

Censorship Evasion in Fiction Translation¹

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Abstract

As one of the dominant discourses and a repressive act, censorship is articulated and manifested in everyday practices; however, diverse strategies have been used to escape censorship or repression since ancient times. The following questions were answered in this paper: How has censorship been practiced in Afghanistan? Were there cases (if any) where translators avoided censorship? How and in what domains have translators avoided censorship in translation? What were the strategies adopted, and how frequent were they? What were the motivations behind the evasions? To that end, translations during 1933–2021 were analyzed using the researchers' developed taxonomy for detecting translation strategies and censorship evasion instances. It seems that the types of censorship imposed varies and shifts as the governmental administrations changed. In addition, censorship evasions have occurred in different domains of Afghan society. Moreover, Clause Structure Change was used frequently, and Cultural Censorship Evasion overrode other censorship evasion types that were identified from data. It is concluded that state codes and the types of regimes have prompted censorship evasions to a great degree.

Keywords: Cultural censorship evasion, Fiction, Taxonomy of analysis

1. Introduction

Since ancient times, different strategies have been adopted to elude censorship or suppression. One of the cases where translators practice censorship

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evasion is when they confront silence. Moreover, scholars have spotted several reasons to show why censorship elusion is inspired and how sensitive concepts or taboos are dealt with in translation. One reason for adopting censorship elusion strategies is that the state governments' oppositions use it to fight against the imposed rules to bring about social and political changes (Müller, 2004). Another reason could be for the silenced minorities to ask for justice and their rights. Furthermore, censorship has been called a birthplace for creativity, which is another reason for escaping censorship in translation (Holman & Boase-Beier, 1999).

This paper had identified and introduced censorship evasion instances in translating English fiction into Dari-Persian in the Afghan context during 1933–2001 and 2001–2021.

2. Literature Review

Several seminal research studies have been published on censorship, reflecting scholars' interests in the topic and the influence of censorship on the literature and published works, including translations. Mollanazar's work (2011) on text screening explored the nature of different governmental 'redlines' in contemporary Iran after the introduction of the printing press (a historical perspective to censorship). Scholars have shed light on the contrast between traditional and modern censorship (a conceptual change). The former is defined as the direct regulatory repression by the political authorities assigned by the state or the church. The latter entails the regulation of discourse that influences people, how they state things, and the context in which they say something. Khosravi (1999) believed that traditional censorship might be constructive if conducted through law and regulations which are imposed by the public law-making entities. He writes that this kind of censorship prevents misuse of freedom, protects the privacy of communication, and it does not interrupt communication.

2.1. Cultural Status of Afghanistan from 1933 to 2021

The resistance or the exile poem was written when censorship was strictly imposed, and the government audited the literature in Afghanistan. Therefore, poets and writers used metaphorical languages, so their works were sometimes vague and nonsense since they were afraid of the state and ruling system (Muradi, 2015); however, writers and poets in exile wrote about the tragedies going on in Afghanistan. Bezhan (2018) also stated that the government had strictly practiced censorship in Afghanistan in 1932–1964, and every literary work and publication was screened by the government.

In the winter of 2008, Karim Khuram, Minister of Information and Culture, suspended several Balkh journalists and bereft Basir Babi, for utilizing the Persian-Dari terminology [دانشگاه]/da:ni[ga:h/ (university). In the news reports, the Minister called democracy 'a vain discourse' (Muradi, 2015). After the Taliban took control of Kabul in 1996, the capital city of Afghanistan, they imposed the most stringent Islamic regulations, so people were allowed to listen to 'na'at' or a cappella of religious chants only (Lee, 2018).

2.2. Theoretical Considerations

Censorship elusion can be traced in many literary works in the history of translation activity. For example, Müller's (2004) claimed that censorship (including self-censorship) could be implemented by using aesthetic devices such as the Aesopian language or finding alternative literary markers that intend to 'smuggle' ideas into the space between the lines and escape censorship (Müller, 2004).

At the same time, St-Pierre (2017) stated that one of the means for eluding censorship is the translation itself. For example, the work is published in a different language to escape censorship. In addition, translation is identified as a means for the circulation of the ideas imposed by governments and *evading censorship* (Billiani, 2007b).

Baker and Saldanha (2011) cited that any instance of translation in any form is subject to continuous censorship. At the same time, a translation in any form could

be a means by itself in negotiating and escaping censorship imposed by authorities or states.

3. Methodology

The researchers adopted St-Pierre's (2017) perspective and Baker and Saldanha's (2011) notion about translation as the primary framework stage of the study. They stated that translation, in any form, is the source of censorship circumvention, and it is a means of negotiating and escaping censorship.

For analyzing the instances of translating strategies and censorship evasion in the target data, the researchers have developed a taxonomy of analysis based on Chesterman's classification of translation strategies to investigate the relevant Afghanistan documents, such as codes, regulations, constitutions, relevant to the literature under analysis during 1933–2021.

The data under study has been classified based on two different periods. The first period covers the fiction translated before 2001, and the second period includes the data which were translated after 2001. The reason for this classification was the extent to which the governments practiced censorship. Censorship had been rigorous, and it was observed very seriously by the governments before 2001; however, after 2001, Afghanistan experienced democracy in every part of public life, so the translators and the publishers enjoyed more freedom of speech and media.

3.1. Corpus

The corpus required to collect the study's necessary data consisted of contemporary fiction translated from English into Persian. The research covered relevant novels and short stories translated during the target timespan (1933–2021). The data were selected randomly.

The unit for analysis in the research ranged from the smaller units (words, phrases) to the bigger ones (the whole text).

Table 3.1. Original English Fiction

No.	Book title	The author	Publication year	The publisher	Number of pages	Fiction type
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1	The Romance of a Busy Broker (RBB)	O. Henry	1906	Doubleday, Page & Company	4	Short Story
2	The Death of a Bachelor (DB)	Arthur Schnitzler	1908	Wiener Osterreichische Rundschau	11	Short Story
3	The Happy Man (HM)	W. Somerset Maugham	1924	Heinemann	4	Short Story
4	The Fall of Edward Barnard (FEB)	W. Somerset Maugham	1921	Heinemann	29	Short Story
5	The Poet (P)	W. Somerset Maugham	1951	Heinemann	4	Short Story
6	The Painted Veil (PV)	W. Somerset Maugham	1925	William Heinemann	Lxxx (80) sections	Novel
7	The Vessel of Wrath (VW)	W. Somerset Maugham	1931	William Heinemann	32	Short Story
8	Monsieur Beaucaire (MB)	Booth Tarkington	1900	Doubleday & McClure Company	32	Short Story
9	The Sense of an Ending (SE)	Julian Barnes	2011	UK	144	Novel
10	The Awakening (A)	Kate Chopin	2001	New York	206	Novel
11	Lolita (L)	Vladimir Nabokov	1955	Vintage International	335	Novel
12	The Box Man (BM)	Kobo Abe	1973	Vintage International	196	Novel

Table 3.2. *Translations of English Fiction into Persian during 1933–2021*

Number of pages	The publisher	Year of publication	The translator	The title	No.
4	مجله عرفان مطبعه معارف	1339 شماره (1)	علی محمد زهما	داستان عاشقانه یک دلایل	1
12	مجله ادب	1341 شماره (2)	حبیب الله بهجت	اعتراف تلخ	2

	مطبعه دفاع ملی			(مرگ یک مرد مجرد)	
2	مجله ژوندون	1346 شماره (17)	عبدالحق واله	انسان خوشبخت	3
20	مجله ادب مطبعه دفاع ملی	1341 شماره (6)	عبدالحق واله	بربادی ادوارد برنادر	4
3	مجله ژوندون	1346 شماره (19)	عبدالحق واله	شاعر	5
نا مشخص	روزنامه اصلاح	1341 شماره های (203، 204 و 205)	حبیب الله بهجت	پرده رنگین	6
نا مشخص	مجله هفتگی ژوندون	1349 شماره های (20، 21، 22، 23، 24، 25، 26، 27 و 28)	نورالله صحرایی	کیشنی حشم	7
نا مشخص	روزنامه اصلاح	1341 شماره (185)	بشیر رفیق	بن اعلی بوکر	8
224	مؤسسه نشر واژه	1396	رامین انوری	بیداری	9
190	زریاب	1394	محمد حکمت	حس یک پایان	10
405	زریاب	1393	اکرم پدramنیا	لولیتا	11
144	آن	1399	رامین انوری	مرد جعبه‌یی	12

3.2. Theoretical Framework

A taxonomy developed by the researchers was used to analyze the data. For analyzing the translation strategies, the researchers adopted Chesterman's classification of translation strategies. Chesterman (2016) classifies translation strategies into Syntactic Strategies (G) (any syntactic change), Semantic Strategies (S) (any lexical semantic change and aspects of clause meaning) and Pragmatic Strategies (Pr) (strategies result from the general decisions of translators about the appropriate way of translation; as a whole, Pr deals with the selection of information in the TT).

3.2. Procedure

The following steps represent how the present research was conducted:

1. Documenting censorship evasion instances detected from the corpus;
2. Identifying distributions of translation strategies in the textual analysis phase;

3. Specifying frequency of Grammar, Syntactic, and Pragmatic translation strategies;
4. Identifying distributions of censorship evasion in textual phase; and
5. Identifying instances of translation strategies and censorship evasion in the extratextual analysis phase.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Textual Analysis: Distribution of Translation Strategies

Both translation strategies and censorship evasions and their frequencies were shown based on the developed Taxonomy of the researchers. This phase led the research to find translation strategies used to escape censorship in translation, and the subsequent phase analyzed censorship evasion instances. For abbreviations, see the Appendix at the end.

In this first section of our discussion, the research dealt with the fiction rendered between 1933 and 2001. We have detected samples associated with Syntactic (G), Semantic (S), and Pragmatic (Pr) translation strategies classified by Chesterman. Remarkably, the occurrences of the target strategies manifested variations in terms of strategy type. G strategies overrode S and Pr strategies. Out of 117 cases, 73 instances belonged to the G category, making 48 percent of all occurrences. S was the next frequent strategy used in translating this fiction (56 cases), which made 37 percent. However, Pr has demonstrated the least frequent translation strategies with 23 cases (15 percent). We have noticed that in our data, the highest tendency has been toward G strategies.

The details recorded some other statistics for each of the intended translation strategy categories which were deemed interesting. In the G category, we identified instances of G2, G4-G7. The rest of the translation strategies which belonged to the G category did not appear in the data. G6 made a considerable number of occurrences with 50 instances. Of 56 S strategies, 50 cases belong to S1,

and only six belong to S10. The most frequent translation strategies used in the Pr category were associated with Pr2 (12 cases), 50 percent of the total number.

As translation strategies for the second group of fiction were concerned, all three translation strategies, G, S and Pr, have been identified. However, they have appeared in different frequencies. The G class translation strategies had great frequency with 244 occurrences (44%). For each category, the translation strategies differed. Of 244 instances, 156 belonged to G6. It covered more than half of the instances. G1 and G10 occurred only once. However, no instances of G3, G8, and G9 were identified at all. The following frequent strategies belonged to Pr with 214 cases (38%). Pr3 has happened more than any other strategy (65 cases). The least frequent strategies belonged to S. Out of 558 instances, only 100 of them belong to this category, making 18% of all instances. The results indicated that there had been different tendencies towards using the translation strategies.

This section could be summarized as:

1. Translation strategies were not alike for the two sections.
2. In the first section of our analysis, only a limited number of translation strategies were used in translation.
3. In both sections, no tendency towards using S2, S3, and S4 was revealed.
4. G6 was the most frequent translation strategy used in both sections.
5. We cannot generalize findings from section one to section two because the occurrences showed the unpredictable tendency of translators in applying G, S, and Pr strategies.
6. There was no relationship between using a specific type of translation strategy and censorship evasions.

4.2. Distribution of Censorship Evasions

Overall, 452 occurrences of censorship evasions were recognized in this research. The most frequent tendency was shown toward MoCE (233 cases). CCE was in the second position (181 instances). The subsequent widespread censorship evasion instances belonged to RCE (34 cases). SPCE stayed on the fourth rank with 3 cases, and MiCE was the least frequent censorship evasion detected with only 1 case.

However, only manifestations of two typologies of censorship evasions that we listed in the analysis Taxonomy were not detected, ScCE and PoCE; this might be because of the socio-political circumstances of the country.

We have also made distinctions between fiction rendered during 1933-2001 and 2001–2021. The four fiction (novels) in *Table 3.1* were translated during 2001–2021. As seen, most censorship evasion instances belong to this time span. In addition, all 3 instances of SPCE belonged to the same time span. Moreover, 1 MiCE has also been detected here, which is small but still matters. The findings lead us to conclude that censorship had been strictly imposed by the governments between 1933–1973, as cited by Muradi (2018) and Bezhan (2018). Compared to 1933–1973, Afghanistan had enjoyed unexpected freedom after the collapse of the Taliban regime in 2001. This truth might have encouraged the translators to choose fiction that had been banned and censored.

Table 4.1. Results of Translation Strategies and Censorship Evasions during 1933–2021

TAXONOMY OF TRANSLATION STRATEGIES AND CENSORSHIP EVASIONS										
FICTION (1933-2001)	DOMAINS		CCE	MoC E	RC E	ScC E	PoC E	MiC E	SPC E	TOTAL
	STRATEGIES									
داستان عاشقانه یک دلال (RBB)	G6	2	3 100 %							3
	Pr3	1								
	Total	3								
اعتراف ف تلخ (DB)	G2	1	15 100 %							15
	G4	1								
	G5	1								
	G6	10								
	S1	5								
	Pr2	1								
	Total	19								
	G6	1	1		1					2

انسان خوشیخت ت (HM)	S1	3	50%		50%							
	Total	4										
بربادی ادوارد برنارد (FEB)	G2	5	34 100%									34
	G4	9										
	G6	10										
	S1	16										
	Pr3	3										
	Total	43										
شاعر (P)	G6	3	1 100%									1
	Pr10	1										
	Total	4										
برده رنگین (PV)	G2	1	3 50%	3 50%								6
	G6	6										
	Pr2	1										
	Total	8										
کیشتی خشم (VW)	G2	1	31 74%	2 5%	9 21%							42
	G4	3										
	G6	16										
	S1	21										
	S10	6										
	Pr2	3										
	Pr10	1										
	Total	51										
بناغلی بوکر (MB)	G6	2	14 100%									14
	S1	5										
	Pr1	5										
	Pr2	7										
	Pr3	1										
	Total	20										
	G	S		Pr	15 2	<i>Total</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Total</i>	
73	56	23										
48%	37%	15%										
Grand Total				102	5	10						11 7
				87%	4%	9%	Grand Total					

FICTION (2001 - 2021)	DOMAINS		CCE	MoC E	RC E	ScC E	PoC E	MiC E	SPC E	TOTAL
	STRATEGIES									
بیداری (A)	G1	1	79 70%	12 10%	19 17%				3 3%	113
	G2	12								
	G4	12								
	G5	11								
	G6	28								
	G7	2								
	G10	1								
	S1	20								
	S7	5								
	S8	8								
	Pr1	14								
	Pr2	28								
	Pr3	10								
	Pr4	14								
	Pr5	1								
	Pr6	20								
	Pr7	20								
	Pr8	14								
	Pr9	2								
	Pr10	14								
Total	237									
حسن بیک پایان (SE)	G2	6	77 94%	4 5%				1 1%		82
	G4	17								
	G6	47								
	G7	3								
	S1	17								
	S8	5								
	S9	2								
	Pr1	6								
	Pr2	8								
	Pr3	23								
	Total	134								

لولينتا (L)	G4	7	82 100 %								82										
	G5	8																			
	G6	39																			
	G7	1																			
	S1	13																			
	S5	1																			
	S6	3																			
	S7	8																			
	S8	4																			
	S9	1																			
	Pr1	4																			
	Pr3	28																			
	Pr10	2																			
	Total	119																			
مرك جعبه (BM)	G2	3	57 98%	1 2%							58										
	G4	3																			
	G5	1																			
	G6	42																			
	S1	8																			
	S8	5																			
	Pr1	1																			
	Pr2	1																			
	Pr3	4																			
	Total	68																			
	G	S										Pr	55	<i>Total</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Total</i>	Grand Total
	244	100										214	8								
44%	18%	38%																			
Grand Total				79	228	24			1	3	33										
				24%	68%	7%			0%	1%	5										
Grand Total																					
<i>Total of all TS 710 and CE452</i>																					

4.2. Extratextual Analysis: Distribution of Censorship Evasions

Baker and Saldanha (2011) wrote that both textual and extra-textual features change in the translation product. Baker and Saldanha (2011) distinguished between textual sources and extratextual sources. For them, textual sources cover "the

translated texts"; however, extratextual sources were defined as "the theoretical and critical statements" (p. 191) vis-à-vis the translations, footnotes, bracketed comments, prefaces, introductions, and translators' notes, videos, descriptions and blurbs are closely studied to detect any useful information needed for the present work. Farahzad (2012, p. 42) calls the "additional information provided along with the metatext [target text]" paratextual information.

The Death of a Bachelor: by Arthur Schnitzler

This story is about the "betrayal of wives to their husbands." A bachelor confesses his secret relationships with his friends' (a doctor, a merchant and an author) wives. The only censorship evasion that the researchers have identified was that this translation brought into or introduced to the traditional society of Afghanistan the culture which is still sensitive and taboo, and censored, such as the betrayal of wives and having relationships with the wives of friends. The theme of this story could be eluding censorship because the story does not conform to the actual beliefs or expectations of Afghanistan society and the constitutions.

The education, personal life, and writings of Arthur Schnitzler indicated how his works could be censorship evasion for Afghanistan society and the society he was living. He was a friend of Freud who lost the cultural background of his world after the Austro-Hungarian Empire. His meeting with a prostitute in his sixteen and his close acquaintance with Freud, his thesis on the hypnotic treatment of neuroses indicated that he was writing about sexual and Freudian topics. These topics and his life experiences showed that his novels were not very usual in an Islamic society such as Afghanistan. Probably, the translator had been aware of the author's life, and he had chosen to introduce his works in the Afghan society through translation, which was an evading socio-political and religious censorship that did not conform to the article (observation of the principle of freedom of speech and mass media in

conformity with the international human rights in the view of the rules of Islam religion).

The Awakening: by Kate Chopin

The contents of "The Awakening" was termed as "harlot, immoral, harmful, and devilish." Moreover, this book was removed from the public library shelves in the homeland of Chopin for an extended period of time. Therefore, we concluded that in an Islamic country, Afghanistan, where people were just released from the strict rules, regulations and ruling ideology after 2001, the subject and the content of "The Awakening" was against the expectations, tradition, beliefs and culture of the Afghan society, and it has evaded moral, cultural, socio-political and religious censorship. As stated, this point was brought to the readers' attention in the translator's notes section.

The Sense of an Ending: by Julian Barnes

The novel's content represented Barnes' withstanding and bravery against ruling norms and repressions. It had been disseminated without interruption of adaptation, so the translation of this book was a censorship evasion attempt in Afghan society. In a society such as Afghanistan, most of the contents in this book are taboos, erotic, against society's norms and expectations.

In the notes section, the researchers have identified one more censorship evasion marker, (Durex Fetherlite) [دوروكس فترلايت] which was defined as a kind of condom.

Lolita: by Vladimir Nabokov

To be precise, this book has evaded censorship imposed by the governments, individuals, critics and societies. For instance, the translator has written that the Head of Sunday Express (London) has called it "pure pornography." It was banned from being imported to Britain after it was published in late 1955. The book was also marked prohibited and forbidden in France by the Minister of Interior Affairs; however, the book was translated and published in Dutch and Danish.

In her speech in the (Toronto Book Club) TBC 92nd Session, Akram Pedramnia stated that *Lolita* could pass through censorship boundaries in Iran; therefore, she published it portion by portion online and finally published it in Afghanistan. Another censorship evasion marker was the subtitle [تجربه‌ای در شکستن سد سانسور] (an experience in breaking censorship boundaries) which was popping up on the same YouTube video she was talking in the TBC 92nd Session.

Traces of censorship evasion have also been found in the endnotes in sections 4.11, 8.11, 3. 23, 2.11, and 2.15. Pedramnia described the following terms which are pornographic, taboo, unusual, erotic, ill-mannered and vulgar in Afghan society based on the Afghanistan regulations.

1. Instead of the usual words to refer to "popo/popoti", "ass" and "period" (haunches in ST), the translator has used a substitute or euphemistic term.
2. "Owndenist" is "Someone (usually a male) who reaches the peak of sexual arousal by the urinate of Someone else (usually a female).
3. "Mushroom" as [این گیاه نمادی است از آلت تناسلی مرد] (This herb is the symbol for the men penis)
4. "The natural peak of orgasm" [اوج طبیعی انزال]
5. "Mr. Uterus as [رحم دختر] (The womb of the girls)

Instances of censorship evasions were not revealed in the rest of the fiction.

5. Concluding Remarks

This study investigated a corpus of English fiction translated into Persian based on the developed Taxonomy of the researchers. The purpose of investigating this study was to find out how translators escaped censorship in translation and to pinpoint distributions of adopted translation strategies.

It is concluded that we can identify instances of censorship evasions by closely investigating both textual and extra-textual features. These evasions could be made by using translation strategies as tools. The types of translations strategies and censorship evasions might vary, yet they exist. Moreover, it is concluded that there is not any systematic relationship between translation strategies and censorship evasions.

All in all, the findings of this research are unique to Translation Studies as an interdisciplinary area of research because this was the only research conducted on the censorship evasion topic with the same language directionality. Researchers of related disciplines can study and investigate the main subject of this research, Censorship Elusion, in other majors, such as literary studies. Most importantly, the developed Taxonomy could be adopted to conduct researchers in which relevant topics, such as censorship evasions, are studied. The developed Taxonomy could be adopted to fit any kind of classification of translation strategies introduced by different scholars.

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G10: Scheme Change			G9: Level Shift	G8: Cohesion Change									
S10: Other Semantic Changes			S9: Trope Change	S8: Paraphrase									
Pr10: Other Pragmatic Changes			Pr9: Transcending	Pr8: Visibility Change									
Total													
G	S	Pr			Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Grand Total
Grand Total					Grand Total								

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بیژن پژوهان^۲ و حسین ملانظر^۳

چکیده

سانسور به عنوان یک گفتمان حاکم و کنش سرکوبگرانه در تمام فعالیت‌های زندگی روزمره ما قابل مشاهده است و خود را بروز می‌دهد، در عین حال، از دوران باستان تا امروز راهبردها و ابزار متفاوتی برای فرار از سانسور یا سرکوب به کار رفته است. در پژوهش حاضر به سؤالات زیر پرداخته شده است: سانسور در افغانستان چه گونه به کار رفته است؟ از سانسور در چه مواردی فرار صورت گرفته است؟ در ترجمه، مترجمان چه گونه و در چه حوزه‌هایی از سانسور فرار نموده‌اند؟ چه راهبردهایی را به چه میزان به کار برده‌اند؟ چه انگیزه‌هایی برای فرار از سانسور وجود داشته است؟ برای این منظور، ادبیات داستانی ترجمه شده از سالهای ۱۳۱۲ تا ۱۴۰۰ برای بررسی برگزیده شدند. برای تحلیل راهبردهای ترجمه و شناسایی موارد فرار از سانسور، از تکسانومی تحلیلی پژوهشگران این پژوهش استفاده شد. به نظر می‌رسد که اعمال سانسور بر اساس تغییر و جابه‌جایی دولت‌ها رنگ و بوی متفاوتی می‌گیرد. قابل یادآوری است که فرار از سانسور در حوزه‌های متفاوت جامعه افغانستان مشهود است. تغییر ساختار جمله‌واره‌ها پربسامدترین راهبرد بوده و در کل سانسورگریزی فرهنگی بسامد بیشتری در مقایسه با سانسورگریزی‌های دیگر داشته است. نتیجه نشان می‌دهد که قواعد و مقررات کشور و نوع رژیم حاکم به گونه چشم‌گیری بر میزان سانسورگریزی تأثیر می‌گذارد.

واژه‌های راهنما: ادبیات داستانی، سانسورگریزی فرهنگی، تکسانومی تحلیلی (توسعه یافته) پژوهشگران

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