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Sommario/riassunto	Almost one-quarter of the world's languages are (or were) spoken in the Pacific, making it linguistically the most complex region in the world. Although numerous technical books on groups of Pacific or Australian languages have been published, and descriptions of individual languages are available, until now there has been no single book that attempts a wide regional coverage for a general audience. Pacific Languages introduces readers to the grammatical features of Oceanic, Papuan, and Australian languages as well as to the semantic structures of these languages. For readers without a formal linguistic background, a brief introduction to descriptive linguistics is provided.

In addition to describing the structure of Pacific languages, this volume places them in their historical and geographical context, discusses the linguistic evidence for the settlement of the Pacific, and speculates on the reason for the region's many languages. It devotes considerable attention to the effects of contact between speakers of different languages and to the development of pidgin and creole languages in the Pacific. Throughout, technical language is kept to a minimum without oversimplifying the concepts or the issues involved. A glossary of technical terms, maps, and diagrams help identify a language geographically or genetically; reading lists and a language index guide the researcher interested in a particular language or group to other sources of information. Here at last is a clear and straightforward overview of Pacific languages for linguists and anyone interested in the history of sociology of the Pacific.
