**Ashtari  Babak**

November 2022

**Statement of purpose**

Contents

[Cover letter: 3](#_Toc117516884)

[Study plan: 5](#_Toc117516885)

[Why do you wish to study in Canada in the program for which you have been accepted? 7](#_Toc117516886)

[What is your overall educational goal? 7](#_Toc117516887)

[Why would you not pursue a similar course program in your country of residence? 7](#_Toc117516888)

[What research have you done in your country of residence or citizenship? 8](#_Toc117516889)

[How will this program enhance your employment opportunities in your country of residence or citizenship? 9](#_Toc117516890)

[What ties do you have to your country of citizenship or residence? 9](#_Toc117516891)

[What are your Sources of funding for the duration of your stay in Canada? 10](#_Toc117516892)

[Supporting documents: 11](#_Toc117516893)

[Social Security Organization report: 11](#_Toc117516894)

[Educational documents: 11](#_Toc117516895)

[Bachelor degree certificate (original document) 11](#_Toc117516896)

[Bachelor degree certificate (translated document) 11](#_Toc117516897)

[Bachelor degree transcript (original document) 11](#_Toc117516898)

[Bachelor degree transcript (translated document) 11](#_Toc117516899)

[Master degree certificate (original document) 11](#_Toc117516900)

[Master degree certificate (translated document) 12](#_Toc117516901)

[Master degree transcript (original document) 12](#_Toc117516902)

[Master degree transcript (translated document) 12](#_Toc117516903)

[English language test Certificates: 12](#_Toc117516904)

[IELTS Academic Module 12](#_Toc117516905)

[IELTS General Module 12](#_Toc117516906)

[Family information: 12](#_Toc117516907)

[My birth certificate (original document) 12](#_Toc117516908)

[My birth certificate (translated document) 12](#_Toc117516909)

[My wife’s birth certificate (original document) 13](#_Toc117516910)

[My wife’s birth certificate (translated document) 13](#_Toc117516911)

[My father’s birth certificate (original document) 13](#_Toc117516912)

[My father’s birth certificate (translated document) 13](#_Toc117516913)

[My mother’s birth certificate (original document) 13](#_Toc117516914)

[My mother’s birth certificate (translated document) 13](#_Toc117516915)

[My father-in-law’s birth certificate (original document) 13](#_Toc117516916)

[My father-in-law’s birth certificate (translated document) 13](#_Toc117516917)

[My mother-in-law’s birth certificate (original document) 13](#_Toc117516918)

[My mother-in-law’s birth certificate (translated document) 13](#_Toc117516919)

[Marriage certificate (original document) 13](#_Toc117516920)

[Marriage certificate (translated document) 13](#_Toc117516921)

# Cover letter:

*Babak Ashtari*

*Tehran, Iran*

*Study Permit visa applicant*

*November 2022*

*Dear visa officer,*

My name is Babak Ashtari and I am applying for a study permit which allows me to study French Language Literature at the University of Manitoba for master’s level.

I have already a master’s degree from *Tarbiat Modares University* of Tehran but in the field of translation studies with the [GPA 18.72](#_Master_degree_transcript) out of 20 and [IELTS Academic module band score 7.5](#_IELTS_Academic_Module) and [General module band score 8](#_IELTS_General_Module), which are far more than the minimum requirements of the University of Manitoba and more than 10 years of work experience both in teaching and translating.

Initially, I had applied for a PHD position of French literature, but since my background was more in line with translation, the Committee of Graduate Studies at the University of Manitoba, which is renowned for its expertise in literature, decided to grant me a position in master’s degree first in order for me to earn the necessary experience needed in literature before I could start any PHD program.

I have my own reasons to choose this particular program in Canada at the University of Manitoba. There are also some incentives urging me to return back to my country at the end of my studies, which are all explained in detail in my study plan and I hope they could earn your kind approval.

I would also like to request a visa for my wife. Unfortunately, the situation of women in my country is becoming more and more unstable these days. Therefore, apart from the fact that her presence beside me will have a significant positive influence on my academic performance due to the devotion and feelings I have for her, if she was not beside me, her safety would become a major concern to me prohibiting me from pursuing my studies properly.

# CV:

## Personal info:

Name: Babak ASHTARI

Date of birth: February 19th, 1988

Place of birth: Tehran

E-mail address: ashtaribabak@rocketmail.com

Matrimonial status: Married

Address: Unit 12, N50, Amini alley, Younesyan st,

Damavand ave, Tehran 1731783685

Phone numbers: +98-21-77991579

+98-21-77822661

+98-912-7621031

## Academic Studies:

**Master’s Degree:**

French Translation Studies at Tarbiat Modares University of Tehran – 2015

**Bachelor’s Degree:**

French Translation Studies at Allameh Tabatabaie University of Tehran – 2012

**High School Diploma:**

Diploma of Sciences at Bahonar high school, Tehran – 2006

## Extracurricular courses:

**TESL**

**Present:**

* + TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages)

**Coursera:**

**2021:**

* + MOOC (Massive Open Online Course)

**Tehran Institute of Technology**

**2019:**

* + Virtual Class Design Pack (designing virtual classrooms)
  + طراحی کلاس آنلاین جهت آموزش تحت وب

**Tarbiat Modares University**

**2016:**

* + Seminar on Teaching Translation theories: 7 techniques of Jean *Darbelnet et Jean-Paul Vignay* by Dr. Rahmatian

**2015:**

* + Seminar on semantic analysis of spectacles: Marsiyeh as an example of Islamic performance by Dr. Shairi
  + Seminar on comparative study of Romantic literature and its translation to Farsi in the framework of Les Miserable de Hugo translated by Mehdi Sahabi

**2014:**

* Seminar on didactic theories of FLE by Dr. Rahmatian
* Seminar on semantic analysis of spectacles: study of Imam Ali by Dr. Shairi

**2013:**

* + Seminar on classical artwork analysis: studies on Molière by Dr. Letafati
  + Workshop on translation of classics – issues and solutions by Dr. Letafati
  + Seminar on literary translation – issues and solutions by Dr. Letafati

**Andisheh Parsian Language Institute**

**2012:**

* TTC (Teacher Training Course)

**Allameh Tabatabaie University**

**2011:**

* Workshop on oral translation by Dr. Farjah

## Professional experience:

**Translation and interpretation:**

2019 – Present:

* Full-time translator and foreign business coordinator at Kowsar Baft Novin Co.

2017 – 2019:

* Part-time translator and manager in charge of the French department at Odaba Zand International Center for Teaching Foreign languages
* Part-time translator at Mazaheri Translation Office
* Part-time translator and editor at Niloufar Publications

**Compulsory military service:**

2016 – 2017:

* Translator at Pouyesh Magazine of Imam Ali Military University
* French and English language instructor at Imam Ali Military University

**Language instruction:**

2012 – 2016:

* Part-time French and English language instructor at Andisheh Parsian Language Center

2009 – 2011:

* Part-time instructor of English language at Saman Pardazesh Aria
* Part-time secretary in-charge of the department of foreign languages at Saman Pardazesh Aria

## Publications:

**Translations:**

* گوستاو فلوبر، مادام بوواری: )انتشارات بهار، 2022 (

**Master’s dissertation:**

* Analyse componentielle de la traduction et son impact culturelle en Iran : le cas de *Madame Bovary de Flaubert* (Tarbiat Modares University, 2015)

**Articles:**

* Shairih Hamid Reza, Ashtari Babak, *Componential Analysis of Translation and the Meaning-Making Processes in the Translated Discourse* (Fersowsi Mashad Translation Studies Magazine, 2015)

## Personal interests:

Linguistics, semiotics, literature, sociology, anthropology, didactics, translation studies

## Language proficiency:

Persian (native) French (fluent) English (fluent)

# Study plan:

## Why do you wish to study in Canada in the program for which you have been accepted?

Apart from the fact that I love traveling, exploring and experiencing cultural diversity and multiculturalism which are all essential in translation industry, it is evident that studying in a native speaking environment, where students are exposed to the language spoken by residents on a daily basis is an advantage for any language learner.

In this regard, I could have chosen to study in France, or any other French-speaking nation. However, there were a couple reasons urging me to apply for Canada. First, Canada has a much higher level of cultural diversity and shows more flexibility towards foreign nationals compared with France due to the heavy volume of immigrants this country has received over time, making it a much more hospitable destination for international students. Second, although my wife has a decent level of English competency, she does not know even a single word in French. Therefore, taking her to a country where she cannot communicate verbally with ordinary people would appear a little selfish of me. Alternatively, I am sure that she can make a lot of friends in Canada and socialize with Canadians easily as not only will they understand her language better, but also will they be more receptive of her.

Finally, I would like to study in Canada for the sake of the Canadian French itself. In fact, this dialect is quite distinctive from the one spoken in France. While the latter is quite accessible as it is considered the Standard French (language of all books and the prevalent accent adopted in most audio materials), Canadian French seems to be somewhat an unknown world to me primarily due to its heavy accent. Secondly, because of the cultural differences : vous ne pouvez jamais imaginer comme surpris je suis devenu quand Dr. Isabelle Masicotte Kirouac m’a dit ‘’bienvenu’’ à la réponse de mon expression de gratitude pour m’avoir envoyé un ensemble d’articles à étudier par courriel.

## Why would you not pursue a similar course program in your country of residence?

I don’t know where to start! The major issue is our Internet connection. The typical broadband connection speed in Iran is nowhere near as fast as that of well-developed nations. Filtering is another concern in our country, further reducing the speed of our internet data exchange. To demonstrate, particular websites, such as YouTube require a VPN to become accessible, leaving a detrimental impact on our already slow internet connection speed, as a result of which viewers would experience frequent frustrating lags while watching videos online. Therefore, it is not an overstatement to say that studying in Iran is far from convenient, especially for language learners, who require exposure to the foreign culture by watching authentic videos and podcasts ever since critical educational databases such as YouTube and Canvas have been blocked.

Apart from the connectivity issues, not being able to make a purchase online is another problem weighing upon Iranian students. This means, websites like Amazon are essentially for window shopping, and this is mainly caused by intense sanctions against Iran during the past four decades, prohibiting us from opening accounts in international banks and purchasing books in other currencies.

Furthermore, the majority of university programs here are outdated. The main reason for this may be because study materials in Iran are centuries old. Due to sanctions the country is secluded and scholars cannot keep up with the latest prevalent theories and advancements in academic environments. For one thing, Dr. Chassing, who is a specialist in modern literature at the University of Manitoba, couldn’t believe his ears when he heard that we are still studying translation theories of *Vigny* and *Darbelnet* at *Tarbiat Modares University*.

Finally, intellectual work in Iran does not normally earn the merit it deserves. By intellectual work I mean translations and research work of any kind. This is because once the research work is done, usually the main credit goes for the publishing agent and the supervising professor and not the poor student who has done the majority of the work; when I published my first article at Ferdowsi Mashad University Press, I got over 400 reviews during the first week of the publication by academics in Mashad. As a result of this, the head journalist of the publication and Dr. Shairi (my supervising professor) were invited to talk about the difficulty of cultural translation (which was the subject of my article) in a seminar where they were admired and recognized intellectually. However, it was a couple weeks later when I first got acquainted about the event; All merit I received from my research work was my name inscribed underneath Dr. Shairi’s, as the second author. Since graduate studies are normally accompanied by research work, I would prefer to base my studies in a more equitable environment.

## What is your overall educational goal?

What I have in mind is my name to be recognized as an Iranian devoted literary translator. The reason for this may be because after installation of the Islamic Republic of Iran, translators, along with anyone who did cultural work, have become isolated, and it is more than 40 years now that the glow of the world literature is losing its incandescence more than ever before.

Hopefully, with accessibility to original books and the knowledge of modern literature I will acquire at the University of Manitoba, I may finally be able to initiate a movement of literary translation to import masterpieces of the world into my country and make this immense horizon of wisdom and perseverance accessible to Iranian people. Taking this to its extreme, I may be the starting point of a generation of younger translators who may rise from a more liberal Iran.

That being said, however, there are some literary work at the disposal of the Iranian people coming from the English translated versions of the original French books. Although this is better than nothing, it is evident that during each phase of translation, a significant part of the culture is lost, especially because English translators are not necessarily familiar with francophone civilizations and their literature. In order to alleviate this situation, I intend to dip myself into French literature as much as I could so that I flourish in this field and become capable of translating directly from French without any medium so that the cultural values present in the original text would be transferred into Farsi as accurately as possible.

Apart from practice of translation, my second goal is to become a University Professor who is an expert in Translation Studies and who can instruct the future generations of Iranian translators. Regrettably, we do not yet have a university program at post-graduate levels for French Translation Studies in Iran. The reason for this may be the multidisciplinary aspect of this major: for a translation professor to become qualified, a broad knowledge of literature, theories of translation, and linguistic competency in both the primary and the secondary languages are required. Unfortunately, most scholars in Iran are unidimensional, meaning that they are either competent in translation of administrative texts without the knowledge of the prevalent modern literary circles, which are far more complex, or have read a lot of literature without any practice of translation.

In route towards acquiring of my qualities, having already earned some translation-related background through my previous studies, I am going to plunge myself into modern literature. Hopefully, I may be able to further pursue my studies at a PHD level at the University of Manitoba and by the time I graduate from this accredited institution, I will have earned enough knowledge and experience to seize my professorship upon my return to Iran and become a member of the first generation of post-graduate professors of French Translation Studies in my country.

## How will this course program enhance your employment opportunities in your country of residence?

As a multilingual, who has a vocation to re-enlighten the dim glow of modern literature as far as I could, this course program could bring me a lot of advantages. For one thing, it is evident that doing cultural work away from propaganda and fanatical views is the prime convenience. In Iran, for an author to be able to publish a book, they should be approved by the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, which has a rather intransigent nature, filtering any non-Islamic views, considering them as hostile.

Having said that, however, liberty of expression in Canada would bring me the freedom I need to translate and publish any literary work without worrying about censorship. This particularly means that I could work on my field of choice (resistance literature) and translate, among many others, *La vie d’Olymph de Gouge* or *Acquittée of Alexandra Lage,* which are both forbidden to be published in Iran as they defy the fanatical version of Islam and boost my fellow compatriots’ morale especially during these tough days we are having in Iran.

Furthermore, this course program could improve my perception of the key factors leading to a thriving society. Unfortunately, since I have lived a lifetime in a closed environment, there is a mental chain developed in my head as a result of a lifetime of exposure to cultural and intellectual exploit. Therefore, I have no doubt that living social values in a more equitable country, such as Canada, would be far more influential than seeing moral dilemmas in movies or reading about them in books. This is especially important to me as these values are going to define the major theme of my future translation projects.

## What research have you done in your country of residence or citizenship?

I have already a master’s degree of French Translation Studies from Tarbiabt Modares University of Iran. In my master thesis, I have focused on *Madame Bovary* of *Gustave Flaubert* and similarity between France of that time and Iran in recent years. Although at first, I had to overcome a stirred quarrel for its approval by the committee of Graduate Studies at Tarbiat Modares University of Tehran, I could successfully defend my master thesis and obtain my degree in the end.

The translation project included primarily analysis of the life story and the social influence of a fictitious French woman who was trying to earn her place in society, while her surrounding played tricky, making her life a misery. Although the original work focused on the innocence of a young lady who was trapped in the cruel claws of an exploiting society, the translated version was considered as an example of promotion of social ill-values and feminism.

On that same note, I was vigorously criticized for my choice of corpus of study. However, there was actually an obvious correlation with the situation of women in my country, and the civil crisis we are experiencing nowadays in Iran is in fact an unbendable proof to that.

In 2015, I published my first article at Ferdowsi Mashhad University of Iran[[1]](#footnote-1) about the difficulty of cultural translation and how difficult it is to transfer the author’s authentic view if it differs from the social norms recognized in the target language since there is always room for sacrilege (which makes a typical concern for any literature-based work in Iran).

I have also translated a book called *Mes Souvenirs* by *Adelaide Herculine Barbin* into Persian. It is an autobiography reciting the story of tribulations an intellectual hermaphrodite undertakes due to his physical situation in France. Although this could have been an enlightenment towards recognition of LGBTs and other sexual minorities in Iran, unfortunately, it was considered against social norms by authorities and, therefore, failed publication.

I have also participated in almost all *Dr. Kirouac’s* online seminars ever since Corona Virus has hit the world (she is one of the faculty members at the University of Manitoba). Fortunately, she has helped me a lot by sending her publications with regards to *Trash Theory* in literature and I am currently planning to study modern literature by fixing on this view which, briefly speaking, studies all authors and poets who rise from a low social status but manage to create valuable literary work by adopting somewhat popular expressions instead of the prevalent accepted aesthetic values.

This is particularly important to me since Modern Resistance Literature is full of such vulgar and idiomatic expressions. Furthermore, they are considered the most complex structures of a text and transferring them through translation is quite a demanding task for any translator.

## What ties do you have to your country of citizenship or residence?

My utmost valuable tie to my country lies within my fellow compatriots, who have been fighting valiantly during the past few months for our freedom; after recent social events in Iran, my wish to spend here the remaining days of my life as a free citizen with my honorable countrymen and women is more than ever before.

According to history, people have always been the definitive victors and I do believe that we are on the brink of a new Iran where we will find peace, harmony and equality along with a flourishing future. In this situation, I believe it is natural to expect me to return back and live with my loved ones, enjoying the political tranquility restored in my country.

Nevertheless, I also believe that this is a national duty for any patriot to import as much as they could from the vast sources of knowledge and wisdom in well-developed nations so as to promote sciences and technologies in their home country in spite of risks, such as homesickness and culture shock, they may suffer during their education overseas.

Borrowing knowledge from other nations is not a new phenomenon in Iran: *Dar Ul-Fonun,* which was the first polytechnic institution founded in Iran by the order of Naser Al Din Shah, King of Persia, used to dispatch its distinguished students for fellowship to flourished nations of that time including, among others, Great Britain and France for learning the latest advancements in sciences. Therefore, playing my part in rekindling the torch of knowledge, lit formerly by my ancestors in my country, is another tie linking me to my homeland.

Also, my wife and I have deep connections with our parents. They are too old to adapt themselves with a new culture or to learn a new language. Therefore, I doubt if they ever leave the country. As our loved ones are not supposed to stay with us forever, we have to spend as much time as we have, benefiting from their company in the remaining days of their lives.

Most importantly, my father-in-law is a veteran war hero with many serious injuries remained from his honorable services during 8 years of military campaign against Iraqi intruders (his medical records are here). During the civil crisis of 2009 in Iran, he was also the colonel commander of Kerman Police department. When he refused the direct order of his superiors to repress the righteous youngsters manifesting on streets, instead of being revered for his patriotism, he was imprisoned for a couple years and discharged most dishonorably from the armed forces, losing all his privileges. Ever since, he has devoted himself to his family and we do not wish to deprive this honorable man of his last shelter: having his family beside him.

As far as my mother is concerned, she is in her late 60s and she still suffers from intense mobility issues since she has just recovered from a serious spine surgery (her medical records are here). She usually stays with us as she needs me for her daily routines. However, fortunately, my sister and her nurse have agreed to take care of my mother while we are gone.

Regarding my father, he has founded a commercial empire under the flag of Kowsarbaft Novin Co[[2]](#footnote-2) in which my brother and I are working. This is a wholesale Textile distributing company founded in Tehran for which we have devoted a lot of time and capital. Since I am the one with the knowledge of foreign languages, he expects me to be in charge of the expansion of its trade network on international scales after my return.

## What are your Sources of funding for the duration of your stay in Canada?

I have saved enough money to cover all my expenses, including tuition fees as well as the cost of living in Canada during my whole education (as stated in the bank Statement attached). I also have a part-time teaching assistance position available in my letter of admission, granting me the permission to work for 15$ to 20$ per hour at Manitoba University. Moreover, I am nominated for the International Graduate Student Entrance Scholarship, which could partially cover my academic expenditure. Furthermore, despite my temporary educational leave from work, my wife is still a full-time employee, meaning that she is a final financial shelter should any unexpected incidences occur.

# Supporting documents:

## Social Security Organization report:

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## Educational documents:

### Bachelor degree certificate (original document)

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### Bachelor degree certificate (translated document)

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### Bachelor degree transcript (original document)

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### Bachelor degree transcript (translated document)

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### Master degree certificate (original document)

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### Master degree certificate (translated document)

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### Master degree transcript (original document)

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### Master degree transcript (translated document)

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## English language test Certificates:

### IELTS Academic Module

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### IELTS General Module

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## Family information:

### My birth certificate (original document)

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### My birth certificate (translated document)

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### My wife’s birth certificate (original document)

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### My wife’s birth certificate (translated document)

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### My father’s birth certificate (original document)

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### My father’s birth certificate (translated document)

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### My mother’s birth certificate (original document)

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### My mother’s birth certificate (translated document)

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### My father-in-law’s birth certificate (original document)

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### My father-in-law’s birth certificate (translated document)

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### My mother-in-law’s birth certificate (original document)

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### My mother-in-law’s birth certificate (translated document)

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### Marriage certificate (original document)

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### Marriage certificate (translated document)

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1. <http://ensani.ir/fa/article/352526/%D8%AA%D8%AD%D9%84%DB%8C%D9%84-%D9%81%D8%B1%D8%A2%DB%8C%D9%86%D8%AF-%D9%85%D8%B9%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%A7%D8%B2%DB%8C-%D8%AF%D8%B1-%D8%AA%D8%B1%D8%AC%D9%85%D9%87-%D9%88-%D9%86%D8%B8%D8%A7%D9%85-%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%B2%D8%B4%DB%8C-%DA%AF%D9%81%D8%AA%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%A7%D8%B2-%D9%85%D9%86%D8%B8%D8%B1-%D8%AE%D8%B1%D8%AF%D9%87-%D9%85%D8%B9%D9%86%D8%A7%D9%87%D8%A7%DB%8C-%D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%AA%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%B9%DB%8C-%D9%81%D8%B1%D9%87%D9%86%DA%AF%DB%8C-%D9%88-%D8%B0%D8%A7%D8%AA%DB%8C> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Kowsarbaft.ir [↑](#footnote-ref-2)