LANGUAGES MATTER

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Far too many years ago, I was helping run a course on language and culture acquisition. Part of the course was to help the students as they worked with a Congolese man, trying to learn his language - Lingala.Â I didn't learn much Lingala and the little I did learn, I forgot quickly apart from the simple 'hello' type greeting.

This morning, while I was washing the car, a couple of African women came walking past with their children. They were speaking an African language with some French mixed in - the norm for educated Francophone Africans. I gave them a cheery 'Bonjour mesdames", which surprised them - people in Southampton don't normally greet each other in the way Africans would. Anyway, we had a brief chat and I discovered that they were Congolese and I dragged my 'hello' up from the pits of my memory.

The big grin on their faces as they heard this rather odd white guy in the middle of Southampton greet them in their own langauge was fantastic. The sunny day lit up even more!

Bible translation matters because people value their languages and culture. But even more importantly, God values people along with their languages and culture.Â A single word of Lingala on the streets of Southampton says - you are important people and you matter. God speaking in the languages of the world says that he cares about all of us.