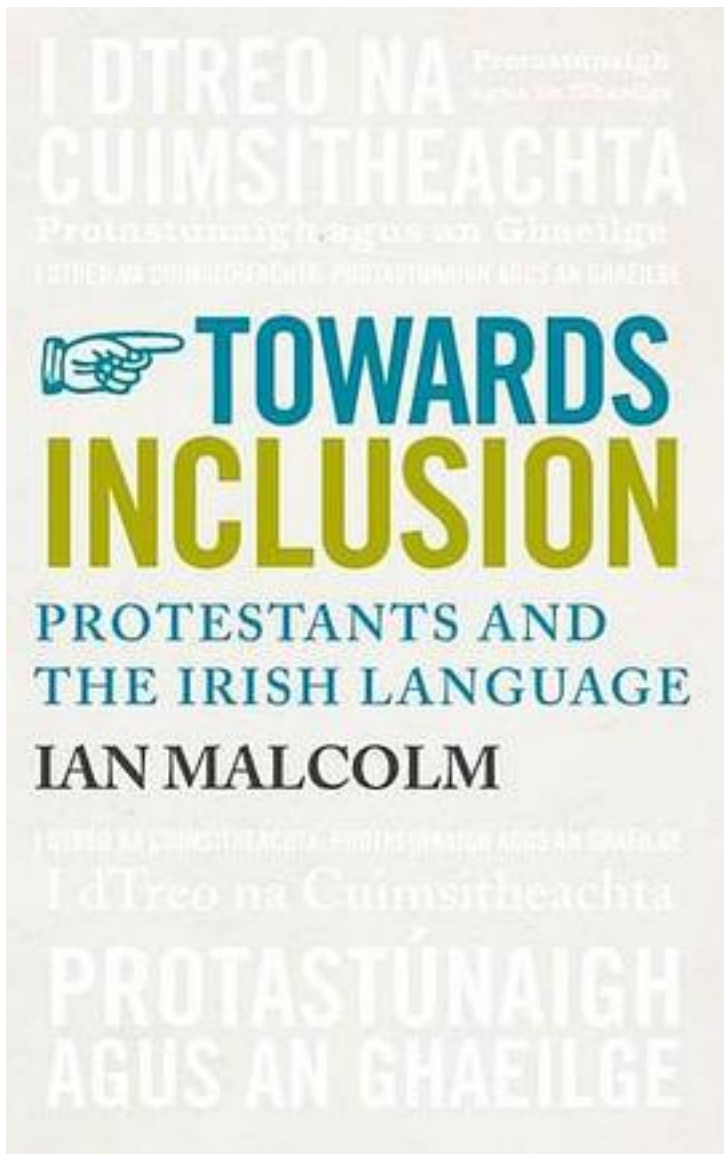


Towards Inclusion



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著者:Malcolm, Ian

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In Northern Ireland the Irish language has the power to enrage and enthrall. For some, Irish is the expression of a cherished culture, but its close association with nationalism and republicanism means that Protestants and unionists rarely see it in a positive light. History reveals that this was not always the case. For centuries, Protestants engaged with Irish on their own terms, sometimes for academic reasons but often because it was their everyday language and an integral part of their lives. "Towards Inclusion" considers these fascinating historical perspectives, as well as covering the role of the Irish language in Northern Ireland's more recent past. But the main body of the book is based on Malcolm's extensive and detailed research into the attitudes of young Protestants towards the Irish language, carried out through questionnaires and focus groups. Some of the students had attended a Gael-Linn language enrichment course, but the rest had little or no exposure to Irish. The results of this research are both striking and surprising, and will provoke fresh debate on the role of the Irish language in Northern Ireland today. In the twenty-first century can Irish become the intellectual property of all, regardless of political stance or religion?

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