



Signs of stroke no laughing matter

SYDNEY — When footage of a US TV reporter delivering her Grammys report in apparent gobbledygook was posted on YouTube it went viral, prompting a rash of online jokes at her expense.

But the video should fuel concern, not laughs, a stroke expert has said.

Serene Branson's garbled attempt to deliver a Grammy Awards report during the CBS2 news on Sunday has been

watched the world over via the online video sharing site, where it has sparked numerous parody videos.

She also became the butt of an avalanche of jokes on blogs, Twitter and even news sites.

Professor Linda Worrall said the reporter showed the classic signs of having a "mini-stroke" on camera. The immediate reaction to it showed widespread ignorance about stroke, she said.

"Stroke is the third

biggest killer in the Western world and the most disabling disease in the Western world," Professor Worrall said.

"What you're seeing is that it doesn't normally happen to young beautiful women on the TV, at the Grammys, in full camera.

"But it is a very common disorder."

Professor Worrall is professor of speech pathology at the University of Queensland, and her research has focused on

the area of communicative disorders and rehabilitation.

She said the reporter showed the telltale signs of aphasia — an interruption to the part of the brain which controls speech — as well as dysarthria or paralysis affecting the face, lips, tongue and jaw.

Migraine or an epileptic seizure could have a similar effect.