



Reporter had classic signs of a mini stroke says professor

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 jokes at her expense.

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

Serene Branson's garbled attempt to deliver a Grammy Awards report during the CBS2 news has been watched the world over. 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, she said.

"Stroke is the third biggest killer in the west-

ern world and the most disabling disease in the western world," Prof Worrall said.

Prof 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 tell tale 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.

"You could see the left-side of her face start to have a facial droop as well," Prof Worrall said.

"It was a temporary loss of language and that can be the result of a transient ischemic attack which is a mini-stroke."

Migraine or an epileptic seizure could have a similar effect, she said, though any TIA-like incident should be treated as seriously as a heart attack.

Its effects can be temporary though a TIA can result in disability.

People suffering a TIA should "get to hospital as quickly as possible", Prof Worrall said.

The reporter's employer issued a statement saying Ms Branson was examined and she "hopes to be back on the air very soon".

The situation echoes league great turned sports newsreader Wally Lewis who experienced an on-air freeze, and appeared disorientated, during a broadcast of Brisbane's Nine Network News.

Lewis later revealed he had epilepsy.



CONCERN: Veteran TV journalist Serene Branson was feeling fine after a brief lapse into incomprehensible speech during a live shot outside the Grammys, her station said