

EEIA-2018
**2018 International Conference "Education Environment for
the Information Age"**

**DOUBLE MASTER DIPLOMA AS A FORM OF INTERNATIONAL
COOPERATION RUSSIAN-FRENCH COOPERATION**

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Abstract

This article provides insight into problems of developing and implementing network international educational programs, caused by difficulties related to the need for mutual adaptation of the education systems of the two states participating in the project and to the social and cultural integration of students into a new educational environment. The presented material contains a detailed description of educational standards, requirements for applicants, the procedures for assessment and submission of the master's final qualification work, as well as that of the dissertation committee members, the content of courses and extracurricular activities. It also gives a brief overview to the educational methods and new teaching practices adopted in the frame of the dual academic program. In the conclusion, the main difficulties in the implementation of international educational programs are listed, and the role of the program with dual academic supervision of the master's research work "Russia-Europe: Languages and Cultures" of the Philological Faculty of Peoples' Friendship University of Russia (Russia) and the Department of Slavic Languages of Bordeaux Montaigne University (France) is delineated. The article also cites several solutions to the aroused problems elaborated mutually by the Peoples' Friendship University of Russia and Bordeaux Montaigne University. Finally, it shows the evident necessity of mutual efforts directed to unify or, at least, to juxtapose educational systems to make student introduction in the alien educational process less complex.

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Keywords: Network education, international program, integration, humanities.



1. Introduction

Higher education in many countries of the world, including Russia, is currently facing challenges of the scientific revolution, on the one hand, and of an extensive growth in the number of entrants, on the other. This means that modern society needs young professionals who would make meaningful discoveries in all fields of science, be capable of an unconventional approach to addressing a number of acute problems. But the universal accessibility of modern education implies mass sets of young people with very different basic training.

There is also a third aspect of the problem: the modern market of educational services is marked by quite a tough competition for entrants with good training and a significant educational potential. This leads to the fact that universities are looking for ways to attract such young people by offering them special educational programs allowing students to receive a maximum amount of knowledge in various fields in a relatively short period of time, to acquire skills that will give them advantages over other graduates in the labor market, to be awarded two or more diplomas confirming this knowledge and skills (Kviek, 2015).

2. Problem Statement

In search of independent solutions, many higher educational institutions in Europe and the USA have already achieved tangible success, which has brought them to the leading positions in international rankings and attracted the best teacher and student minds. This situation has brought about the fact that Russian universities have lost a qualitative influx of entrants and are facing the need to focus on the "average" student, and consequently, to produce an "average" specialist. This state of affairs may persist for quite a long time, but it will inevitably lead to a deterioration in the reputation and a decrease in the demand even for the leading Russian universities.

In an attempt to avoid such a development of events, certain Russian universities, including Peoples' Friendship University of Russia, were integrated in the Bologna Process, calling for the creation of a single European space for higher education. The participating countries, numbering 48 at present, have agreed to bring their education systems closer and harmonize them, thus ensuring the freedom of academic mobility of faculty and students (Mitchel, 2015; National Report regarding the Bologna Process implementation, 2017).

The participation of Russia in the Bologna Process and the passing of the Federal Law of the Russian Federation No. 273-FZ, "On Education in the Russian Federation", which states that "the network form of implementing educational programs provides an opportunity for students to master the educational program using the resources of several organizations carrying out educational activities, including international ones; and also, if necessary, using resources of other organizations..." (paragraph 1 of Article 15 of the Federal Law of the Russian Federation "On Education in the Russian Federation", No. 273-FZ of December 29, 2012) provided students from Russia and Europe with a chance to obtain high-quality knowledge at several universities simultaneously over the same period of study (Lukov et al., 2010). Examples of such an opportunity are student exchange programs as part of the inclusive education: short-term (the so-called internship programs, implying professional and educational and linguistic internships) and long-term, when educational programs are implemented with dual academic supervision of master's final research work (Vaisse, 2015).

3. Research Questions

The question that the authors of the article seek to answer is as follows: is it expedient to search for ways of interuniversity cooperation on an international platform, taking into account the numerous complexities (political, economic, social, intercultural, psychological, etc.) that arise in the implementation of various programs of network education (De Carlo, 1998; Bennett & Kane, 2014) Besides, the authors' concern is whether the risk of losing potential talented graduates of such programs is likely to increase because they may prefer an academic or professional career abroad to a career in Russia (Chmykhalo & Hasanshin, 2015).

4. Purpose of the Study

The research aims to address the above-stated issues using a particular example of the practical implementation of the network educational program "Russia-Europe: Languages and Cultures", carried out by Peoples' Friendship University of Russia and Bordeaux Montaigne University.

5. Research Methods

Along with general research methods (comparison, generalization, observation, commenting, etc.), and statistical methods this research also includes surveying (students having participated in the program "Russia-Europe: Languages and Cultures" were asked to answer questions about the difficulties of social, educational and linguistic adaptation in the course of education (Balyasin, Karaval'o & Mikhut, 2016); interviewing (the topic of the interview being "My impressions of the program"); presentation, revealing various aspects of student life in Russia and France, as well as the method of experiment, which consists in a non-standard approach to teaching a foreign language in a mixed auditorium (Li Li, 2016).

6. Findings

6.1. Description of the master's program "Russia-Europe: Languages and Cultures"

Since 2005, Peoples' Friendship University of Russia has been carrying out the master's program "Russia-Europe: Languages and Cultures" on the basis of the Department of General and Russian Linguistics of the Philological Faculty and the Department of Slavic Languages of Bordeaux Montaigne University (France). The program has been attractive for master's degree students due to the fact that, given the successful passing of the state examinations and the submission of the final research work, its graduates are awarded two higher education diplomas at the same time: the Russian diploma of the state standard of the Master of Philology and the French diploma of the Master of Slavic Studies.

The program was developed within the framework of the Agreement on Interuniversity Cooperation between Peoples' Friendship University of Russia (Moscow, Russia) and Bordeaux Montaigne University (Bordeaux, France) and approved by a special Agreement on the opening of the Main educational program of higher education "Russia-Europe: Languages and Cultures" as part of the "Philology" master's program "Philology" of Peoples' Friendship University of Russia (Moscow, Russia) and the master's program "Arts, Humanities, Languages" on the speciality "Languages, Literature, Regional and International Civilizations", on the speciality "Slavic Studies and Interculturality" (Bordeaux, France), in accordance

with the requirements of the RUDN basic standards of higher education. It was approved by the RUDN Rector's order No. 441 dated May 25, 2013. The agreement on the opening of the program lists the legal and state requirements, the partnership scheme of the parties, the membership of the selection committee, the responsibilities of the parties, the procedure for students admission, the description of the forms to monitor the knowledge, methods for students to report and choice of program coordinators, living conditions, insurance and sources of financing, principles for quality maintenance and the program duration.

One coordinator is proposed and promoted by each partner university participating in the program. The coordinator's duties also include adherence to the principles of selecting candidates for the formation of a mixed Russian-French learning group, setting up the deadlines of their submission of the necessary documents to the partner institution and the transfer of information on the results of examination sessions.

The program is aimed at training qualified specialists in the field of philology and at the formation and development of general cultural and professional competencies at students, in accordance with the requirements of the RUDN higher education standards / FGOS VO in the training area 45.04.01 "Philology" and is carried out for 2 years.

The main goal of the educational program is to train graduates with broad humanitarian knowledge and skills of working with Russian and foreign language texts, teaching philological disciplines in general and higher educational organizations, and working in an international team. The program is implemented in the face-to-face education format in Russian and French, at Bordeaux Montaigne University during the first year (Sablina, 2012), at RUDN during the second year. Over the full course of the program, the student must have attended disciplines totaling 120 credit units.

The program is intended for the training of specialists whose professional activities are carried out in the field of philology and humanities, linguistic, interpersonal and intercultural communication, in educational, scientific, cultural and administrative institutions. The program is focused on the Russian and international labor market, as it provides for an in-depth mastering of Russian studies not only in the descriptive but also in the comparative aspects. Graduates can work as teachers of Russian abroad, editors of Russian-language publications, translators from Russian into French, and also from French into Russian.

The basic requirements for the entrant are a state-standard diploma of the Russian Federation certifying higher professional education (bachelor's or specialist's diploma) or a bachelor's diploma of one of French universities, as well as a document confirming the proficiency level in French / Russian (for international students), which has to be no lower than B1 in terms of the international system of foreign language proficiency levels Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR).

6.2. Characteristics of the professional activities of a graduate of the program "Russia-Europe: Languages and Cultures"

The field of humanities, linguistic, interpersonal and intercultural communication in educational, scientific, cultural and administrative institutions is the area of professional activities of masters of the program "Russia-Europe: Languages and Cultures". The objects of professional activities of masters of the program "Russia-Europe: Languages and Cultures" include languages (native and foreign) in their theoretical and practical, synchronic, diachronic, sociocultural and dialectological aspects; various types of

texts – written, oral and virtual (including hypertext and text elements of multimedia objects); oral and written communication.

The types of professional activities of a master of this program are: research activities at research and academic institutions, organizations and units; pedagogical activities in the system of higher, secondary general and secondary vocational education; applied activities (e.g., translation, editorial, expert, analytical ones) at institutions for education, culture, management, mass media; activities in the field of linguistic and sociocultural communication – social and humanitarian activities; project activities at educational and cultural institutions, in the social and pedagogical, humanitarian and organizational, book-publishing, mass-media and communication fields; organizational and management activities in all of the above areas.

6.3. Objectives of training graduates on the program "Russia-Europe: Languages and Cultures"

The objectives of training graduates on the program "Russia-Europe: languages and cultures" include independent research in the field of philology (linguistics) with the use of the acquired theoretical and practical knowledge; independent replenishment, critical analysis and application of academic knowledge; qualified analysis and interpretation of individual linguistic and communicative phenomena and processes of all types of texts, including fiction, on the basis of the existing concepts, with the formulation of reasoned conclusions; preparation of research reviews, abstracts, compilation of reference papers and bibliographies on the ongoing research; participation in academic discussions, presentation of reports (oral, written and virtual – posting in information networks), presentation of own research; participation in the work of research teams conducting research in philology (linguistics); conduct of training sessions and extracurricular work on language at higher educational institutions and institutions of general and secondary vocational education; preparation of methodological manuals and participation in professional guidance; creation, summarizing, editing and systematizing all types of business documentation; qualified transformation of all types of texts; planning and implementation of public presentations using public speaking skills; design of the structure and content of the educational process in the field of philology; dissemination and popularization of philological knowledge; participation in the development and implementation of various types of projects at educational and cultural institutions, in the social and pedagogical, humanitarian and organizational, book-publishing, mass-media and communication fields; organization and conduct of academic courses and practical training; organization of academic seminars, conferences and research.

6.4. Content of the program "Russia-Europe: Languages and Cultures"

To achieve the goals set by means of the Departments of General and Russian Linguistics, Russian and Foreign Literature, as well as the Department of Foreign Languages of the RUDN Philological Faculty, students studying under this program are offered theoretical, methodological and practical courses in Russian and French. The work program, containing the names of courses, the number of credits assigned to each of them, and an indication of the university where the courses are taught, is attached to the Agreement on the program opening. The courses offered by both universities include the following disciplines: "History of Thought and Cultural Life in Russia", "Russian and Foreign Literature", "Musical

Theater in Russia and Europe", "Aesthetics of Cinematography", "Geopolitics of Russia and Europe" "Information Technologies in Humanities", "Language and Style of Research", "Semiotics", "History and Theory of Linguistics", "Language Contacts in Russia and the Post-Soviet Space", "Comparative Literature Studies" and many others. Each of the two universities recognizes the results of examination sessions in the courses taken by students at the partner university.

Within the framework of the program, students also undergo pre-diploma practical training, which consists in compulsory participation in academic conferences (the list of conferences is updated every year), including the Vinogradov Russian Language Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences, in readings of public lectures on the area of study and theoretical courses. Forms of report on the undergoing of practical training include the presentation of the topic and content of the master's thesis, designed in accordance with the requirements for masters' final works in the Russian Federation, and a journal with a list and a brief description of the attended lectures and conferences. The program "Russia-Europe: Languages and Culture" also implies publication activities of students on the basis of their participation in research and practical conferences for young researchers attended during the period of practical training.

Students are also invited to participate in the meetings of the academic literary discussion club held monthly at the Department of General and Russian Linguistics of the RUDN Philological Faculty and the "French-Russian get-togethers", organized by the Department of Foreign Languages of the RUDN Philological Faculty (Sheveleva, 2015; Scheerens & Blomeke 2016).

In addition to the traditional system for studying foreign languages, Peoples' Friendship University of Russia also has a special system. A student enrolled in any specialty must necessarily study a foreign language or Russian if he or she is a foreign citizen. However, the number of academic hours often proves to be insufficient to fully immerse in the environment of the language being studied and to overcome the language barrier. In the light of this fact, on March 21, 2016, a pilot project on the integration of communication with native French speakers entitled "'Franco-Russian POCIDELKI" Friendship Club" was designed and implemented at the Department of Foreign Languages of the RUDN Philological Faculty (French is the second most popular language among Russian students). The club's activities are aimed at creating special conditions fostering linguistic and cultural adaptation of both francophone students coming to study at Peoples' Friendship University of Russia and wishing to improve their knowledge of Russian and Russian-speaking students seeking to overcome the language barrier and immerse in the French language environment (Erasmus Student Network, 2014).

The club's activities include translating of popular French comics, preparing the exhibition "Russia Through the Eyes of Francophone Students" and "France Through the Eyes of Russian Students", presenting creative performances (an additional opportunity to use language skills in a way that is free from the academic framework), transforming a traditional classroom into the atmospheric Café de Paris (Paris Cafe). The work of the club is supported by the attaché for culture and education of the French Embassy in Russia Virginie Tellier, a literature teacher of the Dumas French lyceum in Moscow Catherine de la Hossieray, a representative of the Center for French-Russian Education (Centre d'études franco-russes) Eva Bertrand (Riba & Mègre, 2015).

6.5. Requirements for the results of the program "Russia-Europe: Languages and Cultures"

A graduate of the master's program "Russia-Europe: Languages and Cultures" is expected to have the following general cultural competencies: a capacity for abstract thinking, analysis, synthesis; readiness to act in non-standard situations, to bear social and ethical responsibility for the decisions made; readiness for self-development, self-realization, use of creative potential; the ability to acquire and use new knowledge and skills in practical activities, independently or by means of information technologies, including in new areas of knowledge that are not directly related to the sphere of activities.

He or she must also acquire professional competencies: readiness for oral and written communication in Russian and foreign languages for solving professional problems; communicative strategies and tactics, rhetorical, stylistic and linguistic norms and methods adopted in various fields of communication; willingness to lead a team in the field of professional activity, while tolerantly perceiving social, ethnic, confessional and cultural differences; the ability to demonstrate knowledge of the modern scientific paradigm in the field of philology and dynamics of its development, the system of methodological principles and methods of philological research; the ability to demonstrate in-depth knowledge in a selected specific area of philology.

In the field of pedagogy, a graduate must be able to master the skills of qualified interpretation of various types of texts, including the unfolding of their meaning and connections with the time of their appearance; skills of the analysis of linguistic and literary material to ensure the teaching and popularization of philological knowledge. He or she must have experience of conducting academic courses and extra-curricular work on language and literature at educational organizations of basic general, secondary general and secondary vocational education; be able to prepare methodical manuals and organize professional guidance work.

In the field of applied activities, a graduate is supposed to have the ability to create, edit, summarize and classify all types of texts of official and journalistic style; the ability to transform various types of texts (e.g., change the style, genre, target of the text); be prepared to plan and perform public speeches using public speaking skills; possess skills of qualified linguistic support of international forums and negotiations.

Finally, a graduate must have experience in project activities, which include the ability to build prognostic scenarios and models for the development of communicative and sociocultural situations, the ability to guide research, applied, pedagogical and creative projects in the chosen field of activity, as well as organizational and managerial activities, including the ability to plan integrated information impact and manage it. A graduate should have the skills of organization and conduct of academic courses and practical training, seminars, academic discussions and conferences.

6.6. Forms of assessment of students of the program "Russia-Europe: Languages and Cultures"

The responsibility and procedure for the preparation and conduct of state final examinations at RUDN, as well as the list, order, deadlines of the submission of documents required for the implementation of the state final assessment, are determined between the structural units by the "Procedure for conducting the final state assessment of students of higher education programs – bachelor's, specialist's and master's programs at Peoples' Friendship University of Russia (new edition)", approved by the RUDN Rector's order

№ 790 dated October 13, 2016. The stages of the completion of the final qualifying work, the conditions for the student's admission to the submission procedure, the requirements for the structure, volume, content and formatting, as well as a list of mandatory and recommended documents necessary for the submission are specified in the "Rules for the preparation and formatting of the final qualifying work of the graduate of Peoples' Friendship University of Russia", approved by the RUDN Rector's order No. 878 dated November 11, 2016 on the basis of the decision of the University's Academic Council of November 28, 2016, Protocol No. 13.

The state final assessment on the main educational program "Russia-Europe: Languages and Cultures", aimed at determining the correspondence of the results of the students' mastering of the main educational programs to the requirements of the RUDN higher education standards / FGOS VO, includes an oral interdisciplinary state examination in linguistics consisting of 22 examination papers (2 questions per each paper).

The state examination precedes the electronic computer testing, designed to testify the student's readiness for the exam. The testing consists of 10 questions. The questions of the computer test correspond to the list of questions of the state examination. To prepare for the testing, the student needs the same educational literature as for the preparation for the oral exam. The test is assessed automatically in percentage by a computer program. To pass the examination, the student must complete at least 50% of the test.

The final work of RUDN student must be written in Russian and be supplemented with a 10-page research abstract in French. The defense is performed in French.

The final work of the student of Bordeaux Montaigne University must be written in French and be supplemented with a 10-page research abstract in Russian. The submission is performed in Russian.

The submission takes place once and is carried out at Peoples' Friendship University of Russia. Only students who have passed the state exam are allowed to defend their final work. The submission is held at an open meeting of the State Examination Commission, which includes representatives of RUDN and Bordeaux Montaigne University. In the course of the submission, members of the joint dissertation committee may ask the student additional questions in Russian or French. To successfully complete the submission procedure, the student should select the object and the subject of the research, set forth a hypothesis, determine the goals and objectives, prepare a review of the history of the issue, justify the theoretical approach and the choice of research methods, have the material analyzed, the results formulated, and the conclusions drawn.

7. Conclusion

The program of dual academic supervision of the master's final research work "Russia-Europe: Languages and Cultures", implemented jointly by Peoples' Friendship University of Russia and Bordeaux Montaigne University, which has been continuously functioning for more than ten years, represents a compromise solution to many problems impeding the implementation of network education and proves that all these problems can be overcome.

The difficulties arising in the course of the mutual integration of programs include, first of all, the difference between the education systems themselves in Russia and France. In this regard, each step in the

preparation and implementation of such programs requires discussion, coordination and approval by administrative officials.

In addition, the requirements for the admission of applicants to the program contain a number of problems that can be solved only through initiatives of the program coordinators. Thus, e.g., according to the Agreement, the education of students of the Russian party at the partner institution is free, as well as the education of students of the French party at RUDN. However, in addition to the requirement of having a bachelor's diploma (with excellent and good results), there is a need for RUDN students to pay for the cost of the international program (in RUDN itself). Given the current economic situation in Russia, the high cost of the education, the responsibility for travel and accommodation costs make the program inaccessible to students of the RUDN philological faculty (Sergeev, Bondareva & Stepanov, 2017; Roga, Lapina & Muursepp, 2015).

Unfortunately, at the moment, the mechanisms of financial support for students participating in international programs are poorly developed: the system of individual grants in Russia has just begun to evolve, and grants of the French government tend to be allocated to support students of such areas as "Economics", "Natural Sciences", "Information Technologies".

Another problem is the way applicants are registered: French partners offer Russian students an on-line format of document presentation, some parts of which do not correspond to Russian realities (e.g., the method of social insurance), and the failure to fill out any fields of the electronic questionnaire makes it impossible to complete the registration procedure, in general. On the other hand, the RUDN requirements for applicants include the translation of all documents into Russian and their notarization, which, adding up to the cost of the RF visa, also increases the cost of the program for students of Bordeaux Montaigne University, making the program unattractive.

Another difficulty is the timeframe for transferring the information on the results of examination sessions, which does not coincide in Russia and in France. These difficulties are stipulated at the level of additional agreements every 5 years, which increases the amount of work with documents. The additional agreements also describe the list of academic courses, which change almost every year, depending on the teaching load of professors of both universities and on their willingness to participate in the program.

The vividly discussed question of the importance of constructing modern education on the principle of interdisciplinarity, openness and remoteness is quite acute. But not all faculties are ready to "open up" for cooperation, not to mention the fact that sometimes the very system of higher education in Russia does not provide this kind of training. It is, however, worth noting that in recent years, it has been possible to solve this problem through the development of extramural courses. E.g., RUDN has successfully started to employ the Telecommunication Training and Information System, which makes it possible to connect a student from any university in the world to the courses offered by RUDN faculties (Soutar & Turner 2002).

In conclusion, it should be noted that the development, negotiation and implementation of international network educational programs is a huge work. But, given the efforts of state bodies (first of all, the Ministries of Education of the countries involved in the projects of such programs), the administration of universities, program coordinators and students themselves, all problems can be overcome, or, at least, compromise can be found.

The program "Russia-Europe: Languages and Cultures" has a long-term perspective and is aimed at strengthening academic ties between the universities of Russia and France, at the cooperation of these states in the field of humanities and in the political and social fields, at the development of partnerships on many international projects. The existence and development of such programs not only prevents Russia from the threat of the loss of valuable young personnel, but also contributes to the training of mobile professionals at the international level, placing Russian education on the same stage with world education.

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