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Sommario/riassunto

In *Small-language Fates and Prospects* Nancy C. Dorian gathers findings from decades of documenting an endangered Scottish Gaelic dialect, presenting detailed evidence of contraction and loss but also recording a positive role for imperfect speakers. Retention of language skills undervalued by linguists but positively viewed by the community has supported the survival of local Gaelic-English bilingualism well beyond early predictions. Nonetheless, potent factors that threaten small-language survival everywhere have also operated here. Negative social attitudes towards the minority population, loss of a traditional occupation, the increasing impact of majority-culture ideologies, are recurrent phenomena in small-language settings. Maintenance or revitalization efforts pose special challenges under these circumstances, as does fieldwork itself when adverse sociohistorical forces have left very few fluent speakers.
