Acknowledgements

This book is a revised version of my doctoral dissertation, defended at the University of Bergamo and University of Pavia in May 2017. Many people have helped me and guided me through this project, and I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all of them.

First of all, I cannot express enough gratitude to my advisor, Caterina Mauri, who had a tremendous impact on my growth as a linguist and person. She guided me from the very beginning, spending countless hours with me, looking at the data, discussing ideas, and carefully reading drafts of this book. Her encouragement, patience, and support as well as her precious advice have helped me at every difficult stage of the work. I will always be indebted to her for believing in me even when I could not believe in myself.

I would also like to thank the professors in Pavia and Bergamo who steadily followed my work, imparting to me valuable knowledge and wisdom: Anna Giacalone Ramat, Federica Da Milano, and Pierluigi Cuzzolin. I sincerely thank Giorgio Francesco Arcodia for his precious suggestions and help in analyzing the Japanese data, Mira Ariel for her insightful comments and for being an important female role model in academia, and Francesca Masini for her suggestions on how to handle the semantic parameters. Furthermore, I would also like to express my deepest gratitude to my colleagues, with whom I shared time, ideas, laughter, and a few tears: Simone Mattiola, Ilaria Fiorentini, Maria Cristina Lo Baido, and Roberta Combei. They supported me in the good times and the bad. A big thanks go to Shanshan Huang for helping me with the translation and interpretation of the Japanese occurrences.

Part of my Ph.D. thesis has been carried out in Japan and Belgium. The time I spent in these two beautiful countries was extremely important for my personal and professional growth. I would like to thank Kazumi Taniguchi for the opportunity to work at the Cognitive Linguistics Lab of Kyoto University for three months and for the time she took to discuss my project and help me with the Japanese data. I would also like to thank Johan van der Auwera for having hosted me at the University of Antwerp for two intense months and for giving me useful guidance and suggestions along the way.

I am extremely grateful to my non-linguist friends who supported me all these years. My heartfelt thanks go to Manuel, who has been my rock for over fifteen years. He has been an essential source of emotional support throughout my Ph.D. I am sincerely grateful for his friendship and love.

Finally, I owe gratitude to my family for the support they gave me, even when I was insufferable (which is most of the time). They always encouraged
me to pursue what I wanted to do, not what they thought I should do, and always trusted my judgment.

The last thanks go to Aki for being my sunshine and *making me happy when skies are gray.*