

Analyzing Early Reading Fluency of Second Graders through Words Correct Per Minute (WCPM) Method to Support Multiliteracy Development in Elementary Education

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Abstract. This study examines the early reading fluency of second-grade students using the Words Correct Per Minute (WCPM) method as a diagnostic basis to support multiliteracy development in elementary education. The participants consisted of 87 students from four second-grade classes (2A–2D) at a public elementary school in Cimahi City. Data were collected through WCPM assessments, learning motivation questionnaires, and teacher interviews. Results showed that the average WCPM scores ranged from 59.13 (Class 2A) to 63.3 (Class 2C), indicating a moderate level of fluency across all classes. Motivation scores were also categorized as moderate ($M = 50.74$; $SD = 25.84$), suggesting that cognitive and affective aspects jointly influenced students' reading performance. Interviews revealed that low reading fluency was affected by limited home literacy support, low confidence, and insufficient reading practice. These findings highlight the interrelation between cognitive, motivational, and environmental factors in early literacy development. The WCPM method proved effective in identifying students who require additional reading support. Overall, this study provides a diagnostic foundation for developing remedial literacy initiatives, such as the Reading Clinic based on the Seven BK Hebat Strategies, to strengthen reading fluency and multiliteracy in line with Sustainable Development Goal 4 on quality education.

Keywords: early reading fluency, WCPM, multiliteracy, motivation, elementary education.

INTRODUCTION

Reading ability is a basic skill that forms the foundation for mastery of various fields of knowledge. At the elementary school level, especially in the lower grades, early reading skills are an important stage in forming a strong foundation for literacy. Students who have good early reading skills will find it easier to understand what they read, while students who have difficulty reading are at risk of facing obstacles in learning in subsequent grades.

The results of the 2021 PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study) show that the reading skills of elementary school students in Indonesia are still at a low level. Indonesia ranked last, 43rd out of 43 participating countries, with an average score of 388. These findings illustrate that Indonesian students' reading literacy skills have not yet reached international standards, necessitating serious efforts to improve the quality of literacy learning at the elementary school level (Rahmayanti, et al., 2025).

These findings indicate that Indonesian students' reading comprehension skills are still below global standards. These low scores show that many students have not yet achieved a level of reading proficiency that includes fluency, understanding of text content, and the ability to

interpret written information in depth. PIRLS is an international study that assesses the reading abilities of fourth-grade elementary school students every five years, focusing on how students use reading skills to acquire and interpret meaning from written texts. Therefore, Indonesia's position at the bottom of the rankings is an important wake-up call for the world of elementary education to strengthen literacy programs, improve the quality of early reading instruction, and pay more attention to effective reading teaching and assessment strategies in elementary schools.

Facts on the ground show that many elementary school students still face difficulties in reading fluently, especially in terms of accuracy and speed. Based on initial observations and information from second-grade teachers in Cimahi City, there are several students who are not yet able to read fluently. This condition shows that not all students in the lower grades have fully mastered early reading skills. Students who are not yet fluent in reading tend to have difficulty understanding teacher instructions, completing written assignments, and participating in text-based learning activities. As a result, they often fall behind in various subjects that require basic literacy skills.

In addition, teachers face challenges in providing learning that is appropriate to the level of student ability because there is no measurable quantitative data on the reading ability of each individual. Reading assessments conducted so far are often subjective and unsystematic, making it difficult for teachers to determine the appropriate intervention strategies. The evaluation of reading fluency plays an important role because reading is not only related to the ability to recognize letters or words, but also involves speed, accuracy, and expression or prosody in delivering text. Reading fluency serves as a link between the ability to decode words and reading comprehension. In other words, students who have good reading fluency tend to find it easier to understand the content of a text and acquire new information (Rasinski, 2004).

Furthermore, according to Penner-Wilger (2008) and Rasinski (2004), the main components of reading fluency include three aspects, namely accuracy in decoding words, automation in word recognition, and prosody, which is demonstrated through the use of intonation, pauses, and appropriate expression when reading aloud. Therefore, measuring fluency is an important step in the early identification of elementary school students' literacy skills and helps teachers in providing targeted and continuous reading guidance. One way to obtain an accurate picture of students' reading abilities is through reading fluency assessment (Silalahi, R. A., et al., 2025). In this context, Words Correct Per Minute (WCPM) is one of the most widely used

instruments because it is objective, simple, and standardized. This measurement tool counts the number of words that students can read correctly in one minute, so that the results provide quantitative information about each individual's reading fluency level.

However, assessment results alone are not enough without appropriate follow-up. Therefore, data from WCPM can be used as a basis for implementing the 7 Great BK Techniques-based Reading Clinic, which focuses on individual student assistance through fun and therapeutic reading activities. By integrating WCPM and the Reading Clinic, teachers not only obtain objective data on reading abilities, but also have effective means to carry out measurable and sustainable literacy interventions. This integrated approach allows teachers to design remedial or enrichment programs according to the specific needs of students, in line with the principle of data-driven instruction, where learning decisions are based on accurate assessment results. Thus, the application of WCPM combined with the Reading Clinic can create a more focused, effective, enjoyable, and student-centered reading learning process, especially in improving early literacy skills in elementary school. Previous research confirms that the use of WCPM data in the learning process is crucial for identifying students' initial literacy levels. Teachers who understand the WCPM categories—low, medium, high—can develop more appropriate, effective, and needs-based interventions (Sari, A. P., 2023).

Research by Stefanie & Prasetyaningsih, R. H., 2024 shows that teacher training in interpreting WCPM results directly influences the improvement of data-based learning strategies. Teachers who are able to quantitatively analyze students' reading profiles will be more confident in determining intervention and literacy reinforcement measures. Based on the above description, it can be concluded that early reading skills are an important foundation for successful learning in elementary school. However, the reality on the ground shows that many students still face obstacles in reading fluently, especially in terms of reading speed and accuracy. This condition is exacerbated by the suboptimal implementation of continuous reading coaching in schools.

Through the application of the 7 Great BK Techniques-based Reading Clinic, teachers can provide more focused and enjoyable assistance according to the individual needs of students. This approach encourages remedial, adaptive, and continuous literacy-oriented reading learning. Thus, the study of elementary school students' early reading abilities through the Reading Clinic is not only relevant for understanding the current literacy status of students, but also serves as an important basis for the development of more effective, enjoyable, and sustainable reading intervention programs in elementary schools.

METHODOLOGY

This study used a quantitative descriptive method to analyze the early reading abilities of second-grade elementary school students using the Words Correct Per Minute (WCPM) method. This approach was chosen to describe the actual reading abilities of students without providing special treatment or intervention. The research was conducted at a public elementary school in Cimahi City, West Java, which had four parallel classes at the second grade level, namely classes 2A, 2B, 2C, and 2D.

There were 87 second-grade students participating in the study, consisting of 23 students from class 2A, 21 students from class 2B, 23 students from class 2C, and 20 students from class 2D. The main instrument used was the WCPM test, which measures the number of words read correctly by students in one minute. Each student was asked to read a short text of 100–120 words appropriate for the second grade reading level. Reading errors such as substitutions, omissions, or mispronunciations were deducted from the total number of words read to obtain the WCPM score.

The test results were then analyzed using quantitative descriptive analysis by calculating the mean, standard deviation, and reading ability categories (low, medium, high) based on the distribution of WCPM scores. In addition, the researchers also conducted brief interviews with classroom teachers to reinforce the interpretation of the quantitative results. The results of this analysis were used as a basis for identifying the need for further literacy intervention, particularly the development of a Reading Clinic program based on the 7 Great BK Techniques.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study aims to analyze the early reading skills of second-grade elementary school students using the Words Correct Per Minute (WCPM) method as a diagnostic tool to support multiliteracy development in primary education. The WCPM method was chosen because it has been proven to be a reliable indicator in measuring reading fluency through the number of words read correctly per minute (oral reading fluency), which is highly correlated with reading comprehension (Rasinski, 2004; Hasbrouck & Tindal, 2017). This approach provides quick and objective information about the accuracy, speed, and fluency of students' reading, which can then be used as a basis for developing literacy interventions. The research was conducted in a public elementary school in Cimahi City, involving 87 second-grade students

divided into four learning groups (2A–2D). This school is located in an urban environment with relatively good school literacy support, although the variation in literacy support at home and students' reading habits still varies. This condition makes the school representative of the early reading abilities of elementary school students in urban areas.

Data were collected using three main techniques, namely the WCPM test, a reading motivation questionnaire, and teacher interviews. The WCPM test was used to generate quantitative data on reading fluency, while the learning motivation questionnaire was used to measure students' affective aspects related to interest, confidence, and perseverance in reading. Interviews with teachers were conducted to obtain qualitative data that reinforced the numerical findings and provided context for students' reading behavior. Data analysis was performed using a quantitative descriptive approach supplemented with qualitative interpretation. Quantitative analysis included calculating the mean, standard deviation, and categorizing students' reading ability and motivation levels. Meanwhile, qualitative data was used to interpret the results in greater depth in the context of the learning environment. The discussion of the research results focused on two main aspects, namely early reading fluency and learning motivation, which were then linked to understand the relationship between cognitive and affective factors in the development of multiliteracy in elementary schools (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Schunk, Pintrich, & Meece, 2010).

Quantitative Analysis of Reading Ability

The WCPM measurement results show relatively uniform average scores across classes, but still reveal variations that warrant further analysis. The average WCPM per class is as follows: class 2A = 59.13; class 2B = 63.19; class 2C = 63.30; and class 2D = 59.10. The overall average for 87 students was 61.18 words correct per minute (WCPM), which placed the majority of students in the moderate category according to the reading fluency development benchmark for elementary school level (see Table 1). The following summary table facilitates the reading of the data before further discussion.

Table 1. Average WCPM per class

Kelas	n	Average WCPM	Category
2A	23	59,13	Moderate
2B	21	63,19	Moderate

2C	23	63,3	Moderate
2D	20	59,1	Moderate
Total	87	61,18	Moderate

When visualized in a bar graph, the pattern shows four relatively parallel bars with 2C slightly higher—indicating consistency in performance between classes despite a small difference between the best and lowest classes. Practically speaking, scores in the 59–63 WCPM range reflect that many students have mastered the basics of decoding and some aspects of fluency, but have not yet reached the level of fluency generally associated with optimal reading comprehension at the end of the semester (Hasbrouck & Tindal, 2017).

From the perspective of reading fluency theory, Rasinski emphasizes three main components: accuracy, rate, and expression (prosody). The WCPM score represents a combination of accuracy and speed; students in this study tended to demonstrate adequate basic accuracy, but speed still needed to be improved so that the decoding process could become automatic and allow for cognitive allocation for better reading comprehension and expression (Rasinski, 2004). Therefore, interventions should target repeated reading and opportunities for reading aloud that support word automation so that fluency increases without sacrificing comprehension. Variations between classes—although small—may have arisen due to several factors. First, differences in literacy support at home: some students reported little or no regular reading activities at home, thus limiting opportunities for practice. Second, daily learning practices in the classroom differed: the frequency of reading aloud activities, teacher feedback models, and the use of meaningful reading materials influenced the rate of WCPM development. Third, individual differences such as attention span, motivation, and exposure to written language also contribute. These findings on the influence of home environment and classroom practices are consistent with local research showing that school enrichment programs and parental involvement accelerate WCPM improvement through structured practice (Wulandari, 2022; Rimadhani, 2024).

The results of the WCPM score distribution show that the reading fluency of elementary school students is generally in the moderate category, with variations influenced by several demographic and environmental factors. In general, reading ability increases with grade level and age, with older students scoring higher than younger students. Based on gender, the difference in scores between boys and girls is not significant, although there is a slight

tendency for boys to score above average. Family factors also play an important role, especially the mother's education, which has been shown to contribute greatly to children's literacy skills. In addition, parents' employment in the professional sector correlates positively with higher WCPM scores, indicating that a supportive literacy environment at home also influences learning outcomes. Overall, these findings confirm that the development of students' reading fluency is not only determined by internal factors, but also by the social and economic environment of the family that supports children's literacy activities (Kusumaningtyas, dkk., 2025)

Implicitly, this quantitative data confirms the need for teaching strategies focused on improving word speed and automation (e.g., repeated reading, guided oral reading), strengthening reading habits at home through cooperation with parents, and training teachers in providing prosodic and corrective feedback. This combination of approaches is expected to boost WCPM from the moderate category to a higher category, thereby supporting the overall development of students' multiliteracy.

Analysis of Motivation to Learn Reading

The results of measuring the motivation to learn reading among second-grade elementary school students show that, in general, the level of motivation is in the moderate category, with an average score ($M = 50.74$; $SD = 25.84$). The learning motivation questionnaire consists of several indicators that represent three main dimensions, namely interest in reading activities, perseverance in completing reading tasks, and confidence in reading in public. These scores reflect fluctuating motivation among students, where most show an interest in reading in the context of classroom learning, but do not yet have a strong motivation to read independently outside of school hours.

Table 2. Distribution of Student Reading Motivation Categories

Kategori	Rentang Skor	Jumlah Siswa	Persentase
Tinggi	≥ 76	14	16,10%
Sedang	26 – 75	59	67,80%
Rendah	≤ 25	14	16,10%
Total	—	87	100%

The data in Table 1 shows that most students (67.8%) fall into the moderate motivation category. Only a small proportion of students have high motivation, while the group with low motivation has the same proportion as the group with high motivation. This pattern shows that most students tend to read only when directed by the teacher, not because of strong internal motivation. From the questionnaire analysis results, it was found that the aspect of interest in reading was quite good—students generally liked reading picture stories or short texts that were familiar to their daily lives. However, their perseverance in reading longer or more complex texts was still limited. Many students admitted to getting bored quickly or stopping reading when they encountered difficult words. Meanwhile, students' confidence in reading aloud in front of their friends was still low; some students showed embarrassment and fear of making mistakes. This indicates an affective challenge that teachers need to pay attention to in early reading instruction.

These findings are in line with the Self-Determination theory proposed by Deci and Ryan (2000), which distinguishes between intrinsic motivation (an internal drive to do an activity because it is considered enjoyable or meaningful) and extrinsic motivation (a drive that arises due to external factors, such as rewards, grades, or teacher demands). Based on the results of observations and interviews, the majority of students at this school are still driven by extrinsic motivation—they read because it is assigned by the teacher or because they want to be praised, not because of a personal awareness of the importance of reading. Meanwhile, students with high motivation scores exhibit characteristics of intrinsic motivation: they read because they are curious, enjoy learning new things, and tend to look for additional reading material at home.

Further analysis shows a positive correlation between learning motivation and reading ability. Students with high motivation generally have better WCPM scores than students with moderate or low motivation. Conversely, students with low motivation tend to read more slowly, pause frequently, and lack focus while reading. This relationship shows that the affective and cognitive aspects of reading interact with each other—strong motivation can accelerate the process of reading automation and increase students' confidence in understanding texts.

Interviews with classroom teachers reinforce these quantitative findings. One teacher stated, “Some children do like to read, but most only do so when told to. At home, they rarely open books on their own.” Another teacher added, “Children who are not yet fluent in reading usually give up quickly when they encounter difficult words, especially when they have to read in front

of their friends.” These statements indicate that the formation of intrinsic motivation is not yet optimal, and the home environment does not fully support children's literacy habits. Thus, it can be concluded that students' motivation to learn to read still needs to be improved through learning strategies that are more interesting, interactive, and based on students' needs. Teachers need to create a learning atmosphere that fosters confidence and independence, as well as involve parents in building a culture of reading at home. This increase in intrinsic motivation is expected to have a direct impact on improving early reading fluency and forming a strong foundation of multiliteracy in elementary school students.

Synthesis of Results and Integrative Discussion

The results of this study indicate that early reading fluency, as measured by the Words Correct Per Minute (WCPM) method, and reading motivation are closely related and influence each other. From a cognitive perspective, fluent reading requires mastery of accuracy, speed, and prosody (Rasinski, 2012), while from an affective perspective, strong learning motivation is needed so that students have the internal drive to practice and improve these skills. The findings show that most students have moderate reading skills with an average WCPM score between 59.13 and 63.3 words per minute and a moderate level of learning motivation ($M = 50.74$; $SD = 25.84$). This similarity in patterns shows the relationship between cognitive and affective aspects: students with high motivation tend to have better WCPM scores than less motivated students.

The relationship between these two variables can be explained through Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), which emphasizes that intrinsic motivation will grow when individuals feel autonomy, competence, and social connectedness in their learning activities. In the context of early reading, students who feel confident, have successful reading experiences, and receive social support from teachers and friends will be more motivated to read fluently. Conversely, when reading activities are considered difficult, unpleasant, or stressful, motivation decreases, and this has an impact on stagnant reading fluency.

In addition to internal factors, the learning environment in the classroom and at home has also been proven to be a variable that either strengthens or hinders literacy development. Based on teacher interviews, it was found that most students do not yet have a habit of reading independently at home. Many parents are busy working and rarely accompany their children to read, so literacy activities are limited to school hours. Teachers play a major role in facilitating positive reading experiences, for example through reading aloud activities, classroom reading corners, and reading simple texts together. When teachers provide positive

feedback and the classroom atmosphere is conducive, students are more confident in reading and participating actively. These findings are in line with the research by Rahmawati & Setiawan (2023), which shows that support from teachers and families contributes significantly to the motivation and fluency of early reading among elementary school students in Indonesia.

From a theoretical perspective, the results of this study reinforce the view that reading ability cannot be viewed as a technical skill alone, but is part of multiliteracy development—that is, the ability to understand, interpret, and interact with various forms of text in a social context (Kalantzis & Cope, 2012). In multiliteracy, meaning and motivation are key. Students who read out of curiosity and are able to relate the content of the text to their personal experiences will develop a deeper understanding. Therefore, teachers need to develop learning that focuses not only on reading speed but also on the meaning, expression, and emotions that accompany the reading process.

When compared to Nurjanah's (2024) research on early literacy in elementary schools in Bandung, the results of this study show a similar pattern: students with high intrinsic motivation show significant improvements in reading speed and comprehension. However, the difference lies in the social context—schools in Cimahi show that family economic factors and time spent reading at home play a stronger role in shaping children's reading habits. This emphasizes the importance of a contextual approach in the development of multiliteracy in Indonesia.

Based on this data, the study recommends the development of data-driven remedial and literacy enrichment programs, such as the Reading Clinic based on the 7 Jurus BK Hebat (7 Great Counseling Techniques). This program can be used to assist students with low WCPM while fostering intrinsic motivation through enjoyable, reflective, and experience-based reading activities. Reading clinic activities such as paired reading, prosody exercises, and guided reading have been proven effective in improving reading fluency and interest (Suhartono, 2022).

Despite its important contributions, this study has several limitations. First, the sample size only included one school with four classes, so the results cannot be generalized to the entire population of elementary school students in Indonesia. Second, the relatively short duration of the study meant that observations of the development of reading skills and motivation were not fully longitudinal. Third, motivation was measured through a closed questionnaire, so the nuances of students' emotions and motivational dynamics may not have been fully captured. Therefore, further research is recommended to expand the sample size, extend the observation period, and combine qualitative approaches and direct observation to obtain more

comprehensive results. Overall, the results of this study show that early literacy development must be placed within a holistic approach that integrates cognitive (reading fluency), affective (learning motivation), and social (environmental support) aspects. Efforts to improve students' reading skills need to involve collaboration between teachers, parents, and schools so that the learning process not only produces fast readers, but also meaningful, motivated, and critical readers of the texts they read.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

Theoretically, the results of this study enrich our understanding of reading fluency theory by showing that reading speed and accuracy cannot be separated from motivational and social aspects. These findings support Rasinski's (2012) concept that reading fluency is a bridge between word recognition and text comprehension, where motivation acts as an internal driver for students to continue practicing until reading becomes automatic and expressive. In addition, this study expands the scope of multiliteracy theory by emphasizing that reading instruction at the elementary school level should involve the social, cultural, and emotional contexts of students as part of the process of constructing meaning.

From a practical standpoint, the implications of this study are important for elementary school teachers. First, teachers need to conduct routine WCPM assessments to monitor the reading fluency development of each student. Second, reading instruction needs to be enriched with reading aloud, paired reading, and reflective reading activities that can increase students' confidence and expression. Third, teachers need to instill intrinsic motivation through reading activities that are relevant to children's experiences, such as reading local stories, inspirational stories, or meaningful thematic texts. Collaboration between teachers and parents is also important to foster reading habits at home.

In a broader context, these findings are in line with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4: Quality Education, which emphasizes the importance of inclusive and quality learning for all children. This research also supports the formation of the Pancasila Student Profile, particularly the dimensions of critical thinking and independence through sustainable literacy activities. Thus, the results of this study provide a strong foundation for developing holistic, sustainable, and contextual literacy interventions in elementary schools—towards a generation of readers who are competent, reflective, and have good character

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that reading fluency and learning motivation are two interrelated aspects in early literacy development. Students with high learning motivation tend to demonstrate greater reading fluency, while teacher support and a positive learning environment reinforce these skills. These findings indicate that improving reading skills depends not only on technical practice, but also on strengthening the affective and social aspects that support the learning process. Overall, the results of this study contribute to the development of more holistic literacy learning strategies in elementary schools, and provide a basis for efforts to improve the quality of literacy education in a sustainable manner.

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