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Psychometric Validation of Oral–Written Language Associations in Preschool Children (Evidence from the “Aphrodite” School Readiness Assessment Tool)

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Abstract

School readiness is widely recognized as a multidimensional concept that encompasses the cognitive, emotional, social, and developmental prerequisites necessary for a child’s successful transition to and adaptation within the school environment. International research has consistently identified oral and written language competencies as fundamental components of school readiness during the preschool years. Despite the importance of early assessment, the Cypriot educational context is characterized by a limited availability of standardized instruments designed to evaluate school readiness comprehensively. The Aphrodite School Readiness Assessment Tool was developed to address this need by providing a standardized framework for assessing school readiness among preschool-aged children in Cyprus. Furthermore, the instrument contributes valuable research data and supports the early identification of children’s developmental strengths and educational needs. The present study utilized the Aphrodite assessment tool to collect data from a sample of 181 Cypriot preschool children between the ages of 4 years and 8 months and 6 years. The primary objective was to examine the relationship between children’s performance on oral language measures and their performance on written language measures. The results revealed a significant association between oral and written language performance. Specifically, children’s achievements in oral language tasks were found to influence their performance in corresponding written language tasks. The findings further suggest that when a particular language skill has not been adequately acquired, difficulties become evident in both oral and written language domains. These findings highlight the interconnection of oral and written language and the role of early assessment in school readiness

Keywords: Psychometric validation; oral language; written language; preschool children; language assessment; Cyprus

1. Introduction

School readiness is widely recognized as a multidimensional construct encompassing the cognitive, linguistic, socio-emotional, and motor competencies required for children’s successful transition to formal schooling. A

substantial body of research has demonstrated that oral and written language skills constitute fundamental components of school readiness and are critical predictors of later academic achievement (Tsaoussi, 2023).

More specifically, vocabulary knowledge, phonological awareness, letter knowledge, and narrative competence have consistently been identified as strong predictors of subsequent reading and writing development (Mati-Zisi, 2008). Furthermore, evidence suggests that well-developed oral language skills during the preschool years are positively associated with later academic performance, whereas weaknesses in these skills increase the risk of learning difficulties and literacy-related challenges (Kargiotidis, 2024). In addition, the family literacy environment and children's early exposure to print and digital literacy experiences have been shown to play a significant role in fostering school readiness and facilitating successful adjustment to primary education (Tsaoussi, 2023; Konstantopoulou, 2023).

Despite the recognized importance of early assessment, the availability of standardized school readiness measures within the Cypriot context remains limited. To address this gap, the *Aphrodite School Readiness Assessment Tool* was employed in the present study (Anonymized). The instrument was specifically designed to assess preschool children's competencies and developmental needs across oral and written language domains, thereby providing valuable information regarding their readiness for school and their preparedness for successful engagement in formal education.

Data were collected from a sample of 181 Greek-speaking Cypriot preschool children aged between 4 years and 8 months and 6 years. The primary aim of the present study was to investigate the relationship between oral and written language skills during the preschool years. More specifically, the study sought to examine the extent to which children's performance on selected oral language tasks was associated with their performance on corresponding written language tasks. By exploring these associations, the study aimed to contribute to the understanding of the interrelationship between oral and written language development as key dimensions of school readiness.

1.1 Literature Review

A substantial body of research has investigated the ways in which oral and written language skills influence children's school readiness (Jago et al., 2025; Britto et al., 2012; High, 2008; Park et al., 2013). More specifically, previous studies have examined which linguistic competencies are essential for the development of early reading and writing skills during the preschool years. Among these, alphabet knowledge, grapheme recognition, phonological skills and phonological awareness, receptive and expressive vocabulary, grammatical abilities, and the ability to write letters and one's own name have been identified as critical components of emergent literacy development (National Early Literacy Panel, 2008; Muter et al., 2004; Silven et al., 2007^a).

In particular, phonological awareness has been consistently recognized as a key contributor to the development of early reading skills (Catts et al., 2002^a; Lombardino et al., 1997; Torgesen & Davis, 1996). Together with other language competencies, it serves as a significant predictor of school readiness and subsequent academic achievement (Duncan et al., 2007; Blair & Raver, 2015).

Bigozzi et al. (2023) argue that the preschool years represent a crucial period for the development of semiotic and phonological awareness, both of which constitute fundamental emergent literacy skills underlying later reading and writing achievement. During this developmental stage, emergent literacy programs are particularly important for supporting children whose families may be unable to provide enriched learning opportunities and educational support from the earliest years of life. Such programs help compensate for environmental disadvantages and promote the acquisition of foundational literacy skills necessary for future academic success (Bigozzi et al., 2023).

Research has also demonstrated that children possess emergent writing knowledge from an early age (Puranik & Lonigan, 2011; Treiman et al., 2007; Bloodgood, 1999). The ability to write one's name, produce letters, and recognize and discriminate between letters are common indicators of emergent literacy during the preschool years. In particular, name writing reflects children's graphomotor abilities, as well as their understanding of the functions and conventions of written language (Bloodgood, 1999). Emergent writing has been identified as a core component of early literacy development and a significant contributor to later academic achievement (DeBaryshe, 2023).

Lust and Donica (2011) examined preschool children's prewriting abilities, name-writing skills, fine motor development, and school readiness within the context of evaluating the *Handwriting Without Tears – Get Set for School* (HWT-GSS) program. Their findings revealed that children in the intervention group demonstrated significantly greater improvements than those in the control group. Specifically, children who developed appropriate graphomotor skills exhibited higher levels of school readiness, highlighting the importance of early handwriting-related experiences in preparing children for formal schooling (Lust & Donica, 2011).

Children who exhibit language difficulties or developmental disorders, such as Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) or Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), prior to school entry frequently experience delays in reading and writing development and demonstrate lower levels of school readiness (Justice et al., 2009; Catts et al., 2002^a; Magnusson & Naucler, 1990; Lombardino et al., 1997; Pentimonti et al., 2016).

Similarly, research involving children considered at risk for developmental or learning difficulties has shown that those who received individualized educational interventions acquired significantly stronger literacy skills by the end of kindergarten than children who did not receive such support. As a result, they were considered better prepared for the transition to primary school (Landry et al., 2017).

Oral language abilities at kindergarten entry have consistently been found to predict later literacy outcomes and overall academic success (Dickinson & Tabors, 2001; Duncan et al., 2007; Snow et al., 1998). Children with limited language skills, particularly weaknesses in receptive language, are more likely to demonstrate lower levels of school readiness and face an increased risk of subsequent academic difficulties (NICHD Early Child Care Research Network, 2005). More broadly, the development of oral language and emergent literacy skills during the preschool years has been shown to predict writing performance in the first grade of primary school. These findings support the view that oral language competencies acquired during early childhood contribute substantially to school readiness and influence children's later educational trajectories (Cabell et al., 2022).

The assessment of school readiness constitutes a central concern in early childhood and primary education, as the identification of children at risk for academic failure has become a common practice in both preschool and elementary school settings. To this end, various assessment methods are employed, including developmental checklists and standardized screening instruments. Given the limited availability of standardized school readiness assessment tools in Cyprus, the present study utilized the *Aphrodite School Readiness Assessment Tool* to generate new empirical data regarding the school readiness of Greek-speaking Cypriot preschool children.

2. Methodology

The study sample consisted of 181 preschool children (81 girls and 100 boys) aged between 4 years and 8 months and 6 years, who were enrolled in public and private kindergartens across Cyprus. Data collection was conducted during the 2024–2025 academic year.

Participants were recruited using a non-probability sampling strategy based on participant availability and accessibility. This approach was considered appropriate for educational field research, as it facilitated access to preschool populations and enabled the recruitment of a sufficiently large sample while maintaining methodological rigor (Cohen et al., 2017).

The inclusion criteria were: (a) preschool age, ranging from 4 years and 8 months to 6 years, and (b) written informed consent provided by parents or legal guardians. This age group was selected because it represents a critical developmental period for the maturation of competencies associated with school readiness, including language development, phonological awareness, and executive functioning. The application of these criteria ensured the collection of data from a developmentally homogeneous sample while adhering to the fundamental ethical principles governing educational research (Duncan et al., 2007; Blair & Raver, 2015).

2.1 Procedure

The study was conducted following approval from the Ministry of Education and Culture of Cyprus and the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute (Approval Code: 160057). Authorization from the Ministry required prior review and approval by the Centre for Educational Research and Evaluation (CERE), thereby ensuring compliance with legal and ethical requirements for conducting research in public educational settings.

Prior to participation, written informed consent was obtained from the parents or legal guardians of all children included in the study. Participation was voluntary, and all procedures were conducted in accordance with established ethical guidelines for educational research involving young children. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the data collection and analysis process.

2.2 Instrument

Data were collected using the *Aphrodite School Readiness Assessment Tool* (Anonymized), a standardized instrument with established psychometric properties, including evidence of validity and reliability. The instrument was selected because it allows for the systematic assessment of children's school readiness skills and facilitates the application of robust statistical analyses for the generation of valid and reliable research findings (Cohen et al., 2017).

The *Aphrodite* assessment tool provides an individualized School Readiness Skills Profile for each child, identifying areas of relative strength and weakness and supporting the development of targeted educational interventions by teachers and parents. The assessment considers both behavioral and socio-emotional aspects of development and is designed to evaluate children's preparedness for entry into the first grade of primary school. Importantly, it is not intended as a diagnostic language assessment but rather as a comprehensive measure of competencies associated with school readiness.

2.3 Development of the Instrument

The development of the *Aphrodite School Readiness Assessment Tool* began as a pilot project between 1986 and 1990 at Rainbow Kindergarten in Cyprus. The primary objective was to create an assessment instrument capable of evaluating children's readiness for formal schooling. Initial versions incorporated elements from a German school readiness assessment measure in combination with the *McCarthy Scales of Children's Abilities* (Massoth, 1985). Over time, these components were adapted and expanded into a new assessment instrument that was initially used exclusively within the school setting.

Subsequent revisions and refinements were informed by data collected from approximately 1,150 children. The theoretical framework, assessment philosophy, and testing procedures were influenced by several internationally recognized school readiness and developmental assessment tools, including the *ATHINA Test* (Paraskevopoulos et al., 1999). The instrument reached its final form in 2000. In 2010, following the establishment of the European University Cyprus Clinic, the instrument became part of a large-scale research initiative approved by the Centre for Educational Research and Evaluation (CERE). Data collection was conducted in schools throughout Cyprus between 2010 and 2020 under authorization from the Ministry of Education and Culture, with annual participation by university students trained in assessment administration. In 2020, the official administration manual for the *Aphrodite School Readiness Assessment Tool* was published (ISBN: 978-9925-7664-0-6).

2.3 Structure and Content

The *Aphrodite* assessment tool was designed to generate a comprehensive School Readiness Skills Profile by evaluating children's linguistic, cognitive, socio-emotional, and psychomotor competencies. The inclusion of social skills assessment is supported by evidence demonstrating the strong association between socio-emotional functioning and school readiness, as well as subsequent academic achievement (Welsh et al., 2010; Forget-Dubois et al., 2009; Pagani et al., 2010). Likewise, cognitive and graphomotor abilities have been consistently identified as important predictors of successful school adjustment (Bull & Scerif, 2001; Espy et al., 2004).

The instrument comprises two complementary components.

2.3.1 Oral Language Assessment

The first component evaluates oral language abilities through eight subtests:

- (a) general knowledge and conceptual understanding;
- (b) reasoning and critical thinking skills;
- (c) verbal analogies;
- (d) expressive vocabulary and verbal articulation;
- (e) phonological and auditory discrimination;
- (f) short-term and working memory;
- (g) receptive and expressive vocabulary; and
- (h) introductory mathematical concepts.

This component also incorporates a social skills rating scale assessing indicators such as achievement motivation, attention and concentration, anxiety or nervousness, and the need for external reinforcement. These factors are closely associated with children's adaptation to the school environment and their engagement in learning activities.

2.3.2 Written Language and Pre-Academic Assessment

The second component evaluates written language and pre-academic competencies through fifteen tasks assessing:

- (a) introductory mathematical and language skills;
- (b) emergent reading and writing aptitudes;
- (c) fine motor skills and visual-motor integration;
- (d) geometric shape replication;
- (e) human figure drawing as an indicator of cognitive and perceptual maturity;
- (f) general acquired knowledge;
- (g) comprehension and execution of verbal directives;
- (h) task completion time; and
- (i) behavioral manifestations during task performance.

This multidimensional framework enables a comprehensive evaluation of school readiness and provides valuable information regarding children's developmental status and potential need for early educational intervention.

2.4 Scoring Procedures

Performance on the oral language tasks was scored using a dichotomous scale (0–1), where 0 indicated an incorrect response and 1 indicated a correct response. This scoring method ensured objective and reliable recording of participants' performance.

The written language and pre-academic tasks were scored using a proportional scale ranging from 0 to 100, allowing for a more detailed quantitative assessment of skill development and greater differentiation among children in terms of task achievement.

The combined use of dichotomous and proportional scoring systems enhanced the sensitivity and discriminatory power of the assessment, facilitating a more accurate evaluation of children's developmental profiles. This structured approach supports objective skill assessment, the early identification of developmental difficulties, and evidence-based educational decision-making regarding appropriate pedagogical interventions.

2.4.1 Psychometric Properties of the Assessment Instrument

The present assessment instrument was designed to provide a comprehensive evaluation of school readiness in preschool-aged children and is grounded in contemporary theoretical and empirical approaches within developmental psychology and educational assessment. Its structure comprises two main sections and multiple subtests, allowing for the systematic and multidimensional examination of cognitive, linguistic, social, and psychomotor skills.

The reliability of the instrument is ensured through the internal consistency of its subtests and the standardized administration and scoring procedures. The homogeneity of the tasks within each scale facilitates the stable and replicable assessment of children's performance while minimizing the risk of random measurement error. Furthermore, the use of clearly defined evaluation criteria and adherence to standardized administration protocols contribute to the establishment of both inter-rater and temporal reliability.

In addition, the multidimensional nature of the instrument, incorporating different types of tasks (verbal, visuomotor, executive-function, and behavioral), enhances the overall reliability of measurement by enabling cross-validation of performance across developmental domains. This approach provides a more comprehensive and dependable representation of children's school readiness profiles.

Content validity is ensured through the inclusion of tasks that encompass the full range of developmental competencies identified in the international literature as critical components of school readiness. These competencies include oral and written language, emergent literacy and pre-writing skills, foundational mathematical abilities, memory, attention, social behavior, and fine motor skills.

Construct validity is strengthened by the instrument's clear theoretical foundation, which is based on contemporary models of school readiness and early learning. The individual subtests correspond to distinct yet interrelated developmental dimensions, enabling a systematic assessment of each child's developmental profile.

Furthermore, ecological validity is supported through the use of activities and stimuli that closely resemble authentic learning experiences and school-related demands. Consequently, the obtained results are more representative of children's actual functional performance within educational settings.

Overall, the psychometric characteristics of the instrument support its use as a reliable and valid measure of school readiness, providing valuable information for the identification of potential developmental difficulties and the planning of early educational interventions.

2.5 Data Processing and Statistical Analysis

Data collected from the oral and written language assessments were systematically recorded in Microsoft Excel, including both subscale scores and total scores from all activities across the two tests. For each participant, a total score was calculated for each assessment and subsequently converted into a percentage score (%), thereby ensuring comparability across tasks and participants.

To evaluate the underlying structure of the subtests and determine whether they measured a common latent ability, factor analysis was conducted on all variables. In parallel, the reliability of the assessment instrument was examined through the calculation of Cronbach's alpha coefficient, providing evidence of the instrument's internal consistency.

To investigate the relationship between oral and written language skills, Spearman's rank-order correlation analyses (one-tailed) were performed between selected pairs of variables. Specifically, the total score of the oral language assessment was correlated with the total score of the written language assessment. Furthermore, mathematical skills assessed in the oral component were associated with specific subtests of the written component, including number transcription following auditory presentation, representation of numerical quantities using the symbol “X,” and the addition of elements to achieve a target numerical value.

Additionally, phonemic auditory discrimination skills and oral text processing and comprehension abilities were correlated with corresponding written-language skills. This included letter transcription following auditory

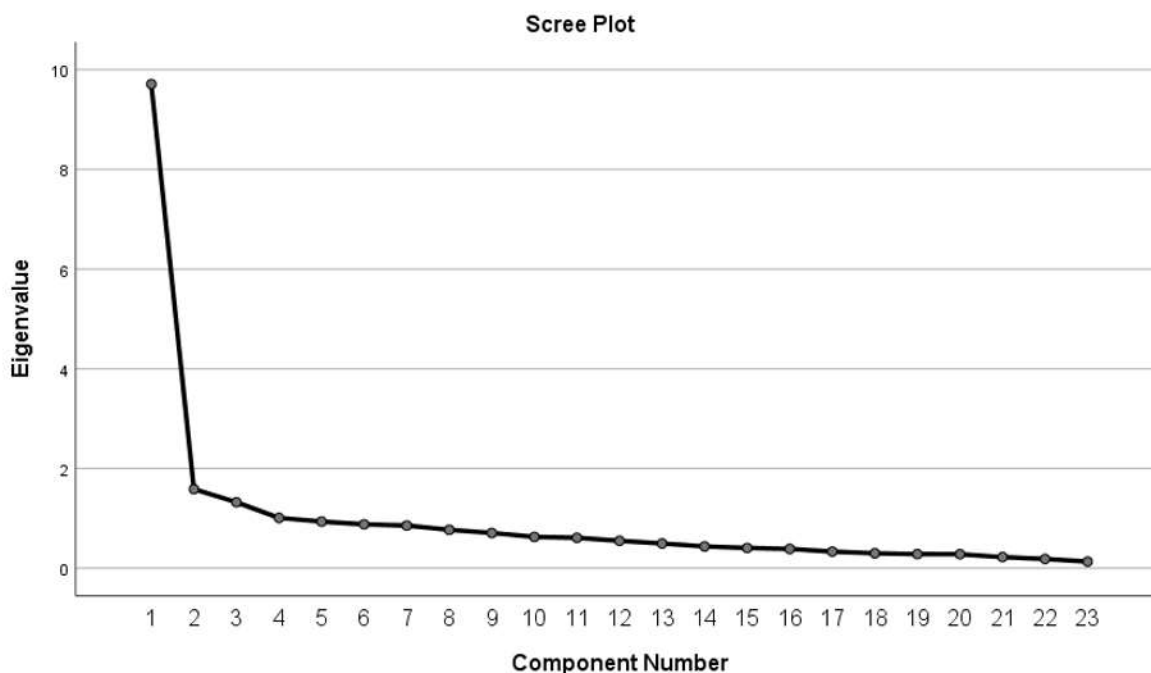
presentation, coloring objects beginning with a specified phoneme, matching words to pictures, drawing the conceptual representation of a word, grapheme discrimination, and copying a provided written phrase.

To minimize the risk of Type I errors resulting from multiple comparisons, Bonferroni correction procedures were applied to all correlation analyses, thereby enhancing the robustness and reliability of statistical inferences. The combined application of factor analysis, Cronbach's alpha reliability analysis, and Spearman correlation analyses enabled both the verification of the instrument's internal structure and the examination of relationships among different dimensions of school readiness.

3. Results

The results of the factor analysis indicated the presence of a single underlying latent factor. This finding is supported by the eigenvalues obtained from the analysis, as illustrated in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1. Eigenvalues obtained from the factor analysis of the school readiness assessment instrument.



The scree plot demonstrated a clear predominance of the first factor, while the remaining factors exhibited substantially lower eigenvalues, suggesting that the assessed subtests primarily reflect a common underlying construct. This finding provides evidence for the unidimensional structure of the instrument and supports the assumption that the included measures assess a shared dimension of school readiness. Consequently, the factor analytic results contribute further evidence for the construct validity of the assessment tool.

3.1 Reliability and Correlation Analysis Results

The reliability analysis yielded a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of $\alpha = 0.924$, indicating excellent internal consistency and a high level of reliability for the assessment instrument.

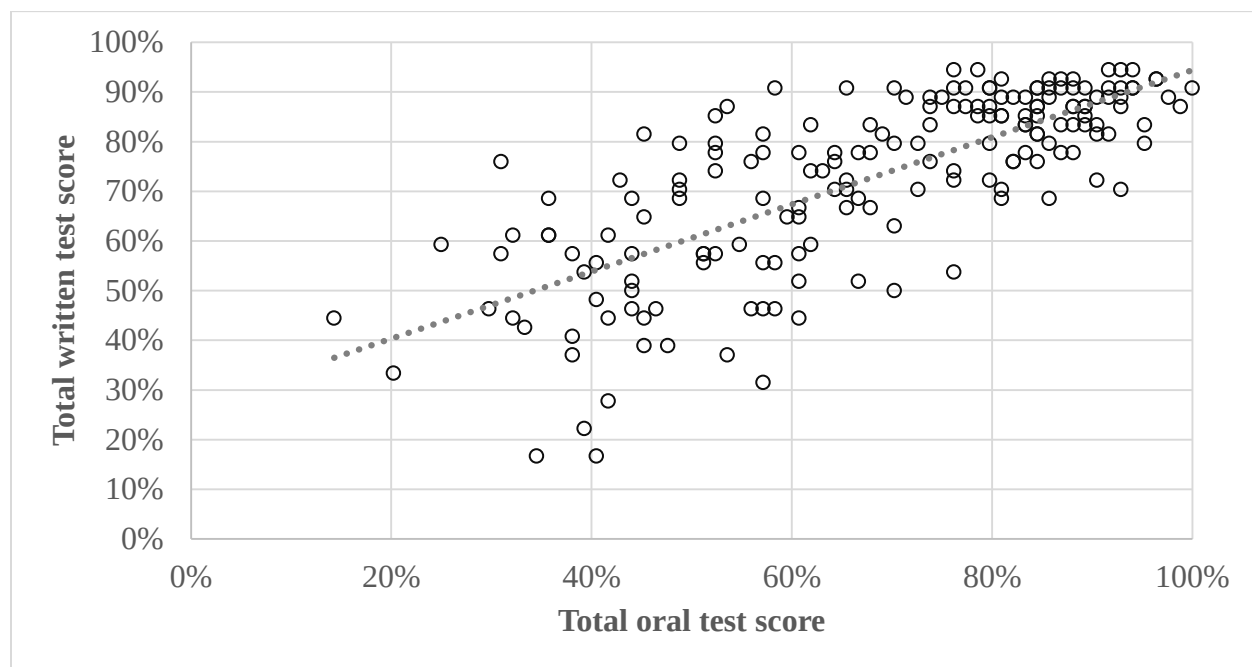
The results of the descriptive analyses showed that, in the oral assessment, participants achieved a mean total score of $M = 67.9\%$ ($SD = 19.8\%$), whereas in the written assessment, the mean total score was $M = 72.7\%$ ($SD = 17.8\%$).

A Spearman rank-order correlation analysis (one-tailed) was conducted to examine the relationship between overall performance in the oral and written assessments. The analysis revealed a strong and statistically significant positive correlation, $\rho(181) = 0.751$, $p < .0005$. This finding indicates that children who achieved higher scores on one assessment tended to obtain higher scores on the other assessment as well.

The magnitude of the correlation suggests a substantial association between oral and written language competencies, supporting the assumption that these domains are closely interconnected components of school readiness. Furthermore, the observed relationship provides additional evidence for the convergent validity of the assessment instrument, demonstrating that performance across different modalities of language-related tasks reflects a common underlying developmental competence.

The association between the total scores obtained in the oral and written assessments is illustrated in **Figure 2**. The figure demonstrates a strong positive association, indicating that higher performance in one assessment is associated with higher performance in the other.

Figure 2. Scatterplot depicting the relationship between total scores in the oral and written assessments ($\rho(181) = 0.751$, $p < .0005$).



Footnote: Each point represents an individual participant. The dashed line indicates the fitted linear regression trend line, illustrating the strong positive relationship between performance in the two assessment modalities (Spearman's $\rho = 0.751$, $p < .0005$).

Correlation Analysis of Specific Oral and Written Language Skills

A significant positive correlation was observed between **O8** (mathematical skills in the oral assessment) and **W3** (transcription of orally presented numbers), $\rho(181) = 0.379$, $p < .0005$. Similarly, a significant positive correlation was found between **O8** and **W7** (representation of the numerical value of a number using the symbol

“X”), $\rho(181) = 0.557$, $p < .0005$, as well as between **O8** and **W8** (addition of elements to a set in order to achieve a target number), $\rho(181) = 0.428$, $p < .0005$.

These findings indicate that stronger mathematical competencies demonstrated in the oral assessment were associated with superior performance on numeracy-related tasks within the written assessment. The strongest association was observed between oral mathematical skills and the symbolic representation of numerical quantity (W7), suggesting a close relationship between verbal numerical understanding and symbolic numerical processing.

Regarding the associations between **O5** (phonemic auditory discrimination) and **O6** (oral language processing and comprehension) and the written-language variables **W4** (writing letters following auditory presentation) and **W10–W14** (coloring objects beginning with the phoneme /a/, matching words to pictures, drawing the meaning of a word, grapheme discrimination, and copying a given written phrase), the analyses revealed significant positive correlations for nearly all variable pairs.

Specifically, children who demonstrated stronger phonological discrimination and oral language comprehension skills tended to perform better on tasks involving letter recognition and transcription, phoneme–grapheme correspondence, vocabulary-related activities, visual word processing, and early writing skills. These findings support the theoretical assumption that oral language competencies constitute a foundational component of emergent literacy development.

The only exception was the relationship between **O6** (oral language processing and comprehension) and **W12** (drawing the meaning of a word), for which the correlation did not reach statistical significance. This result suggests that the ability to represent a word conceptually through drawing may involve additional cognitive and representational processes that are not directly dependent on oral language comprehension abilities. Results of the Spearman rank-order correlation analyses examining the associations between oral language competencies, namely phonemic auditory discrimination (O5) and oral language processing and comprehension (O6), and written language skills, including letter transcription following auditory presentation (W4), coloring objects beginning with the phoneme /a/ (W10), word–picture matching (W11), drawing the meaning of a word (W12), grapheme discrimination (W13), and copying a given written phrase (W14). Significant positive correlations were observed for all variable pairs except O6–W12. A complete presentation of the correlation coefficients and significance levels is provided in **Table 1**.

Table 1. *Spearman correlation coefficients between oral language skills (O5: Phonemic Auditory Discrimination; O6: Oral Language Processing and Comprehension) and written language tasks (W4 and W10–W14).*

	W4	W10	W11	W12	W13	W14
O5	$\rho(181) = 0.399$, $p < 0.0005$	$\rho(181) = 0.398$, $p < 0.0005$	$\rho(181) = 0.260$, $p = 0.003$	$\rho(181) = 0.291$, $p = 0.001$	$\rho(181) = 0.383$, $p < 0.0005$	$\rho(181) = 0.270$, $p = 0.002$
O6	$\rho(181) = 0.486$, $p < 0.0005$	$\rho(181) = 0.305$, $p < 0.0005$	$\rho(181) = 0.303$, $p < 0.0005$	$\rho(181) = 0.159$, $p = 0.265$	$\rho(181) = 0.381$, $p < 0.0005$	$\rho(181) = 0.210$, $p = 0.036$

Footnote: Examining the associations between oral language competencies, namely phonemic auditory discrimination (O5) and oral language processing and comprehension (O6), and written language skills, including letter transcription following auditory presentation (W4), coloring objects beginning with the phoneme /a/ (W10), word–picture matching (W11), drawing the meaning of a word (W12), grapheme

discrimination (W13), and copying a given written phrase (W14). Significant positive correlations were observed for all variable pairs except O6–W12.

4. Discussion

The findings of the present study demonstrate that children's overall performance in oral language was significantly associated with their performance in written language, confirming the existence of a close developmental and functional relationship between these two domains. This result is consistent with a substantial body of international and Greek literature highlighting the fundamental role of oral language competencies as a foundation for the development of literacy and reading achievement (Snow et al., 1998; Dickinson et al., 2006; National Early Literacy Panel, 2008; Muter et al., 2004; Silven et al., 2007^b; Torgesen & Davis, 1996; Catts et al., 1999^b; Lombardino et al., 1997; Tsaoussi, 2023).

More specifically, skills such as vocabulary knowledge, phonological awareness, narrative competence, and auditory discrimination have consistently been identified as strong predictors of later literacy development and academic success (Lonigan et al., 2000; Muter et al., 2004). The present findings further support this evidence, indicating that weaknesses in these oral language competencies are reflected in both oral and written language tasks, ultimately contributing to lower levels of school readiness. These results are in agreement with previous studies demonstrating that early language difficulties are associated with reduced literacy achievement and increased educational vulnerability (Justice et al., 2009; Catts et al., 2002^a; Magnusson & Naucler, 1990; Lombardino et al., 1997; Pentimonti et al., 2016).

Furthermore, the significant correlations observed between specific oral and written language tasks reinforce the notion that these domains develop interdependently through shared cognitive and linguistic processes. According to the emergent literacy framework, early oral language experiences provide the cognitive and linguistic foundation upon which reading and writing skills are subsequently constructed (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). The findings of the present study provide empirical support for this theoretical perspective.

Of particular importance is the finding that lower performance in oral language was consistently associated with lower performance in written language. This observation underscores the importance of early identification of language difficulties during the preschool years. As noted by Catts et al. (2001^c), children exhibiting early language weaknesses are at increased risk of developing learning difficulties during formal schooling, highlighting the need for timely and evidence-based intervention programs.

The educational implications of these findings are substantial. They emphasize the importance of adopting a holistic approach to school readiness assessment that incorporates linguistic, cognitive, social-emotional, and psychomotor dimensions. Such comprehensive assessment procedures facilitate the early identification of children at risk for academic difficulties and support the development of targeted interventions aimed at strengthening both oral and written language competencies prior to school entry.

An additional strength of the School Readiness Assessment Tool *Aphrodite* is that, beyond oral and written language competencies, it evaluates children's social skills, which have been consistently identified as important predictors of school readiness and later academic outcomes (Welsh et al., 2010; Forget-Dubois et al., 2009; Pagani et al., 2010). Moreover, the instrument assesses cognitive and graphomotor skills, domains that have also been shown to play a significant role in school readiness and early academic achievement (Bull & Scerif, 2001; Espy et al., 2004).

The present findings suggest that the *Aphrodite* School Readiness Assessment Tool provides a comprehensive and multidimensional evaluation of school readiness, distinguishing it from many instruments previously

employed in both international and Greek research. While numerous existing measures focus on isolated skills or limited developmental domains, *Aphrodite* assesses a broad spectrum of cognitive, linguistic, social-emotional, and psychomotor competencies and generates an individualized Skills Profile for each child.

The use of a standardized assessment instrument within the Cypriot context enables objective measurement of children's performance, accurate comparisons across developmental domains, and the simultaneous evaluation of oral and written language abilities. The findings indicate that competencies that have not been fully developed at the oral language level are reflected in written language performance, further supporting the importance of multidimensional assessment approaches. Consequently, the *Aphrodite* assessment tool provides valuable information for the early identification of learning needs and the planning of targeted educational interventions, capabilities that are often lacking in other available school readiness measures.

5. Conclusion

The present study highlights the strong interdependence between oral and written language skills in preschool children and confirms that early language competencies play a critical role in performance across both domains. As the only standardized school readiness assessment instrument currently available within the Cypriot context, the *Aphrodite* tool enables a holistic evaluation of school readiness, providing individualized developmental profiles and identifying areas requiring support.

Overall, the findings underscore the importance of early, multidimensional assessment combined with targeted educational interventions as key factors in promoting school readiness, facilitating successful adaptation to formal schooling, and supporting long-term academic achievement. The results further reinforce the value of early intervention and systematic support of language development as essential foundations for successful learning trajectories.

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