The purpose of this thesis is to investigate awareness and strategies in both oral and silent reading by Japanese learners of English as a foreign language (EFL). In order to accomplish this goal, I analyzed findings obtained from a questionnaire survey of 157 first-year undergraduate students of English.

Before analyzing the results of the questionnaire survey, I first considered the effects of oral and silent reading in English for Japanese EFL learners. Understanding these effects will aid in the analysis of the questionnaire results.

This thesis comprises six chapters, summarized in the following manner.

Chapter 1 is an introduction to the topic, in which I present the following three research questions.

Question 1: What are the characteristics of awareness and strategies in oral and silent reading by Japanese EFL learners?

Question 2: Are there any differences between men and women with regard to Research Question 1?

Question 3: What are the relationships between English proficiency level and the awareness and strategies in oral and silent reading by Japanese EFL learners?

Furthermore, Chapter 1 discusses the process of reading. In order to reveal the effects of oral and silent reading, it is first necessary to clarify how the reading process occurs. Finally, Chapter 1 explains the working memory process for the reading model proposed by Grabe and Stoller (2011).

Chapter 2 explains the effects of oral reading by providing a literature review. It also discusses the definition, process, and weaknesses of oral reading. In this chapter, I present a simplified version of the dual-route model of reading (Harley, 2008) and the phonological loop (Gathercole and Baddeley, 1993).

This thesis discusses the effects of oral reading from the following perspectives: automatization of written lexical access, internalization of new items, and other effects of oral reading. Automatization of written lexical access and internalization of new items are discussed on the basis of Kadota (2007). With regard to the other effects of oral reading, this thesis discusses how oral and silent reading affect brain functions on the basis of Kawashima (2003, 2004, 2007). Further, weaknesses of oral reading are discussed in terms of text comprehension and reading speed.

Chapter 3 explains the effects of silent reading by means of a literature review. It also explains the definition, process, and weaknesses of silent reading. The effects of silent reading are explained from the following three perspectives: understanding texts, reading speed, and various reading strategies. Silent reading is superior to oral reading in terms of both understanding and reading speed. Urquhart and Weir (1998) classify reading into five types from the
viewpoint of reader objectives: careful reading, skimming, scanning, search reading, and browsing. I explain the weaknesses of silent reading from the following three perspectives. First, it is less effective than oral reading in automatizing decoding. Second, when learners read silently, the connections between letters and sounds are not reinforced. Third, silent reading is an activity in which the reader understands written language input. Therefore, oral reading is more effective than silent reading to activate brain functions (Kawashima, 2004).

Chapter 4 presents the method used to implement the questionnaire and analyze its results. It explains the purposes of the questionnaire survey and describes the pilot study, number of participants, questionnaire design, procedure for distributing the questionnaire, and data analyses. The participants were 157 first-year students (49 males and 108 females) at Hyogo University of Teacher Education. The questionnaire contained a total of 73 items, divided broadly into Question A and B sections.

I constructed the questionnaire in light of Shinzawa (2004) and Iwata (2011), which analyze oral reading by Japanese junior high school students. Question A section and the items in the Question B section that asked about oral reading were written with reference to these two studies. The items in the Question B section that asked about silent reading were my originals.

The questionnaire asked participants to provide answers about their English learning experiences. It was conducted in June 2011.

Statistical significance testing of the responses to questionnaire items was conducted in order to reveal the characteristics of the participants' awareness and strategies in oral and silent reading in English.

In order to answer the three research questions, I compared the results in terms of the following four participant characteristics: (1) sex, (2) general English proficiency, (3) English reading proficiency, and (4) English listening proficiency.

I analyzed Items 5 to 73 using a t-test. In order to investigate the relations among the participants' levels of English proficiency, oral reading, and silent reading, I used the results of the ACE Placement test that all the participants had taken on April 7, 2011.

Chapter 5 presents the results of the questionnaire. For both oral and silent reading, there are no major differences by sex.

The participants in the respective upper groups of general English proficiency, English reading proficiency, and English listening proficiency were more likely to report that they are fonder of and more proficient in English than were the participants in the respective lower groups. Moreover, the participants in the respective upper groups had acquired effective learning methods and strategies for oral and silent reading in English, whereas the lower groups had not. In addition, the questionnaire results proved that oral reading helps to improve the English listening ability of both junior and senior high school students.

Chapter 6 presents the conclusion of the thesis and gives pedagogical suggestions on the basis of findings from the questionnaire survey and the literature review. For example, I suggest that English teachers in Japan should motivate students to like English and to become good at understanding, speaking, and reading it. Moreover, they should teach effective learning methods and strategies for both oral and silent reading.