Acknowledgements

This book has grown out of my research stay as a Humboldt Fellow at the University of Cologne, Institut für Deutsche Sprache und Literatur I during 2016 – 2018 and my first debt of gratitude goes to the *Alexander von Humboldt Stiftung* for the generous financial aid and to Klaus von Heusinger, my host and supervisor, for the warm hospitality, his unflinching support and for the endless hours of discussions on various parts of the manuscript and the experiments presented in this book. I am also grateful to my colleagues at UniKöln, Elif Krause, Elyesa Seidel, and Andreas Brocher for their kind help with the statistics and the design of the experiments presented here and to Frederike Weeber, Semra Kizilkaya, Lukasz Jędrzejowski, and Nagihan for their support with the intricate administrative aspects related to university life and life in general while in Cologne.

I would not have been able to bring this work to its current shape, had I not had the chance to discuss it with Alexandra Cornilescu, my former PhD supervisor and dear professor at the University of Bucharest to whom I am deeply grateful for the invaluable guidance throughout the past 15 years. Also, I would like to thank the audiences at the *Datives in Discourse* Workshop, Linguistischer Arbeitskreis and Romanisches Seminar in Cologne, those at the workshop on *DOM in Spanish - diachronic change and synchronic variation* at the University of Zürich and the Research Seminar at the University of Geneva for their helpful comments on previous drafts of this monograph.

The comments and suggestions of the anonymous reviewers from Mouton de Gruyter were likewise most valuable and proved crucial in turning the submitted manuscript into publishable material and the same goes for the help I received from Kirstin Börgen in preparing the final manuscript and Mervin Ebenezer regarding the copy-editing work. I wish to express my deepest gratitude to them all.

Lastly, I would like to thank my family back home for their love and constant encouragement and my newly found family in Cologne, Iana, Maggie and Ingo, who stood by me in times of dispair and joy, always ensuring that I get a balanced diet of Chinese, German and Romanian food, work and entertainment.