

A Historical Overview of Self-help Translations in Turkish: The Emergence of a Cultural Field

Türkçede Kişisel Gelişim Çevirilerine Tarihsel Açından Bir Bakış: Kültürel Bir Alanın Doğuşu

Research/Araştırma

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ABSTRACT

This study offers a succinct account of the translation history of self-help books in Turkish, starting from the early decades of the Republic until the 2000s, by touching upon the translations of bestsellers. Employing the concept of field theorized by Pierre Bourdieu in his sociology of culture, the study illustrates that self-help as a field of production arose in the cultural atmosphere of Turkey in the 1930s and 1940s mainly through translations. This newly emerging genre gradually developed towards the 1990s and went through a remarkable expansion in the following decades, mostly due to the translated works as well as works written in Turkish. The number of translations continues to exceed the amount of works written in Turkish in the first decade of 2000s, and it seems this tendency will continue in a similar fashion. The underlying factors behind the expansion of this field, regarding the social, economic and political changes in Turkey are also described in the study, to shed light on the popularity of self-help and its growth in the target culture. The study also challenges some scholarly analyses that associate the beginning of self-help in Turkish with the works of some Turkish authors, totally ignoring the translation history.

Key words: self-help translations, self-help, field, Bourdieu

ÖZET

Bu çalışma, Cumhuriyetin ilk yıllarından 2000’li yıllara kadar Türkçede kişisel gelişim kitaplarının çeviri tarihini, kaynak kültürde çok satan eserlerin çevirilerine değinerek kısaca anlatmaktadır. Çalışma, Pierre Bourdieu’nun kuramsallaştırdığı “alan” kavramını kullanarak, kişisel gelişimin, Türkiye’nin 1930 ve 1940’lı yıllarının kültürel atmosferinde çeviri eserler aracılığıyla, bir “üretim alanı” olarak oluştuğunu göstermektedir. Bu alan 1990’lara kadar sınırlı bir büyüme göstermiş ve Türkçe kişisel gelişim eserleri yazılmış olsa da, sonraki yıllarda yaşanan gözle görülür büyüme çoğunlukla çeviri eserler aracılığıyla olmuştur. 2000’li yılların başında, bu alandaki çeviri eserlerin sayısı, Türkçe yazılan eserlerin sayısından fazladır ve bu eğilimin benzer şekilde süreceği öngörülmektedir. Çalışma, kişisel gelişimin hedef kültürdeki popülaritesine ve bir üretim alanı olarak büyümesine ışık tutmak amacıyla, Türkiye’deki sosyal, ekonomik ve politik değişimlerden kaynaklanan nedenleri de dikkate alır. Aynı zamanda, Türkçede yazınsal bir tür olarak kişisel gelişimin doğuşunu, çeviri tarihini görmezden gelerek, Türk yazarların eserleriyle ilişkilendiren akademik çalışmaları da sorgular.

Anahtar sözcükler: kişisel gelişim çevirileri, kişisel gelişim, kültürel alan, Bourdieu

1. Introduction

Self-help is a very popular reading category in English, and with their origins going back to the eighteenth century, self-help books have always been widespread for the American society (Cawelti, 1965, pp. 4-5). Offering advice and promising hope on a range of subjects from health and diet to success and relationships, these books have become noticeably prevailing in English in the last few decades (Botton, 2005, p. 68). As a matter of fact, the idea of self-invention has always been prevalent for the American society, which serves as the main source for the literatures of self-improvement or advice in different languages, and it is a huge sector in the publishing industry of the US. The sales figures and statistics prove that one third to one half of Americans have purchased a self-help book in their lifetimes (McGee, 2005, p. 11). The situation is not less remarkable for Turkey, where the amount of books presented in this category encompasses a considerable percentage of popular literature, which can easily be recognized at a quick glance through the lists of the publishing houses. Just a general catalogue search in the Turkish National Library database reflects the dramatic increase in the number of publications of this category in the past few decades and translation has played a substantial role both in the import of this genre into Turkish and its expansion in the recent decades. Self-help books on a range of issues including success, happiness and spirituality have been introduced to the Turkish culture through translation.

By presenting a succinct overview of the translation history of self-help in Turkish focusing on the early decades of the Republic after the Alphabet Reform (1928), the aim of this study is to reveal the emergence of a cultural field, in the sense theorized by Pierre Bourdieu, around this genre through translations. Exposing the early and long translation history of the genre in Turkish, the study will also confute

the arguments based on the general assumption that self-help is a recently established reading category, which emerged with the works written in Turkish. With this intention, first a very general portrayal of the history of self-help in the source culture, mainly the United States, will be offered by focusing on the main thematic trends and tendencies in the publishing field under concern. Then, in part three, the concept of “field” will be briefly presented, in the sense theorized by Pierre Bourdieu in his sociology of culture. Finally, in part four, after interpreting the data concerning the number of self-help books in Turkish offered by the Turkish National Library Catalogue, the emergence of a cultural field of self-help will be described through the translations of the English bestsellers. This description will be based on the bestselling works published in English in the self-help category and translated into Turkish.

2. A Brief History of the Self-help Literature in English

Before delving into the history of this extremely popular genre, it is required to explain “self-help” (or self-improvement) as a classification category used in the publishing world. Neither “self-help/self-improvement” nor its Turkish equivalent “kişisel gelişim,” is definitive enough as a category name at least in their representation in the book markets. Apparently, the expectation to find some clues for a better life on behalf of the readers have allowed any piece of literature or philosophy to be considered as a self-help source. In the book lists offered by the publishing companies in Turkey for instance, a wide range of different types of texts including literary, philosophical or religious works is grouped in this category as well as some self-help manuals. Generally speaking, however, a self-help book is briefly a guidebook that promises to improve one’s life through some principles and ideas. Self-help/self-improvement as a reading category comprises a variety of subjects ranging from guidance on childcare or relationships to success and motivation at personal and professional life. Popular introductory books such as “for Dummies” series, “how to” books on different topics and guides on spirituality are included in this category as well.

Regarding the origins of this genre, researchers generally agree that the roots of self-help lie in the traditions and values of the Protestant New England and the prescriptive guidelines of the Puritan leaders of the seventeenth century.¹ These works intended to teach their readers how to live in accordance with the Puritan framework incorporating some virtues such as “work, diligence and thrift” not only for their “personal satisfaction” but also “to do God’s will on Earth” (Starker, 2008, p. 14). Self-help books embrace a more secular perspective in the eighteenth century though, when they get progressively established as sources of practical knowledge in which a moral character is offered as the key way to all life’s benefits. It is towards the 1900s, when the books on “how to succeed” become more common. In the following years,

¹ See Cawelti, 1965; Starker, 1989/2008 and McGee, 2005.

the philosophy of self-help adopts an idealistic character with the popularity of the New Thought movement, which can be described as “a belief in the infinite potential of ‘mind-power’” (McGee, 2005, p. 35), where the content of the advice literature gets more engaged with positive thinking and spirituality. Although originally rooted in religion, the philosophy of New Thought appeared in the more secular realm with only slight modifications. In fact, some of its central ideas on the powers and potential of the human mind and the relation between personality and success managed to endure a third trend that affected the field of self-help, which was the rise of the discipline of Psychology (Starker, 2008, pp. 23-24). With the development of the discipline of Psychology, a number of titles appeared on almost any subject integrating a psychological standpoint, and some self-help authors even incorporated psychology and theology in their works after the 1st World War and during the Depression years. Indeed, religion and psychology constituted the two strongest leitmotifs in this literature, and though self-help books emerged on a variety of topics comprising sex and marriage in the nineteenth century and diet, health, pop theology, and pop psychology in the twentieth century, success always remained the most predominant topic² (Starker, 2008, pp. 14-146). As a result of social and economic changes and different interpretations of religious traditions through ages, Americans have had a changing philosophy of success, which also led to various approaches of the authors to the idea of self-improvement (Cawelti, 1965, p. 3).

3. The Concept of “Field” in Bourdieu’s Sociology of Culture

As self-help is a popular sociological phenomenon closely related with the social and political changes in the United States and in Turkey, a historical account on the translation of self-help books needs to take into consideration the sociological approaches to the analysis of translation. In fact, any analysis of translation may require a sociological perspective both for the depiction of the cultural field in which translation takes place and also for some other factors, particularly those related to agency. For this reason, Translation Studies scholars have proposed different theoretical frameworks to examine translation from a sociological point of view and to analyze agency in translation,³ and some conceptual tools introduced by Pierre Bourdieu, “habitus” in particular, have been employed frequently in sociological approaches to translation. Bourdieu’s theory of culture offers a comprehensive framework for the sociological analysis of translation and enables the explication of types of capital that shape a cultural field, translation products, their characteristics, their positions in this field and relations to other products, the agents including translators, the types of capital they possess, their trajectories in this and other fields, and their positions in terms of politics and poetics of translation. As the main purpose of this study is to shed light on the “genesis” and general development of the self-help

² A too concise summary from Starker 1989/2008, pp.14-146.

³ Pym, 1998; Hermans, 1999; Simeoni, 1998; Gouanvic, 2005; Heilbron and Sapiro, 2007; Wolf, 2007.

literature in Turkish and its respective cultural field, this study will mainly draw on the concept of “field” in this context.⁴

“Field” is the central concept in Bourdieu’s sociology of culture, as stated above, and a field of cultural production is not a fixed structure where the actions of human agents are destined to have a foreseeable set of results but its structure is always changing and subject to re-hierarchization. The dynamic character of the field stems from its own essence as it is composed of the struggle among agents over the ownership of capital and dominant positions. (Hanna, 2016, p. 5). Social space, on the other hand, is a broader category in this framework, which comprises multiple fields such as cultural, political or economic. The interaction among different fields is crucial to this sociological perspective in that any examination of a field of cultural production necessarily requires an analysis of the impact of the dynamics in the fields of power, such as politics and economy, over cultural production (Hanna, 2016, p. 22). Bourdieu employs a related notion “homology,” which is defined as “resemblance within difference” (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 106) to indicate how the fields of cultural production are “structurally and functionally interlinked” with the political or economic fields “in a way that affects their internal dynamics” (Hanna, 2016, p. 52).

In light of this explication, for the field of self-help, it is possible to identify some relations with other fields based on the content of the narratives produced in the self-help books, such as the fields of economy and that of business (which creates a particular discourse about success and a successful businessman/worker), the field of politics (liberal tendencies in the economy and capitalistic approaches which one way or another support or encourage the discourse of the business world), and the field of psychology (as self-help is closely associated with the discipline in content in the source culture).

Field is described as “a network of objective relations (...) between positions” by Bourdieu (1996, p. 231). It needs to be noted that these positions are “available to be occupied by members of the field,” “these positions and the relations between them can be objectively defined independently of the characteristics of those who occupy them,” and “the positions available in a field are distributed in oppositional terms” (Hanna, 2016, p. 25). For example, some positions that can be ascertained in the literary field are: novel versus poetry, social novel versus avant-garde novel, dominant versus dominated, consecrated versus novice etc. Positions also involve forms of grouping of individual producers (salons, writers’ unions, literary clubs, literary movements), and modes of production (private versus government publishers,

⁴ An in-depth explication of the field of translation under concern, including the analysis of the agents, positions and types of capital, is beyond the scope of this article, and therefore a limited discussion of the field theory is offered. A comprehensive explication of the field of success-based self-help, together with a thorough explanation of the field theory, is offered in Akdoğan-Özdemir (2017).

publishing in a prestigious book series for established writers versus publishing in a series for avant-garde writers, etc.) (Hanna, 2016, p. 25).

Admitting the fact that this study is based on a corpus of bestselling authors, and for this reason may provide limited data for some generalizations, it is still possible to identify positions in the self-help literature in Turkey in terms of the different subjects and approaches authors offer in these books. Different types of self-help such as success manuals, spirituality guides and books on health and diet can be considered as different positions in this field. It is also possible to observe their struggles for dominance. For instance, although success-based self-help books were very popular in the beginning of the 1990s, the dominant self-help discourse has shifted towards a spirituality-oriented theme in the 2000s.

Bourdieu describes different types of struggles among the agents, that is, the individuals and institutions in a field, over different forms of capitals and positions. The boundaries of the cultural field are demarcated by means of the definition of the conditions of true membership, the classification of genres and modes of production within the literary field, and the invention of new genres and the extinction of the old ones (Bourdieu 1996). To exemplify, the boundaries of the literature or popular literature alter when a new genre arises; or the boundaries of the field of translation change when a different kind, such as literary translation or scientific translation, is the point of interest for translators (Hanna, 2016, p.21-22). It is the case with the formation of the self-help genre in Turkish. After this genre was introduced to the Turkish culture through translations, not only has it developed into one of the most popular reading categories but it has also led to the creation of indigenous works in this field. Obviously, the emergence and especially development of the self-help literature in Turkish opened a new field for translation and changed the boundaries of popular literature and those of translated popular literature forever.⁵ Today it is possible to see some self-help books in the bestseller lists of most bookstores in Turkey and the extreme popularity of some self-help authors also imply the struggles between the agents and institutions for dominance in this field. An example of such struggles among different publishing houses in the 1930s will also be depicted in section 4.4 in the discussion on translations.

The members of a field also draw its boundaries by the acts of naming in order to describe themselves in opposition to members of other fields. For Bourdieu, the presence or absence of a particular group in the social universe depends on “its capacity to get itself recognized, to get itself noticed and admitted, and so to win a place in the social order” (cited in Hanna, 2016, p. 25; Bourdieu, 1984: 480-1). A nameless social body possesses an uncertain existence and its members aim to avoid

⁵ These arguments have been discussed in Akdoğan-Özdemir 2017 comprehensively through different examples. The immense popularity of self-help books in Turkish has also been the subject of other studies in different fields such as Sociology, (See Özdemir 2007) and Education (See Ekşi 2012).

being in such a status because their destiny is “bound up with the words that designate them”(ibid.). In order for them to be acknowledged by other existing groups, they need the capacity to “mobilize around a name,” and “to mobilize the union that makes them strong, around the unifying power of a word” (as cited in Hanna, 2016, p. 25; Bourdieu, 1984, pp. 480-1). It is interesting to recognize, as Sameh Hanna observes, “the name that any particular social group accepts for itself is the outcome of a struggle among its members. Individual members have their own *vision* of the identity of the group, which they seek to impose through the act of naming and turn into a legitimate *division* that distinguishes the members of that group from members of other groups” (2016, p. 25). It is stated in the research on self-help in Turkey that the person who used the current name of the field in Turkish, that is “kişisel gelişim” (Turkish equivalent of “self-improvement”) for the first time is Doğan Cüceloğlu (Özdemir, 2007, p. 171). Cüceloğlu is a famous Turkish Psychology professor, one of the prominent names of this cultural field and a significant agent of translation in the history of self-help in Turkish.⁶ Cüceloğlu’s naming the field of self-help, especially the sources which promise and guide for a better and more successful life in different aspects, as “kişisel gelişim” is not a coincidental choice. “Kişisel gelişim” can be translated into English both as “self-improvement,” which is the other title of the field in English, and “personal development,” which evokes a scientific category. This naming which suggests a scientific domain absolutely reflects Cüceloğlu’s vision about the identity of the field and the members of the group.

In this part the concept of “field” is explained based on Bourdieu’s cultural theory and some evidential information is given to show why “self-help” can be regarded as a cultural field. As the main aim of this study is to illustrate the emergence of this cultural field through translations, in what follows, a concise account of the translation history of self-help in Turkish⁷ will be presented, which would not only demonstrate that self-help has existed as a cultural field since the 1930s, a fact overlooked in other scholarly work on self-help in Turkey ignoring the translation history (Özdemir, 2007; Ekşi 2011), but would also reveal the main trends this field has gone through in terms of theme and focus of the texts.

4. The Emergence of a Cultural Field through Translations

Self-help books in general and the success manuals in particular became and have remained extremely popular in the Turkish culture⁸. This research into the history of self-help in Turkish with a focus on the period between 1928 (the date of the adoption of the new Turkish alphabet) and 2000 reveals that some early examples of the

⁶ Agency of Cüceloğlu, his works and contributions in this field have been analyzed in Akdoğan-Özdemir 2017.

⁷ This study is based on the research I carried out in the scope of my doctoral dissertation (Akdoğan Özdemir 2017).

⁸ See Özdemir 2007; Ekşi 2012 and Akdoğan-Özdemir 2017 for different studies on the subject.

twentieth-century self-help books appeared in Turkish soon after they were published in English.⁹ Already in the 1940s, mostly works written by prominent authors of self-help on a range of subjects, including health, marriage life and success were imported into the Turkish culture through translation.¹⁰ The 1990s marked a dramatic increase in the amount of self-help books and the sum of translated works generally outnumbered works written in Turkish. Since the 1990s, self-help has eventually established itself as a popular field in the Turkish publishing industry, and translations continued to outstrip indigenous works in the first decade of the 2000s.¹¹ Despite the dominance of some Turkish bestselling “*kişisel gelişim*”¹² authors and gurus in the media, there still continues an intensive flow of self-help works of all kinds through translation mainly from the English language.

In this section, first the research methodology underlying the main findings of the study will be explained, and then, the data on the number of self-help books offered by the Turkish National Library Catalogue will be interpreted. After explicating the impacts of other factors on the popularity of this genre and formation of a respective field of production in later decades, the emergence of the field of self-help will be described through the translation history of the English bestsellers in Turkish.

4.1. Methodology

The first step in this research process was to clarify the scope and content of the self-help genre in English in the twentieth century, and then, to reveal what has been presented to the Turkish readers in this category. By drawing on the historical research on the subject of self-help in the American culture, first a list of the English bestsellers has been compiled, including their authors in the twentieth century. Then, a catalogue search has been carried out in the Turkish National Library to find out which of these bestselling works were translated into Turkish and when they were translated for the first time. These findings have led to a list of the bestselling authors whose self-help works were translated into Turkish between 1928 and 2000, which will be presented in section 4.4. It is obvious from this list that self-help books on a range of topics such as health, diet and success were offered to Turkish readers through translations. After the catalogue search, the translations published in the early decades of the period under concern have also been examined in terms of content. These translations will be portrayed through concise explanations and book covers in section 4.4.

Although the focus of this study is translations, the works written in Turkish and classified as self-help between 1928-1950 have also been taken into consideration.

⁹ See Table 2 for the names of the self-help authors and when their bestselling works were translated into Turkish for the first time.

¹⁰ The oldest works written by Turkish authors under the category name “*kişisel gelişim*” (Turkish equivalent of “self-improvement”) go back to 1940s in the National Library Catalogue.

¹¹ Ekşi 2012, p. 208.

¹² The Turkish equivalent of “self-improvement.”

These works are classified as “kişisel gelişim” (self-help) today but the Turkish category name “kişisel gelişim” obviously did not exist when these works were published since it has become widely used only after the 1990s. When the content of these books are examined, it is observed that they were not necessarily published within a specific category but some of them appeared in health, philosophy or psychology series while others were issued with the purpose of educating the general public. Some of these Turkish works will be presented in section 4.4 as well.

4.2. Numerical Data about Self-help Books

The development of a new category of books in Turkish is clearly observed in figures presented below, in Table 1, based on the data offered in the catalogue of National Library of Turkey.¹³

Table 1

The Number of Books Listed in the Category of “Kişisel Gelişim” (Self-Improvement) in the Turkish National Library Online Catalogue

Years	Number of Books
1928-1950	14
1951-1970	10
1971-1990	9
1990-2000	32
2000-2010	1160
2010-2015	1559
2016	2614
2017	3289
2018	3692

According to the Turkish National Library Catalogue, between 1928 and 1950, there are just fourteen books categorized as “kişisel gelişim” (self-improvement¹⁴), and four of them are reprints; and among the ten books, seven are translations. From 1951 to 1970, there are only ten books with two reprints and four translations; and between 1971 and 1990, there are just nine books comprising one reprint and four translations. From the 1990s, when the success manuals started to become popular, to 2010s, thousands of books have been published in this field, embracing both translations and indigenous works. Between 1990 and 2000, there are thirty-two books including twenty-three translations classified under the self-improvement category in the Turkish National Library, and between 2000 and 2010, this number rapidly goes

¹³ Numerical data is given for until 2018.

¹⁴ In Turkish “kişisel gelişim” is the literal equivalent of “self-improvement” and it is the common name used for the category of self-help.

beyond one thousand. This is a dramatic increase that continues in the same trend between 2010 and 2015, when the number reaches over one thousand five hundred. In 2016, the number of Turkish self-help books under the subject heading “kişisel gelişim” (self-improvement) is more than two thousand five hundred, and since 2017, it has been somewhere over three thousands in the National Library of Turkey.¹⁵ Compared to the US, where you can even find self-help guides on how to write a self-help book, the figures might seem respectively low, but the current trends in the Turkish publishing industry imply that the number will continue to increase in future years.

4.3. The Impacts of the other Fields on the Development of a Field of Self-help

The emergence of self-help as a popular genre leading to the formation of a corresponding cultural field is closely related to the dynamics of other fields, as Bourdieu suggested, particularly to the economic trends, consumerism and social transformations in the age of capitalism. Before depicting the details of the translation history revealing the appearance of a field of self-help in the Turkish culture, it is worth remembering some political and economic changes in the history of Turkey that have been associated with the progress of this field, especially with the striking increase in the book numbers after the 1990s.

The major social, political and economic changes in the history of Turkey have comprised the subject matter of several analyses across disciplines. For example, a comprehensive research has been brought forward by İker Özdemir, whose doctoral study offers an in-depth analysis of the relation between the political and economic history of Turkey and the communication approaches in the guidebooks and seminars on personal development and management after the 1980s (2007, pp. 157-177). Providing a detailed historical account of the social and industrial changes through different phases of capitalism in the world, particularly in the United States (Özdemir, 2007, pp. 42-128), Özdemir analyzes the socio-economic factors that triggered the expansion of these movements both in the publishing sector and the training institutions in Turkey. Drawing on various sources from Sociology, Politics and Economics focusing on Turkey, Özdemir not only describes Turkey’s transition to a free market economy in the 1980s, but also elucidates the transformation of the business world that adopted some quality management and human resources methodologies, forcing many professionals in Turkey to get involved in the field of personal development (Özdemir, pp. 2007, pp. 157-177). Moreover, Özdemir also underlines the contribution of the media in this transition process who promoted and enhanced some management and self-improvement discourses frequently (2007, p. 169), which again indicates the effect of another field, media, on the development of the field of self-help. Another example is Rifat N. Bali, who remarkably depicts these

¹⁵ The figure was last checked in the National Library Catalogue on January 10, 2020.

transformations in his *Tarz-ı Hayat'tan Life Style'a: Yeni Seçkinler, Yeni Mekanlar, Yeni Yaşamlar*. Turkish society went through substantial changes in their lifestyles, trends and tendencies with the liberal economic policies that came after the pressure of the 1980 military coup (Bali, 2009). The new management culture created a new generation of businessmen as well as initiating a new business ethics which regards the adaptation to market pragmatism prior to individual professional ethics (Kozanoğlu, 1993, pp. 182-185).

Apart from the general sociological and economic factors that had impacts on the Turkish publishing world, after Turkey fell under the influence of capitalism through its transition to free market economy, self-improvement books, mainly the success manuals, started to represent a pertinent field of reading for the Turkish readers. The next section will shed light on the roots of this field by exposing the early translations of this genre and its gradual formation through years.

4.4. Turkish Translations in the Field of Self-help

The research findings based on the Turkish translations of English bestsellers illustrate that some popular self-help works were translated into Turkish in the 1930s and the 1940s. Although this genre did not grow much until the 1980s and 1990s, there existed a cultural field mainly due to the translation of English bestselling self-help works into Turkish in addition to some translations from French. From the 1990s on, not only has the scope of this category expanded in Turkish, but the genre has also got diversified in terms of its subject matters. As a result, self-help has both become an essential category of reading in the catalogues of bookstores and also created a large publishing sector in Turkey. The following table illustrates the names of the bestselling authors of self-help in the twentieth century and when their works were translated into Turkish for the first time.

Table 2

*Bestselling Self-Help Authors in Turkish Translation**

Decades	Names of the authors whose bestselling works were translated into Turkish for the first time
1920s	1. Stopes, M.C. Carmichael
1930s	1. Carnegie, Dale 2. Fosdick, Emerson

1940s	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Coue, Emile 2. Holt, Emmett 3. Link, Henry 4. Velde; Theodore H. Vande
1950s	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Peale, Norman Vincent 2. Rabbi Liebman, Joshua Loth
1960s	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Brown, Helen G. 2. Cameron, John 3. Hauser, Gayelord 4. Smiles, Samuel 5. Spock, Benjamin
1970s	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Berne, Eric 2. Chesser, Eustace 3. Lindlahr, Victor H. 4. Newman, Mildred and Bernard Berkovitz 5. Reuben, David 6. Sheehy, Gail 7. Toffler, Alvin
1980s	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Friedan, Betty 2. Galbraith, John Kenneth 3. Johnson, Spencer 4. Kenneth Blanchard 5. Korda, Michael 6. Peters, Thomas J. 7. Sinclair, Baker Samm 8. Tarnover, Herman 10. Stilman, Irwin Maxwell 11. Waterman, Robert H.
1990s	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Carlson, Richard 2. Chopra, Deepak 3. Covey, Stephen R. 4. Dyer, Wayne W. 5. Fisher, Roger 6. Forward, W. Ury 6. Susan and Joan Torre 7. Fulghum, Robert 8. Greenwald, Jerry 9. Hickman, Craig R. 10. Michael A. Silva 11. Hill, Napoleon 12. Maltz, Maxwell 13. Norwood, Robin 14. Peck, Scott 15. Robbins, Anthony 16. Steinem, Gloria

* Compiled based on Starker (2008), Mcgee (2005) and the Turkish National Library Catalogue.

In the first decades of the Turkish Republic, that is, in the 1930s and 1940s, the translations from some French authors, mainly on the subject of health served as

the self-help guides. For instance, the books of Victor Pauchet (also written as Viktor Poşe), a French surgeon, were offered as the first self-help resources for the Turkish readers, including *Genç Kalınız* (1929), *Nikbin Olunuz* (1936) and *Düşünceler ve Öğütler* (1938). Émilé Coué, an internationally famous figure in this field also appeared in a series of books on health (Sihhi Eserler Serisi 9) and was published by Ahmet Halit Kitabevi in 1942. Coué's *Telkin Usulile Kendine Hâkim Olmanın Yolları* was translated into Turkish by Hüviyet Bekir.



Figure 1. The Cover of Coué's *Telkin Usulile Kendine Hakim Olmanın Yolları*

In addition, the works of some bestselling authors in English were published in Turkish from the 1930s, even in the 1920s, before the Alphabet Reform (1928). For example, M. C. Carmichael Stopes was in Turkish (in Arabic alphabet) in 1926 with his work on marriage life. Some classical works of the self-help literature in English, such as the works of Dale Carnegie and Norman Vincent Peale were translated in the 1930s and 1940s in Turkey. Dale Carnegie's *How to Win Friends and Influence People* (1936) was translated in 1938 (*Dost Kazanmak ve İnsanlar Üzerinde Tesir Yapmak*) and *Public Speaking and Influencing Men in Business* (1937) in 1939 (*Söz Söylemek ve İş Başarmak Sanatı*) by Ömer Rıza Doğrul¹⁶, an important figure in terms of translation history of

¹⁶ Ömer Rıza Doğrul's works and contributions in this field have been analyzed in Akdoğan-Özdemir 2017.

this era. Some passages from the books of both above-mentioned authors, along with some other authors, were published in *Bütün Dünya*, a popular magazine of the day.¹⁷



Figure 2. The Covers of Carnegie's *How To Win Friends and Influence People* and its Turkish translation *Dost Kazanmak ve İnsanlar Üzerinde Tesir Yapmak*

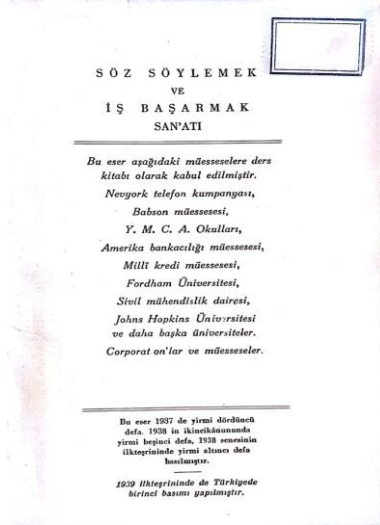


Figure 3. The Title Page of Carnegie's *Söz Söylemek ve İş Başarmak Sanatı*

¹⁷ See *Bütün Dünya* 1948 August (7), September (8), November (10) and 1949 January (12) for the translated texts of Carnegie and *Bütün Dünya* 1949 October (21) 1952 June (53) for the translated texts of Peale.

In the following decades, other leading representatives of the genre were rendered in Turkish one after another, such as H. Emerson Fosdick in 1934, Emmett Holt in 1944, Henry Link in 1949, and Theodore H. Vande Velde in 1944. Another well-known self-help author, namely Orison Swett Marden, one of the leading examples of the New Thought movement, who also founded the *Success*, the first magazine in the success-based self-help, was translated into Turkish in 1946. The 1950s would have some other bestselling names in Turkish, including Richard Carlson who was first translated into Turkish in 1955, Norman Vincent Peale in 1951, and (Rabbi) Joshua Loth Liebman in 1952. Peale, who presented a more religious type of self-help, was in Turkish with his *İman Kurtuluş Yolu* (*Faith Is the Answer* 1940 written together with Dr. Smiley Blanton) in 1951. An alternative example of religion-oriented self-help, *İsa'nın Şahsiyeti* (*The Man from Nazareth As His Contemporaries Saw Him* 1949) by Harry Emerson Fosdick was translated by Sofi Huri and published by Amerikan Bord Neşriyat Dairesi in 1950. Dr. Joshua Loth Liebman was another bestselling author in the American culture, whose *Kalb Huzuru* (*Peace of Mind: Insights on Human Nature That Can Change Your Life*) was again translated by Sofi Huri in 1952.

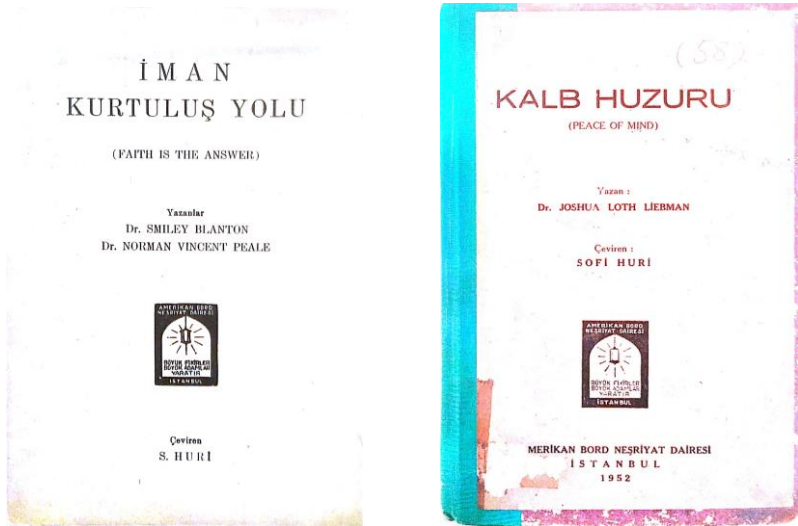
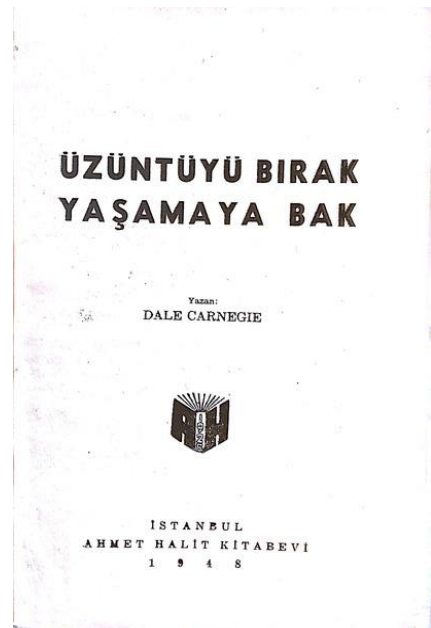
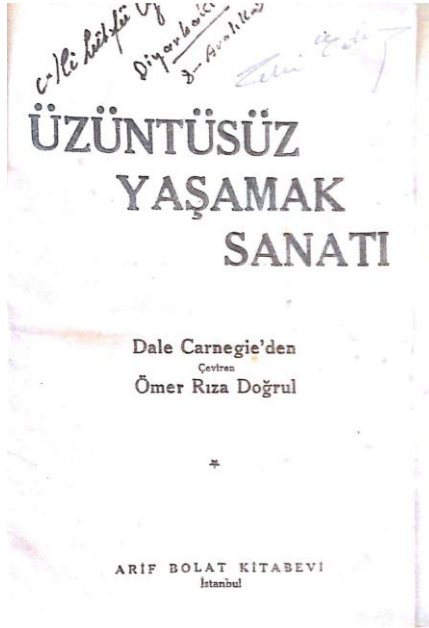


Figure 4. The Covers of Blanton and Peale's *İman Kurtuluş Yolu* and Liebman's *Kalb Huzuru*

The publication of all these works mentioned above indicates that self-help emerged as a field in the 1930s in the cultural atmosphere of Turkey. Another reason for regarding self-help as a field in the Turkish culture is the dynamics that reveal the struggles among the actors representing this genre. It is worth noting that a well-

known translator of this era, namely Ömer Rıza Doğrul rendered two different translations of the same work by Dale Carnegie, that is, *How to Stop Worrying and Start Living* for two different publishers, Ahmet Halit and Arif Bolat. This clearly proves that there were some struggles for dominance and some kinds of capital among the actors of the field. Interestingly enough, there was a third translation of the same work, that is, *How to Stop Worrying and Start Living* published by Güven Basımevi in the same year. The third version was translated by Semih Yazıcıoğlu and printed with the same title Ahmet Halit Kitabevi Publishing used, that is, *Üzüntüyü Bırak Yaşamaya Bak* in 1948. The publisher, Halit Yaşaroğlu, complains about this situation in a note he writes at the end of Doğrul's translation by his company's publication (*Üzüntüsüz Yaşamak Sanatı* 295-296).¹⁸ All these details about the popularity of Carnegie's work and the competition among publishing houses demonstrate the struggles in a newly forming cultural field.



¹⁸ The three translations, two of which are by the same translator, Ömer Rıza Doğrul, published in the same year are: 1. Carnegie, Dale. (1948). *Üzüntüsüz Yaşamak Sanatı*. Trans. Ömer Rıza Doğrul. İstanbul: Arif Bolat Kitabevi. 2. Carnegie, Dale (1948). *Üzüntüyü Bırak Yaşamaya Bak*. Trans. Ömer Rıza Doğrul. İstanbul: Ahmet Halit Kitabevi. 3. Carnegie, Dale (1948). *Üzüntüyü Bırak Yaşamaya Bak*. Trans. Semih Yazıcıoğlu. İstanbul: Güven Basımevi.

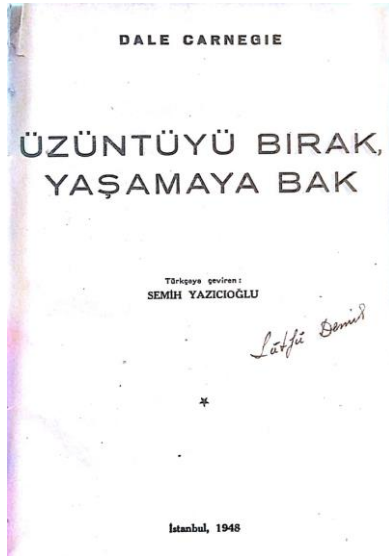


Figure 5. The Covers of Three Different Translations of Carnegie's *How To Stop Worrying and Start Living*

Indeed, the popularity of Carnegie was clearly evident in 1948 in one of the newspapers, *Cumhuriyet*, who advertised the book with a “sold out” label as is shown in the figure below.



Figure 6. The Newspaper Clip about Dale Carnegie¹⁹

¹⁹ I would like to thank Prof. Şehnaz Tahir Gürçağlar for kindly providing this photo for this study.

In the 1960s, the self-help translations comprised the works of Helen G. Brown, John Cameron, Gayelord Hauser as well as Benjamin Spock. Not only self-help experts but also some management gurus would appear in the field through translation in the 1970s, such as Eric Berne and Alvin Toffler in addition to Victor H. Lindlahr, Mildred Newman, Bernard Berkovitz, David Reuben and Gail Sheehy. Samuel Smiles's *Self-help*, the work that gave its name to this genre in English, was translated by S. Süreyya Berkem and published by Yapı Kredi Bank in 1961. In addition to the above-mentioned forerunners of self-help in English, the translations from Erich Fromm, Gayelord Hauser and Bertrand Russell were also published in this period, which have been classified as self-help books.

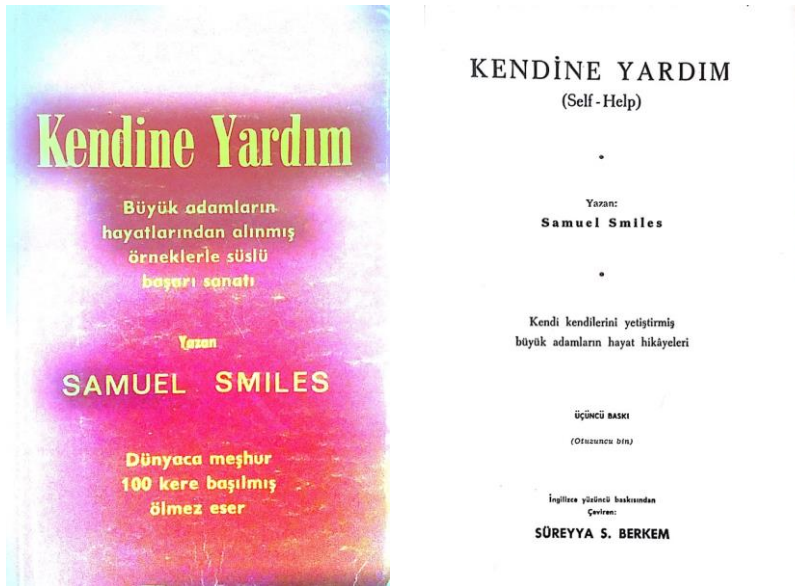


Figure 7. The Cover and Title Page of Samuel Smiles' *Kendine yardım*

It should be noted that as well as some names translated into Turkish and categorized as self-help (kişisel gelişim) in the Turkish National Library Catalogue, such as Fritz Pachtner, Herbert N. Gasson, Alexis Carrel, Daniel H. Bonus and Waldo Emerson, there are also some Turkish authors, namely İsmail Hakkı Baltacıođlu, Murat Ergun and Ahmet Kaya, whose works are classified in this category. These include *Gençlere Öğütlerim* (1955) by Ahmet Kaya, a school administrator, *Gençler için En Büyük Tehlikeler* (1939) by İsmail Hakkı Baltacıođlu, a famous Turkish man of education, and *Aktif Metotlar* (1953), a teaching methodology book for teachers by Halis Özgü. All these works provide examples of advice literature written with an educational point of

view and a nationalist stance. Reha Oğuz Türkkan is another prominent name, who is considered as one of the founders of self-help in Turkey (Sezik, 2000, p. 166), who also wrote extensively on the history of Turks, Turkism and nationalism. Türkkan's self-help books cover the subjects of memory techniques, fast reading, strategies for easy learning, and persuasion, all of which he formerly studied and practiced in the US.

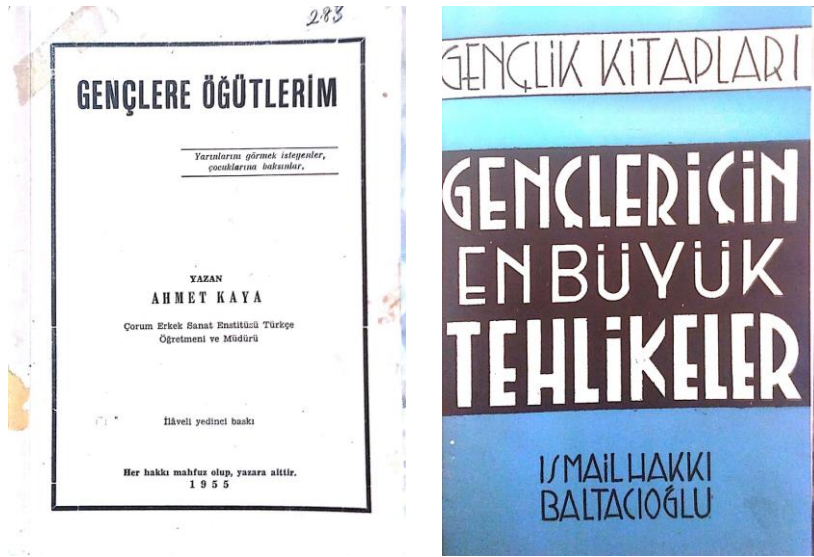


Figure 8. The Covers of *Gençlere Öğütlerim* by Ahmet Kaya and *Gençler için En Büyük Tehlikeler* by İsmail Hakkı Baltacıoğlu

In the 1990s, along with some important changes in the political, social and cultural dynamics in Turkey, as elaborated in part 4.3, the idea of “kişisel gelişim” (self-improvement), especially the success-based self-help books in Turkish, starts to become quite popular. Both Ekşi and Özdemir, the Turkish researchers who analyzed the self-help phenomenon in Turkey in different contexts, cite the publication of Anthony Robbins’ *Sınırsız Güç: Kişisel Başarıda Zirveye Ulaşmanın Yolu* (1994 *Unlimited Power: The New Science of Personal Achievement*), a self-help book on Neurolinguistic Programming (NLP), as a turning point, which accelerated the spread of the idea of self-help and increased the number of publications in this industry²⁰ (Özdemir, 2007, p. 172; Ekşi, 2011, p. 120). It was in the same period, when the term “kişisel gelişim”

²⁰ They make this claim by referring to Sezik (Sezik 2000, p. 167).

(self-improvement), the current label of the field, was introduced by Cüceloğlu and became common (Özdemir, 2007, p. 171).²¹

Regarding the institutions that were active in this field, Ahmet Halit Kitabevi and Amerikan Bord Neşriyat Dairesi are the two main publishing houses who transferred the self-help books into Turkish at the beginning, that is, in the 1930s and 1940s. Some pioneering publishers who joined the field after the 1940s and stayed until the 1980s were Arif Bolat, Altın Kitaplar and Varlık among others. More others followed them in later years, including İnkılap and Sistem, where Doğan Cüceloğlu worked as the editor of self-improvement books and initiated the translation of several works. The proliferation of self-help books came together with a growing diversification of the tendencies of the publishing houses, which also affected their strategies in classifying and positioning self-help books. The books in this category have been classified under the heading of Psychology or Philosophy by different publishing houses in the early phases, and they were also categorized in series. Framing self-help books under more academic titles was clearly a legitimizing strategy for the publishers, which also stemmed from the professional domains of some source authors and translators/editors. Although the genre has established itself as a broad and autonomous reading category since the 1990s, publishers still make use of the same strategies.

The field has expanded to such a great extent since the beginning of the 2000s that “kişisel gelişim” (self-help) is a big book industry in Turkey today, in which thousands of translations and indigenous works are offered to the readers on different subjects including success, happiness, health, and spirituality. Several translations of self-help have been bestsellers in Turkey since then, such as Robin S. Sharma’s *Ferrarisini Satan Bilge*, *Ermiş Sörfçü ve Patron*, *Sen Ölünce Kim Ağlar*; Stephen Covey’s *Etkili İnsanların 7 Alışkanlığı*, and Rhonda Bryne’s *The Secret*. The publishing field has been so lively and productive that it has also generated its local Turkish pioneers. In addition to famous Psychology professors like Doğan Cüceloğlu or Üstün Dökmen, popular authors such as Mümin Sekman, Nil Gün, and Metin Hara have become idols of this field, and have been read and followed by thousands.

Despite the general impression of a commercial genre offering easy solutions, self-help has become such an indispensable part of current life trends that, even research focused publishing houses have started to make room for some academic versions of self-help. A very recent example of popular but academic self-help in Turkey and in the world is Alain de Botton, whose books have been rendered by Sel in Turkey. Botton has written both novels and essayistic books on different subjects, which are described as “philosophy of everyday life” in his website, *The School of Life*,

²¹ The term “kişisel gelişim” denotes a more scientific category, implying psychology, compared to the phrase “kendine yardım,” the literal Turkish equivalent of the category name “self-help,” which is not a common denotation for this field in Turkish.

(www.theschooloflife.com). He also runs a school called “The School of Life,” which has been translated into Turkish and represented by Bilgi University as “Hayat Okulu.” Scholars of different fields including philosophy, psychology and literature offer seminars here based on some questions of everyday life such as “how to make up your mind,” “how to balance work with life,” and “how to cultivate resilience.” Another instance of academic self-help is offered by İletişim, a prestigious Turkish publishing house, generally associated with research-based publications rather than popular literature. İletişim has a series called “Psykhe,” which presents some self-help titles written by experts or scholars in the field such as *Aşık Olmak: Sevgililerimizi Neye Göre Seçeriz (Falling in Love: Why We Choose the Lovers We Choose)* by Ayala Malach Pines, *Mutsuz Olmak: Bir Yüreklendirme (Unglücklich Sein: Eine Ermutigung)* by Wilhelm Schmid, *Kendine Saygı: Başkalarıyla Daha İyi Geçinmek için Kendini Sevmek (L’Estime de Soi)* by Christophe Andre and François Lelord, and *Zor bir Ailede Büyüme: Geçmiş Onarmanın ve Hayatını Geri Kazanmanın Yolları (Toxic Parents: Overcoming their Hurtful Legacy and Reclaiming Your Life)* by Susan Forward and Craig Buck (www.iletisim.com.tr/dizi/psykhe/150). This change is parallel to the observations of some critics who argue that the self-help genre is “seeing a scientific resurgence” in the source culture (Baker L., 2014). Another significant change in this field in Turkey is that self-help topics have also started to include children, after the common advice literature for the youth. A remarkable example of this tendency is *Çocuklar Nasıl Başarır?* (2017 How Would the Children Succeed?) written by Mümin Sekman and Dr. Bahar Eriş and published by Alfa.

5. Conclusion

Self-help, a widespread phenomenon of modern times all around the world, has become an extremely popular genre in the Turkish book markets, and developed into a large field of cultural production in recent decades. The aim of this study is not to offer a full-fledged analysis of this field, which is beyond the scope of an article, but to shed light on its genesis by revealing the translation history of the genre under concern. The study offers a succinct account of the translation history of self-help in Turkish by focusing on the translations of bestsellers. Employing the concept of “field” elaborated by Pierre Bourdieu in his sociology of culture, the study demonstrates that self-help as a field of production emerged in the cultural atmosphere of Turkey in the 1930s and 1940s mainly through translations. This newly emerging genre gradually developed towards the 1990s and went through a remarkable expansion in the following decades, mostly due to the translated works as well as works written in Turkish. The number of translations continues to exceed the amount of indigenous works in the first decade of 2000s (Ekşi 2012) and it seems this tendency will continue in a similar fashion. The study also challenges some scholarly analyses that associate the beginning of self-help

literature in Turkish with the works of some Turkish authors by totally ignoring the translation history.

A field of cultural production is a dynamic entity in Bourdieu's framework, composed of the struggles over the ownership of capital and dominant positions (Bourdieu 1996). To exemplify, the producers of self-help today, that is, the publishing houses, authors, translators, and even the training institutions, all strive to gain dominant positions and some amounts of capital in this field. It is possible to observe their struggles for dominance and the ownership of capital and positions in their publishing and marketing strategies. As for different positions, diverse approaches in self-help stand out at different periods, such as success-oriented self-help in the 1990s or spirituality-based self-help in the 2000s. In order to show that the emergence of this field can be traced back to the 1930s and 1940s, the study presents an early case of struggles among some Turkish publishing houses over the translation of a work written by a prominent self-help author, Dale Carnegie. The popularity of the author and the competition among the publishing houses are clearly evident in the publisher's note attached to the translation (*Üzüntüsüz Yaşamak Sanatı* 295-296) and in the newspaper clip showing the translation as sold-out, all of which presented in section 4.4. Agency is another major component of Bourdieu's field theory and in this study, Ömer Rıza Doğrul, the leading translator of the period and the translator of the above-mentioned work, is given as an example of an agent of translation. The study also offers the covers of the early translations, which are suggestive of a newly forming publishing domain and reading category for Turkish readers.

A field of cultural production is always in relation with other fields for Bourdieu, that is, the dynamics in the fields of politics, power and economy affect the fields of cultural production (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). By drawing on some sociological and historical analyses on self-help and on Turkey, the study also touches upon the underlying factors behind the expansion of this field in the 1990s. Major changes in the social, economic and political realms in Turkey led to a dramatic increase in the publication of the success-based self-help guides and a major expansion in the field of self-help in this decade. This dramatic increase in the number of publications is indicative of the ongoing dynamics of self-help as a field of cultural production since its early phases. The naming of the field in the 1990s as "kişisel gelişim" by Prof. Doğan Cüceloğlu, one of the prominent figures in the field, is also an implication regarding its dynamics.

The immense popularity of self-help as a reading category is clearly reflected in the book markets in Turkey and readers are offered various sources on a number of topics ranging from health and diet to success, spirituality and relationships. The dominance of translations is also obvious in this genre despite the abundance of the indigenous works and wide reputation of some Turkish authors in this field. Indeed, a closer look on the early sources of Turkish self-help brings to light the long translation history of the genre and the role of translations in its growth. Very early examples of

the self-help genre, that is, some bestsellers of the American culture were rendered in Turkish soon after they were published in English. The wide interest of the readers and the quick approval of this new reading category were also reflected in the struggles among publishers, verifying the formation of a cultural field. Not only the numbers of translations and indigenous works have increased in later decades, but the field has also got diversified in terms of topics and approaches. Admitting the fact that this study is based on a corpus of the translated bestsellers in the genre and therefore may present limited information, it explicitly presents the long translation history underlying the formation of a new cultural field.

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