

Robert Kennedy
Senior Vice-President
C-SPAN, Suite 650
400 North Capitol Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001

March 21, 1994

To Viewer Mail

Dear Mr. Kennedy:

Why is it that Radio Moscow in spite of its accents is able to produce readers of Russian news in English speaking at normal conversational speed, while C-SPAN has consistently abused listeners to its MOSCOW EVENING NEWS by hiring a translator who slurs words, swallows syllables wholesale, and jams sentences together at machinegun speed. She often makes it impossible to comprehend what she is saying. She speeds up her reading of the news until it loses sense. She slows down when translating public speakers like Yeltsin, but after that resumes unnatural haste mispronouncing words. Her diction is another cause. It turns unintelligible and terribly frustrating.

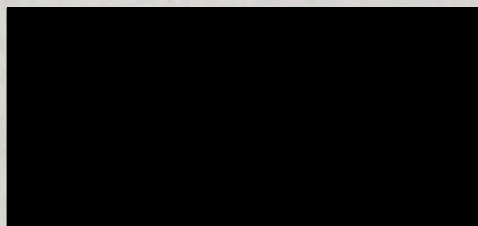
The woman (always the same?) you now have evidently has had no experience in public speaking, verbal translation, lecturing or teaching. No student or reporter would be able to take sensible notes and understand all of her words. She does not have the foggiest idea what meaningful speaking or teaching requires, in addition to normal speed, a slight pause between sentences, and pronouncing each word clearly, with or without an accent. If poverty-stricken Radio Moscow can do it, why can't you?

One gets the impression that your translator's main experience has been with written work. She has no idea what it takes to communicate in public before a crowd. Sitting before a microphone she confuses typed pages with living people. She has no insight into what intelligible verbal translation requires. Her long-standing habits are so ingrained that they are unlikely to change. Besides, she has a short circuit in her brain.

But C-SPAN creates the impression of sloppy management, not monitoring its own programs, careless in its hiring practices, and ignoring complaints. When will C-SPAN come to its senses?

You will not discover these problems unless you sit through the entire newscast every morning for a whole week.

Yours truly,



Poughkeepie, NY 12601