

Forum Logopädie 2007/05 - Bianca Henritzi, speech and voice therapist

## ***PC based therapy tool for voice and speech therapy***

The therapy software TheraVox allows visual feedback of voice and speech. This test report refers to the version “TheraVox Real”. Further versions can also be purchased, like e.g. for use at the patient’s home. TheraVox Real comprises the following modules: differentiation voiced/ voiceless, intensity, pitch, articulation, voice onset and coarticulation. Except for two modules, all are available in two different designs, one for children and one for adults. Additionally, a real-time spectrograph is included.

When the program is started, a clearly arranged Patient Manager appears first. With the Patient Manager, all therapy sessions can be recorded in protocols. The module “differentiation voiced/voiceless” solely shows, if the patient produces a voiced or voiceless sound. With the “intensity” module, the patient gets a direct visual feedback on the loudness of his/her voice and a desired target value can be defined. This is very helpful for the therapy of voice disorders especially for children and teenagers as well as for the Lee Silverman Voice Treatment® (LSVT) method. My former sound pressure level meter often had been too abstract for the patients.

Another helpful tool is the “pitch” module. Like with the “intensity” module, a desired target value that is supposed to be achieved can be defined. There is also a tool to demonstrate the differences between hard and soft voice onset, which I successfully used for the therapy of stuttering patients.

From my point of view, the most frequent use of this application lies in the field of articulation. Firstly, a default template is to be created individually for each patient. For technical reasons, plosives and trills are not included. Recording an individual template for each patient and the following units of sound articulation training always proved to have a highly motivating effect on the patients. That way, they learned the correct articulation of sounds considerably faster.

Contrasting the target sound to the substitution sound showed a clear positive effect on the course of the therapy. There are two ways of articulation training. Either, a single word can be trained with the target sound, or a minimal pairs can be used. A vocabulary pool can be created individually by using a comfortable editor function. Like for all modules, the level of difficulty can be modified with a controller, which defines the match between articulated sound and target item. Until now, I rarely used the real-time spectrograph, although it provides an excellent way of visualizing e.g. plosives.

*Conclusion: TheraVox is a multifunctional software for the therapy of different types of voice/speech disorders with a high motivational potential. But it is highly recommended to use the USB microphone that comes with the package.*