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Past progressive, future perfect:
Some possible models for bilingual education

Abstract for
Bi- and Multilingual Universities?
Challenges and future prospects
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In this talk, we examine the current state of affairs and the strategy and rationale for planning bilingual education at the University of Tartu, in Estonia. The university is at a watershed in its approach to bilingual education. From its historical context, UT is able to draw on experience of best practice, as degree programmes in Russian were offered up until very recently. UT can apply this experience in language teaching as well as in planning curricula which blend courses in Estonian with courses in foreign languages, providing students with a multilingual education and diversifying the subject matter taught and the perspectives offered.

As the demand for foreign students grows, and along with it, the demand for teaching in English, lecturers face decisions which raise crucial issues regarding identity, education policy, national reputation and tradition, and personal self-confidence. The administration has taken note of demographic trends and has identified internationalisation as the inevitable path of the future. Academics are willing, yet hesitant: UT is bound by strong traditions, and by a responsibility, as Estonia's national university, to provide top-quality education in Estonian on all levels. English is seen equally as a threat and as an opportunity, and the internationalisation of curricula must walk a delicate tightrope, ensuring the continuation of longstanding national academic traditions while also opening up the university to the international academic community.