

# The voice-over experience with VALK

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Voiceover, a form of production in media communication. It has been part of the public ear from the 19s to this day—from the press of a button on a television, a tune to the radio, a call to your service providers, at the reception to the elevators and lifts. And the video games on our phones. It is the art, a craft performance encompassing descriptions, highlights, explanations in an informative, entertaining, persuasive, and analytical manner. One can attest that the advertisement part of media production would not be the same without this art. It would be lame lacking significant merit to whoever it may concern. It gives life to any of these, it is the breath, the warmth; from its birth in the 60s to this day. Today it has been an indispensable part in the media realm, a doorway for opportunities for livelihoods and other commercial interests. Nonetheless, the contemporary world poses a myriad of challenges or rather threats as technologies evolve rapidly such as in the fields of artificial intelligence. Either way, as such awareness on voice acting/overs grows, there has been the need to come up with organizations to be the voice of the voices in legal matters and all other concerns where by the talk of voice narrators/artists needs to be pronounced. The industry has evolved with better post-production services, audio recording services, and casting services.

Well, from the break of dawn to the fall of the dusk, voices are heard, voices are made but, variations are certainly there, diversity. This is accredited to the ethnic, cultural, generational, geographical diversities in existence which have effect on the language, accents, tones of individuals. Despite that, uniqueness can be drawn from such, but come to think of it this quality description is a subjective opinion. Either way, in black and white Professionalism and prowess is a core basic definition of uniqueness in this field. Undoubtedly, it more of a skill than a talent. In light of these, there has been a birth of various types of voice overs away from the commercial one which is the parent type from the early ages: narration, translation, etc.

Commercial voice over is part of advertisements which have economic or business objectives. It is the most common type usually playing in mainstream media in the well known term "Commercial breaks " in tvs, radio and films and in social media platforms such as youtube, sportify just to mention those. Professionalism and experience are sensitive necessities in this since the aim is to make deals, contracts, purchases. Thus precisely the correct tone of voice, choice of words, tonal variation are crucial for enticing potential offerers and or otherwise any misappropriations in this can be deal breakers lacking commercial significance.

Narration is another field in voice over applied commonly in documentaries. It involves spoken commentary to convey a story to an audience. . *Sir David Attenborough* is one of the well known figures in wild life documentaries who has played a role in informing, sensitizing, entertaining in matters of the natural beauty .

Translation voice-over that is , audiovisual translation ; It involves voice over translations and usually recorded over the original audio or voice. Major international Media houses such as CNN, BBC embrace audiovisual translations . It will involve translating original voices from one language to the majorly understood or spoken language of its audiences i.e Swahili to English, Arabic to English, French to Spanish and to vice versa of the respective duals. Therefore, it requires translators who are well versed in both of the languages, bilinguals that is to say. Multilinguals are well preferred and has better opportunities .

Automated voice systems have emerged in many premises. It involves recording the individual's sample fragments played back by a computer in an automated announcement. It has been utilized in lifts and elevators, receptions and some sound output devices. In Kenya ,hospitals and banks such as *Equity bank* have utilized this in their receptions to coordinate customer services.

Other forms of Voice over include.. Interactive Voice response Voice-over (IVR) which has become the face of any company that offers mobile telephony such as Safaricom in Kenya voiced by *Jenifer Kanari*. She is an icon who has at times been heard in interactive talks with Kenyans, evidently proving to be crucial for such a company. Video games on our phones, computers have found their brilliance with voice behind them. The field is wide and varied.

Over the years, there has been struggles to make the voices of Voice narrators and actors recognizable and their rights to be adhered to with laws such as on Copyrights. In Kenya the copyright Act licences voice actors... Such struggle has been seen in one of the biggest production industry Hollywood in the strike of the American actors' union SAG-AFTRA (*Screen Actors Guild - American Federation of Television and Radio Artists*) was on strike over a labor dispute with the *Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers* (AMPTP) in 2023 fueled by the emergence of AI generated and AI modified voices which led to loss of jobs of up to 45000 voice-over professionals. So to speak, Artificial intelligence, has led to many audio deepfakes which pollutes the industry's Professionalism.

Organizations such as the *Voice Actors League of Kenya* (VALK) is one of the few best that speaks for those who talk for a living. A notable and exceptional role it has is on mentorship of amateur voice actors and narrators. It is a hub of opportunities well networked with other organizations to offer the best touch for its members. What one will appreciate is its sensitivity to the needs of the members providing professional assistance via webinars such on the Zoom platform. This is the ideal definition of a body that cares, nurtures, grows its members for being reliable, relentless in its pursuit to voice the voices to the national, regional, and global markets. VALK gives one a path to be a paragon in the industry by value, helping one to tell stories, voice themselves in a manner that resonates with one's audience giving an impactful experience. It is the exclusive deal for you, a coach for the voice-over narrators, and actors.

Well, from a basic standpoint, VALK will be the haven for those seeking to venture deep into the field such in audiobooks or eLearning programs or recording voice over for an animated movie, *(an evolving field in Kenya)* .it gives one a voice that captures nuance, provides exceptional experience and leaves the audience wanting more and you access it within your budget structure. affordable to pretty much every Kenyan.