This singular new textbook is both an introduction to the major theories of second language acquisition and a practical proposal for their application to language-learning courses. In each chapter it explains and evaluates these theories and focuses on recent research that has enriched thinking about the best ways to facilitate communicative effectiveness in an L2. It then suggests practical applications regarding language planning, curriculum development, pedagogy, materials development, teacher development and assessment, thus establishing useful connections between theory and practice.

In addition to focusing on the acquisition of language, *SLA Applied* explores also the roles of such factors as pragmatics, paralinguistic signals, gesture, semiotics, multimodality, embodied language and brain activity in L2 learning and communication.

*SLA Applied* connects research-based theories to the authors' and students' real-life experiences in the classroom and stimulates reflection and creativity through the inclusion of readers' tasks in every chapter. This engaging and relevant text is suitable for students in Applied Linguistics or TESOL courses, trainee teachers, researchers and practitioners.

**Brian Tomlinson** (Anaheim University, University of Liverpool) is considered to be one of the world’s leading experts on materials development for language learning. He has over a hundred publications and has given conference presentations and run workshops in more than seventy countries. He has worked as a teacher, teacher trainer, curriculum developer, researcher and football coach in nine countries and is the founder and president of MATSDA (the international Materials Development Association). His recent publications include *SLA Research and Materials Development for Language Learning* (Routledge, 2016) and *The Complete Guide to the Theory and Practice of Materials Development for Language Learning* (Tomlinson & Masuhara, Wiley, 2018).

**Hitomi Masuhara** (University of Liverpool) has worked in Japan, Oman, Singapore and England and is a renowned coursebook and academic author in Japanese and English (e.g. *Materials and Methods in ELT* (McDonough, Shaw & Masuhara, 2013, Wiley) and *The Complete Guide to the Theory and Practice of Materials Development for Language Learning* (Tomlinson & Masuhara, Wiley, 2018)). She is a Higher Education Academy fellow and has won an Innovation and Leadership Chancellor’s Award and a Leadership and Teaching Support Network grant for her work *The Cultural Twist*. She has researched the neural-network development process, second language acquisition and materials development, and has given invited presentations in over forty countries.
In a refreshingly innovative look at what actually leads to communicative effectiveness in L2, Tomlinson and Masuhara connect research with practical guidance for teachers and learners of language. This highly accessible textbook should be of keen interest both to researchers, teacher educators, teachers, and writers of curricular materials. The reader is challenged by thought-provoking questions and tasks throughout the book.

Andrew D. Cohen, University of Minnesota

Written in a comprehensive, inclusive and authoritative style, this book provides in-depth coverage of some of the major theories informing SLA research. However, it does so much more than simply cover the theoretical ground. It offers teaching practitioners an informed and insightful means to convert theory into practical application in their own context. It's a volume that every teacher who wishes to be professionally aware will want to have on his or her bookshelf.

Anne Burns, University of New South Wales

The sub-title of the latest book from Brian Tomlinson and Hitomi Masuhara, "Connecting theory and practice" is entirely appropriate. Both authors have collaborated before on several publications aiming to show the mutual interplay of SLA theory and practice, and this volume is another very successful outcome. It presents a comprehensive but accessible overview of the latest SLA research together with a balanced set of relevant pedagogic applications, with many ideas drawn from the authors' own wide experience. It should be on the bookshelf of all second language teachers, trainers, and curriculum specialists as a valuable reference resource.

Chris Kennedy, University of Birmingham

The divide of decades that existed between SLA and the classroom has finally experienced effective bridging! A thought-provoking reference that will especially help undergraduates grasp early in their education, the connections between SLA theory and practice.

Jayakaran Mukundan, Universiti Putra Malaysia

Tomlinson and Masuhara masterfully present SLA theory and showcase its pedagogical applications in this new book. Written in an engaging and approachable style, with abundant real-world examples and up-to-date evidence on how second languages are processed and acquired, this book is sure to meet the needs of both researchers and teachers.

Stephen Fafulas, University of Mississippi

Establishing a lucid connection between theory and practical application is no small task. In this book, Tomlinson and Masuhara succeed in bridging this important gap, illustrating the relevance of SLA theory in the classroom setting. This book is an especially helpful guide to educators seeking to engage more with SLA theory. A valuable contribution to the field.

Michael T. Putnam, Penn State University
SLA Applied
Connecting Theory and Practice

Brian Tomlinson
University of Liverpool

Hitomi Masuhara
University of Liverpool
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Preface

We have written this book in order to try to bridge the gap between the research and theories of second language acquisition (SLA) and the practice of second-language learning.

There are many books that provide information about research into what determines SLA as well as information about the theories that have been developed from this research. There are also many books that provide practical guidance for teachers and learners of languages. Unfortunately, there has often been little connection between these two types of publication. The former books are usually written primarily for fellow researchers and for post-graduate students on applied linguistics courses, and sometimes they offer little of practical value for the teacher. The latter books are written primarily for teachers in training and in practice, and often offer little of academic value to researchers. There are some books that have tried to bridge the gap between theory and practice. For example, Ellis and Shintani (2013) focuses on instructed second-language learning, starts each chapter from consideration of the problems faced in a specific area of pedagogic practice and then provides a link to applicable theory. This is different from our book, in that we start from significant findings of SLA research and then consider the value, the feasibility and the ways of applying them to practice. To our knowledge, no other book has as yet tried to relate the major findings of SLA to the practical realities of language learning. That is what we are attempting to do in this book, and what we think makes our book distinctive in the field.

Most of our chapters focus on a specific feature of SLA, with our focus moving gradually, as does the process of acquisition, from input to output to outcome. Each of these chapters (with the deliberate exception of Chapter 2) starts from a description of what the SLA literature says about the focused feature, and then goes on to suggest applications of the SLA findings to such aspects of second-language learning as methodology, materials development, curriculum development, assessment and language planning. In doing so, we keep in mind that not all research findings are directly applicable, that practitioners and learners are often constrained by factors not considered in the original research and that the interaction between theory and practice should be two-way.

In the descriptive parts of our chapters we have been as objective as possible in reporting what the literature has said but, when informed opinions are divided, we have offered our own views based on our experience as researchers and as teachers, teacher trainers, curriculum developers, materials developers and
examiners. In addition, in areas that are under-researched we have offered our informed speculation as an impetus to thought and further research. In the application sections we have referred to what little literature there is on the application of SLA theory to practice and have offered our suggestions for implementation, most of which we have tried out in practice. We have also included tasks in both parts of each chapter to stimulate reader thought, discussion and development and we have added suggestions for further reading. We have not provided an answer key or commentary for the tasks, as most of them invite the reader to relate the chapter to their own knowledge, experience and educational environment before coming to their own conclusions.

In reporting the literature on SLA, we have taken a broad view of language acquisition as a multidimensional process involving not just the learning, understanding and production of linguistic items and structures but also the encountering, acquiring and use of language as an element of multimodal, contextualised and purposeful communication. In doing so we have considered how language interacts with visual, auditory, sensory, kinaesthetic and emotive signals to achieve communication and we have referred to literature from the fields, for example, of neurolinguistics, pragmatics, embodied cognition, semiotics, kinaesthetics and communication. In other words, we believe that language acquisition (despite its name) is not just about acquiring language but also about developing the ability to use language accurately, fluently, appropriately and, above all, effectively in conjunction with other means of communication. We do not belong to any particular school of thought or subscribe to any particular -ism but many of our views are similar to those of researchers who consider themselves to be constructivist, humanist, experiential and sociocultural. Put simply, we believe that communication is primarily about human interaction and that human interaction should drive any attempt to teach or learn a language.

Our main aim is to help post-graduate students, teachers in training and in practice, teacher trainers, materials developers, curriculum developers, examiners and language planners to understand what SLA research and theory have to say about the process of learning a second language, to provide them with suggestions for connecting theory and practice and to help them decide for themselves what to apply, and how to apply it, to their own practice. We hope that our book will also be informative, and maybe sometimes provocative, for those students and researchers who specialise in SLA and those who focus on other disciplines in applied linguistics.

Our style we hope is acceptably academic and our approach acceptably rigorous. We have aimed primarily, though, at clarity and impact in our attempt to make SLA accessible to non-specialists in the field, and to do so we have sometimes included personal examples to illustrate and clarify points being made. Our intention is to interact with the reader rather than to lecture or preach. Sometimes we try to
achieve this by being informal and personal, sometimes by inviting the reader to think and to connect and sometimes by being provocative.

As we started out as teachers of English as a second or as a foreign language, most (but not all) of our examples are of the learning of English. However, we have worked with teachers of other languages in Belgium, in Luxembourg, in Mauritius, in Singapore and at the then Leeds Metropolitan University, and we are convinced that most of what we say about facilitating SLA is relevant for practitioners involved in the teaching and learning of any language.

We hope you both understand and enjoy our book and find it relevant to your studies, your research and your practice.