Acknowledgments

First and foremost, I would like to express my gratitude to all the health-care professionals, patients, their families, and local experts, who willingly volunteered their time to be involved in this project. I am especially grateful to the Japanese medical experts, Dr Daisuke Son at the Department of Community-based Family Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, Tottori University, and Dr Shinji Matsumura of Matsumura Family Clinic in Tokyo, for their professional guidance and valuable support they provided throughout my fieldwork, and to many other doctors, resident doctors, nurses and allied professionals who have inspired me.

I would like to acknowledge the academics who have helped me understand the values of concepts of patient-centredness. Dr Gabrina Pounds, in particular, has guided me for my entire time of research in applied linguistics at University of East Anglia. Her research on emotions and empathy has greatly convinced me of the importance of human sensitivity in qualitative research. Professor Andreas Musolff has also been my mentor and has given me his perspectives on healthcare discourse, always providing thoughtful and insightful opinions with great encouragement, enthusiasm and big smiles. Dr Charlotte Salter has been generous with her understanding when I struggled, and she also played a major role for me in learning the key Western consultation skills and psychosocial perspectives in the medical contexts. I will never forget all their endless guidance for the rest of my life.

I was born in a family of healthcare workers. The house I was born was located on the same premises as a medical clinic building where my uncle practiced. I grew up among medical staff and outpatients who regularly visited. I think that my family naturally demonstrated a holistic approach to caring for local patients through listening, which must have required some degree of empathy and physical and mental toughness. Special thank you and genuine respect must go to my mother, father, uncle, aunt, my partner, Luca who is a dedicated worker in social care, and all my friends. I wish to acknowledge their support and great love to complete my book and beyond.

Finally, my thanks go to Professor Jo Angouri and Professor Rebecca Piekkari, the editors of the Language at Work series, the staff at Multilingual Matters and to the reviewers for their helpful and thoughtful comments.