. It consists of a set of words or short sentences containing the troublesome sounds as the stimulus, and
the students have to mark the written word or phrase that matches what he hears.

We can explain this technique through an example. Following are two examples from Urdu for English speakers. The examiner says /gaːɾiː/ 'vehicle' in Urdu. The students choose from the three written words.

/gaːɾhiː/ 'dense'
/gaːɾiː/ 'vehicle'
/gaːliː/ 'abuse'

The examiner says /ʃuːməɾ/ 'count'
The students choose from the words:
/shikaːɾ/ 'hunting'
/shuːməɾ/ 'count'
/sitəːɾ/ 'sitar, violen'

This technique is, in one sense, more flexible than earlier one because the sounds being tested are not announced to the students in advance. Several occurrences of the sounds may be permitted in each choice without complicating the instruction.

The limitation of this technique involves the factor of spelling. We often do not know whether the error was caused by inaccurate hearing or by a spelling confusion.
3.2.1.3 Dictation:

This is one of well known techniques. It consists of reading to the students a set of words or utterances and the students write down what they hear. If the stimulus is made of words or phrases containing the troublesome sounds dictation can be used effectively as an informal classroom test.

The advantage of dictation is that it can range freely over any and all sounds and it can be prepared easily. It does not require special answer sheets and can be scored objectively.

The disadvantages of this method are that a heavy spelling factor is introduced and it requires active mastery of spelling, before hearing discrimination is achieved. Another shortcoming is that the student has to write the entire word or utterance as his answer, and in doing so he wastes time with those parts of the words that are not crucial to the test. Writing itself is slower than listening and the whole technique of dictation should be used with caution for the sake of economy.

3.2.1.4 Sound to Phonemic Symbol:

This technique should be used when students become familiar with a phonemic alphabet of the second
language. Once we know that students are familiar with phonemic alphabets of the foreign language, it is possible to have the students listen to the spoken stimulus and either write the phonemic symbols of what they hear or check the phonemic representation of what they hear if it is given on their answer sheets. In every case the stimulus must be words or sentences that contain the problem sounds.

This technique can be applied in several ways. One possible way is that the student merely writes the symbol that represents the problem sound which has been identified as the only vowel of the word, the last vowel of the utterance, the first or last consonant of the words. For example, to test Urdu phonemes /x/ and /z/ of an English student learning Urdu as a second language, the teacher speaks different words which contain these sounds initially, medially and finally as stimulus. The student has to indicate that at which position these sounds occur eg.

/xarəb/ 'bad' /axbaːr/ 'news paper'
/shaːx/ 'branch' /aːzəd/ 'free'
/andaːz/ 'style' /zaːt/ 'cast'

Another possible way is that several choices are given in
phonemic symbols to the student who marks the one that he thinks he hears the examiner say. It has the advantage of eliminating the factor of spelling, but it introduces the factor of phonemic alphabet which may not be equally well mastered by all the students.

The third way is dictation with phonemic symbols which are written by the students. This technique has the advantage of forcing the students to use symbols that represent the phonemic inventory of the language.

3.2.2 Sound to Sound:
3.2.2.1 Minimal Pairs:

In this technique we select minimal pairs of words or sentences containing the troublesome contrasts for a particular background and we read the pairs aloud to the students. The students simply write 'S' if they hear the same word or sentence repeated and write 'D' if they hear two different words or sentences. An example of six items testing the contrast between /d/ and /dh/ of Urdu language, as in /da:l/ 'branch' and /dha:l/ 'a shield'. The phonemic contrasts which create problems for English, Arabic, French etc, speakers are as follows:

The examiner reads these six pairs of words allowing few seconds between the pairs.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>/də:l/</th>
<th>'branch'</th>
<th>/dha:l/</th>
<th>'a shield'</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>/dəl/</td>
<td>'a bucket for drawing water from a well'</td>
<td>/dhol/</td>
<td>'drum'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>/də:k/</td>
<td>'mail'</td>
<td>/dhak/</td>
<td>'to cover'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>/də:h/</td>
<td>'to cover'</td>
<td>/dhak/</td>
<td>'to cover'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>/dər/</td>
<td>'fear'</td>
<td>/dar/</td>
<td>'fear'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>/də:l/</td>
<td>'branch'</td>
<td>/də:l/</td>
<td>'branch'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The advantage of this technique is its flexibility and validity. We can test different problems in each item without having to forewarn the students. For example, item 1 might remain /də:l/ 'branch', /dha:l/ 'a shield'; item 2, may become /pal/ 'moment', /phal/ 'fruit', testing the /p/-/ph/ contrast; item 3, /kə:n/ 'ear', /kha:n/ 'mine' testing the /k/-/kh/ contrast; item 4, /bə:p/ 'father', /bha:p/ 'steam' testing the /b/-/bh/ contrast etc.

A little more difficult and more valid than isolated words is the use of minimal pairs of sentences. For example.

1. /voh bha:g gaya:/ 'he ran away'
   /voh ba:g gaya:/ 'he went to the garden'

2. /də:l pakro/ 'hold the branch'
   /dha:l pakro/ 'hold the shield'
3. /kam me pani: da:lo/ 'put the water in ear'
/kha:in me pani: da:lo/ 'put the water in mine'

This is an excellent technique for classroom testing. This test is more valid than even extended observation of students in their every day use of the foreign language in and out of class.

3.2.2.2 Triplets:

In this technique the examiner reads aloud three words or sentences that differ only by one of the troublesome contrasts. In some items all the three words or sentences are the same, in order to increase the possible answer and decrease proportionally the possibility of successful guessing. The student only indicates which of the three words or sentences are the same if any. He does this by writing the numbers of the choices that are the same. If the first and the second sound are the same he writes 1,2. If the first and third sounds are the same he writes 1,3. If the second and third, then 2,3. If all three are same, 1,2,3 and if all three are different he writes 0. For example, if we want to test /r/n/ sound of Urdu language to an English speaker. We can give the following words.
1. /paːrɔːnaː/ 'to read', /laːnɔː/ 'fight' /gaznaj/ 'to form'
2. /daːrhiː/ 'beard' /daːrhiː/ 'beard' /daːrhiː/ 'beard'
3. /paraː/ 'to lie down' /Saraː/ 'rotten' /garaː/ 'fixed'
4. /paraː/ 'to be down' /Saraː/ 'Climb' /Saraː/ 'rotten'
5. /gaːrhaː/ 'thick' /gaːrhaː/ 'thick' /toraː/ 'broken'

Several lists can be made to test each phoneme of the Urdu language.

This technique is most effective and satisfactory one to test aural perception that has been reported. It can test the entire system of segmental phonemes of a language in a reasonably sized test. It can be useful for any language.

3.2.2.3 Quadruplets:

This technique is same as the above one, the only difference is that instead of giving three words or sentences the examiner gives four. For example, the examiner says /shaːx/ 'branch', /shaːx/ 'branch', /saːkh/ 'goodwill', /shaːx/ 'branch'. The student writes the numbers of words that are same as in the above case 1, 2 and 4. Minimally contrasting sentences can be used instead of single words.
For example:

A:
1. /phal laːo/ 'bring the fruit'
2. /phal laːo/ 'bring the fruit'
3. /pal laːo/ 'bring the moment'
4. /phal laːo/ 'bring the fruit'

B. 1. /shaːx kəːto/ 'cut the branch'
2. /saːkʰ kəːto/ 'cut the goodwill'
3. /shaːx kəːto/ 'cut the branch'
4. /shaːx kəːto/ 'cut the branch'

In the above examples student has to identify similar sentences and is asked to write their numbers. As in case A, he writes 1, 2 and 4. In B, 1, 3 and 4.

In the above test, the student is told that there will be only one set of choice that is the same in each item, not two.

3.2.2.4 Comparing Sound to Model:

This technique is essentially the same as the above two techniques, but differs from them mechanically. In this technique a word or a sentence is given as a model and three
words or sentences as a choice which may differ from the model by a minimal phonemic contrast. The student writes the numbers of choices that are the same as the model. For example, the examiner says /pəˈraː/ 'to lie down' as the model. Pause briefly, then says /pəˈraː/ 'to lie down', /pəˈrɑː/ 'have read', /pəˈraː/ 'to lie down'. The answer in this case is 1, 3. Because the first and third choices are the same as model. Here the possible answers are eight, namely, 1, 2, 3, 12, 13, 23, 123, and 0.

This technique has been used in formal and informal tests successfully.

3.2.3 Testing the Recognition of Sounds Through Meaning:

In all the above techniques the student is not required to understand the message of what he hears. Basically, he has to identify phonemes regardless of the meaning of the words and sentences in which they appear. These are valid and useful techniques. Now we will describe techniques to test recognition of the phonemic distinctions of a language through the meaning of the utterances used.

Here, the examiner reads a word or sentence and the students indicate what they have understood. What the examiner says must contain the sounds that constitute the
problem to be tested in an environment in which it could be one or the other of a difficult pair or one of the problem set of three or more sounds. The differences are in the form of responses, which can make use of pictures, writing actual objects etc.

3.2.3.1 **sound to picture**:

In this technique the examiner reads a word or sentence and the students choose from two or more pictures, the one that fits the word or sentence. These tests will be clear through examples:

**A. A word and two pictures**:

The examiner says /dhol/ 'drum' and the students choose from two pictures that are as follows:

![A](image1)

![B](image2)

picture 'A' fits the word given by the examiner. The
student who cannot discriminate between the Urdu conso-
nant /d/ and /ḍh/ as in /ḍol/ 'bucket for taking water
from well' and /ḍhol/ 'drum' is at a loss in choosing the
correct answer. This question can be used for English,
Arabic and Persian speakers, because this sound is problem-
atic for them. The whole range of phonemes of Urdu can
be tested through this technique. For example:

\[
\begin{align*}
/kʰɑːnə/ & \text{ 'food'} \\
/kʰɑːn/ & \text{ 'parts of any place'} \\
/dɑːl/ & \text{ 'pulse'} \\
/dɑːl/ & \text{ 'branch'} \\
/tɪːr/ & \text{ 'arrow'} \\
/tair/ & \text{ 'to swim'}
\end{align*}
\]

B. A sentence and two pictures:

The examiner says /kʰɑːpəi mɛz ᵇər rakkhiː hai/
'the copy is on the table' The students choose from the
following pictures.
students who do not hear the difference between the middle consonant of /kaːpi:/ 'copy' and /kaːfɪː/ 'coffee' are at a loss to select the right picture.

C. Three choices:

In order to reduce the effect of guessing in two choice items a third choice can be added.

It is possible to over-estimate the value of pictures in testing. Pictures can be very ambiguous. There are many important words and sentences that cannot be picturized or require highly abstract interpretations of pictures. So, due to these limitations, pictures have to be used with care. They must be carefully edited and tried to the students for whom they are designed.

Inspite of the above limitations, pictures are an important medium of testing, now a days and are essential in testing children.

3.3 Techniques for Testing Comprehension of Grammatical Structure:

3.3.1 Definition of Grammatical Structure:

As Lado (1961:142) points out, "the patterns of
arrangement of words in sentences and the patterns of arrangement of parts of words into words are its grammatical structure. The minimum language unit which functions as a full communicative utterance is known as sentence. We all speak in sentences, not in words or in parts of words. These sentences are made up by patterns of arrangement of words, group of words, intonation, stress and terminal borders and these patterns of arrangement have meaning over and above the individual elements of sentence.

As we know that sentences occur in sequences, and each language has its system for the ordering of sentences in sequence. Sequences may occur in the same utterances, and therefore be produced by the same speaker or they may occur in different utterances by consecutive speakers. The latter are frequent in all languages in the form of questions and answers.

There are various words which can occur as a full sentences because of this possibility, words have been defined as minimum free forms not made up of any other free form. Generally it is found that native speakers of a language can readily break up a sentence into words even
if their language has never been written or they are not familiar with writing. In many languages the words are separated by spaces.

Words comprise morphemes. A morpheme is minimal meaningful grammatical unit of a language. The word 'book' has one morpheme whereas the word 'books' is made up of two morphemes: book+s. Morphemes consist of a phoneme or a sequence of phonemes and a meaning. If a sequence of phonemes has two separate and unrelated meanings it is probably two morphemes. For example:

\[ \{-s\} \rightarrow \{-s/\-z/\-z/\-iz/\} \]

has the same form when it is the plural of nouns and when it is the third person singular inflection of the present indicative verb. Since these meanings are clearly different and unrelated, we can say that we have two morphemes, not just one, on the other hand, if \(-s/\-z/\-iz/\)

which are different in form and have same meaning of plural and if those environment where one appears others are not permitted then we conclude that all three forms are variants of the same morpheme.

3.3.2 Action Response Technique:

There are various ways to test the comprehension of the structure of language. We can check comprehension...
through both linguistic and non-linguistic means. Actions and pictures are non-linguistic means. The action response is particularly useful in formal classroom testing and it is better adopted to young students than adults. In this technique the students listen to the test utterance which contains the structural problem and to perform some act that shows the examiner that whether or not he understands. For example.

**Instructions**: Perform the action as you are directed:
Remain still if no action is required.

**Item**: 
/καμπρε μे γαρμί: hai/ (pause)  
(it is very hot in the room)  
/κχιρκι: θηί: θαν ηαι/ (pause)  
(the window is also closed)  
/δαρβαξα: θκθο/ (pause)  
(open the door)

**Response**: The student does not move when he hears the first and second sentences. When he hears the third he gets up and opens the door. This act provides the idea that he understands the request pattern in Urdu language.
Consider another example:

**Instruction:**

The examiner places a mug and a glass on the desk which is placed in the corner of the room. Then he says:

**Item:**

/aːj bahot gaamiː hai/ 'pause'
(It is very hot today)
/paːniː pilaː o/ 'pause'
(Bring me water)

**Response:** The student does not move when he hears the first sentence. When he hears the second sentence he gets up and brings water from the mug and gives it to the teacher. This whole action shows that he understands the request patterns of Urdu language.

Various items can be made in order to test the different structures of the language effectively through this technique.

3.3.3 **Pictures**:

In this technique pictures of various kinds can
used as a valid non-linguistic device to check comprehension of structure patterns. Various techniques to test the structure patterns of language through pictures are as follows:

The examiner presents an utterance that contains the structure problems and the student chooses from two or more pictures the one that best fits the utterance. The pictures should be drawn in such a way that one of them fits the utterance and others fit the utterance that would differ from it by a minimal distinctive feature. The student has to distinguish between utterances whose difference constitutes the learning problem being tested.

For example the examiner presents the sentence: /larke ne bakri ko maːraː/ 'the boy hit the goat' the students are asked to choose between the two pictures given below:

A

B

![Picture A](image1)

![Picture B](image2)
If the student understands that in this pattern the boy did the hitting he will choose A. If the utterance were /bakri ne laṛke ko maːra/ 'goat hit the boy', picture B would be the expected answer.

In this technique presenting three pictures instead of two is helpful to reduce the effect of guessing. For example, in the sequence of /laṛke ne bakriː ko maːra/ 'boy hit the goat' may be accompanied with a singular plural contrast in /laṛke-laṛkō/ 'boy-boys'. When the student hears the utterance /laṛke ne bakriː ko maːraː/ 'boy hit the goat' and is asked to choose among the following three pictures:

![Picture A](image1.png)  ![Picture B](image2.png)  ![Picture C](image3.png)

Picture B is the expected answer because in addition to knowing that the boy is actor, we also know that it is one boy only.

3.3.4 Choice in the Goal Language:

The goal language can also be used in the choice
to verify comprehension of the test utterance in that language. For example, the examiner speaks an utterance /diwa:r ghaɾiː kyaː hotiː hai/ 'what do you understand by wall clock?' The choices might be:

A. /ghaɾiː Jo diːwaːr par lagaiː Jastishai;/
   (the clock which is made to put on wall)

B. /ghaɾiː Jo pahnii Jastiː hai;/
   (the watch which people use to wear on their wrists).

This technique is effective because it permits the good student to remain set in the foreign language instead of switching back and forth from it to his native language. On the other hand there is a limitation of this technique that is probably the fact that since the choices are in the language being tested they must be easier to understand than the test utterance itself.

Sometimes the structure problem can appear in the choices themselves, leaving the main test sentence only
to provide the meaning and the context. In this type of a case the main sentence or sentences must be easier than the choices, which are the real test material. For example,

**Meaning and context:**

/zaːkɪr ko maːstər ke ɡhɑːr jɑːːte hуe ɑkbaɾ ne dekhaː/  
(Akbar saw Zakir while he was going to master's home)

**Choices containing the structure problems:**

1. /zaːkɪr ko pɑːtɑːhɑːi ki ɑkbaɾ ke yehɑːi kɑːʊn gɑːyaː/  
   (Zakir knows that who went to Akbar's home)
2. /ɑkbaɾ ɡɑːntɑː hɑi zaːkɪr ke yehɑːi ɡɑːyaː ɡɑːyɑː/  
   (Akbar knows that who came to Zakir)
3. /maːstər ɡɑːntɑː hɑi, zaːkɪr kɪs ke yehɑːi ɡɑːyaː ɡɑːyɑː/  
   (Master knows as to whom Zakir visited)
4. /ɑkbaɾ ɡɑːntɑː hɑi ɡɑːkɪr kɪs ke yɑːhaːi ɡɑːyaː ɡɑːyɑː/  
   (Akbar knows as to whom Zakir visited)
5. /ɑkbaɾ ɡɑːntɑː hɑi maːstər kɪs ke yɑːhaːi ɡɑːyaː ɡɑːyɑː/  
   (Akbar knows as to whom master visited)

In the above choices the expected response is (4) and the problem pattern is whom x visited versus who visited x.
This technique is very important and has advantage of requiring good deal of additional reading on the part of the student.

3.3.5 Choice in the Background Language:

It is a well known technique. In this technique, the native language of the student is used to check his understanding of the structure of a foreign language. This technique has certain advantages. Since the student knows his native language, the choices are easy to write and understand. Comprehension problems can be tested with precision in most sentences. However, there are certain disadvantages of this technique that use of translation. By using translation in test we force the advanced students to revert to their native language.

Following is the example of the use of the native language in structure recognition items. For example, Urdu structure with English as the background language.

A. Test item: /Jeib gharī kise kahte hai/

(what thing is known as pocket watch)

Choices: (1) A wrist watch
(2) A pocket watch
B. Test item: /qalam kise kahte hai/
(which thing is known as qalam)

Choices: (1) Through which we can paint.
(2) Through which we use to write.

In the above technique we can increase the number of choices. Through this technique we can test comprehension of target language effectively.

3.3.6 Grammatical Usage:

Various items that present different alternate phrases in a context and asks the student to choose the one that is best suited to the context, has been used for tests constructed from the usage point of view. This technique can be useful to measure control of the structure of a foreign language if it is carefully directed to test real structure problems.

Example:

Instructions: Encircle the choice that best fits the sentence.

A. Item: /[larka/ ne kair torat aur bhaag gai/]

(The girl has broken the car and ran away)
Here the verb /bhaːg gaiː/ 'ran away 'Fem' requires the ' Singular femin. subject'. The expected answer is /larkiː/ 'girl' not /larkaː / 'boy'.

B. Item:
/larkiː khaːnaː [khaːtiː] hai/

The noun /larkiː/ 'girl' requires the verb /khaːtiː/ 'eats' 'fem'. The expected answer is then /larkiː/ 'girl' not /larkaː/'boy'.

Various types of test items can be constructed. One thing should be remembered that this type of item can easily be wasted in forcing a choice based on phrases that are irrelevant to the structure of the language.

3.4 Techniques for Testing the Comprehension of Meaning:

3.4.1 Multiple choice:

I. Choice in the Foreign Language:

Multiple choice type test item is widely used now a days and probably achieved its most spectacular success in
vocabulary tests. There may be variation in form and style, but in general the item consists of a lead or stem containing the problem, one alternative representing the best response and others representing distractors to lure the students who do not know the best answer.

Example:

A. Item: what is the meaning of /moda:feat/?
   (a) /Jurm/ 'offense'
   (b) /ba:ro/ 'defense'
   (c) /baha:dar/ 'brave'
   (d) /hamla:/ 'attack'

In the above item the best suitable choice is (b)

B. Item: Tick the correct meaning of /tahaffuz/
   (a) /hathyar qa:lna: / 'submission'
   (b) /ekhla:qifarz/ 'obligation'
   (c) /ba:na:/ 'protection'
   (d) /a:za:di:/ 'freedom'

In the above item the (c) choice is best suited to the question.
II. **Pictures**:

Pictures are also used as the alternatives especially to test children, adult beginners and illiterates. Pictures can be very helpful in teaching vocabulary and meaning. For example, testing contrast between /andar/ 'inside' /upar/ 'on' /nirse/ 'under' in Urdu language we can use the following pictures.

/se:b baks ke andar hai/
(The apple is in the box)

A single composite picture is sometimes used to test several words.

Example : Make 'x' on the thing that I ask about.

/ghariskha: hai/
(Where is the watch?)

/me:z kaha: hai /
(Where is the table?)

/chota: ba:c:ka: kaha: hai/
(where is the little boy?)
III. Choice in the Native Language of the Students:

This technique is used when problems cannot be tested effectively without recourse to the native language of the students.

Example:

Item: Urdu vocabulary for English speakers.

Instructions: Tick the correct meaning which is same as the above word.

/pha/) 'fruit'

a) colour
b) orange
c) fruit
d) banana