Some 1250-1500 languages, nearly one-quarter of the vernacular languages of the world, are spoken in the Pacific today, often by small numbers of speakers, at best sometimes only a few tens of thousands and most often by a much smaller number of speakers, commonly fewer than one thousand, especially in Melanesia. Unfortunately many of the smaller languages are seriously endangered, some are moribund and others have become extinct over the past decade or two. Language is a primary identity marker for most Pacific communities. Language endangerment has implications for all Oceanic peoples today, as they face up to increasing urbanisation, and indeed out-migration to Pacific Rim countries such as Australia, New Zealand, the United States of America and France, driven by economic imperatives. At the same time, the electronic revolution, almost universal access to television and the internet, dominated in the Pacific by English and French, is diminishing the prestige and roles played by Pacific vernaculars. While there are undoubted benefits to be gained from such developments, they come at a cost, as Pacific languages inevitably change to meet these new challenges. This paper examines some of these challenges and the range of responses developing in Oceania, as Pacific languages assimilate new ideas and concepts, while holding fast to their linguistic heritage and identity.