

# VOICE USE AMONG MUSIC THEORY TEACHERS

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In Belgium, there is a particular group of music teachers referred to as music theory teachers. Working at music schools, they convey theoretical knowledge and practical musical skills to groups of individuals who learn music during their free-time. Even though music theory teachers use both speaking and singing voice intensively at work, little is known about their voice use profiles. This study investigated the vocal loading among French-speaking music theory teachers. Objectives were (1) to describe their professional and extra-professional vocal loading, (2) to determine the relationship between vocal loading and background noise level and (3) to investigate whether objectively measured vocal loading is reflected in music theory teachers' auto-evaluation of their voice. Using voice dosimetry, 13 music theory teachers were monitored for one workweek. Parameters analysed were F0, voice sound pressure level (SPL), phonation time, vocal loading index (VLI) and background noise SPL. At the end of each monitoring day, subjects self-assessed their voice use by means of visual analogue scales. Results revealed (1) significantly higher vocal loading in the professional context than in the extra-professional context, (2) significant positive correlations between background noise level and the parameters F0, voice SPL and phonation time and (3) significant correlations between the VLI and auto-evaluation data (e.g. voice quality and vocal fatigue). These results highlight that teaching music theory is a profession with high vocal demands. At work, music theory teachers are exposed to high background noise, which seems to influence their voice use and may potentially contribute to the development of voice problems among this population. Visual analogue scales provide a promising tool to subjectively investigate vocal loading among music theory teachers.