Mapping Nominal Categories of the Misdeeds Frames

5.1 Introduction

The frame semantics study of translation techniques in the Peshitta to Ezekiel 1–24 thus far has focused on techniques employed by the Peshitta translator in rendering frames evoked by selected verbs. We have found these verbs to instantiate certain frames or events with which Frame Elements (FES) of various types were associated. Alongside these verbs, the mapping of TGrs (Theme-Goal relators) became another subject of study, though to a limited extent. In the present chapter, a slightly different word class, that of nominal categories, will be the focus of discussion. Nominal categories or nouns in general tend to pose a unique challenge to the frame semantics analysis of translation techniques, as the following study will demonstrate. The analysis in the present study will follow the outline presented below:

I. Introductory discussions to the study of nominal categories from a frame semantics approach.
II. Analysis of selected nominal categories from an ICM perspective.
III. Analysis of selected nominal categories from a frame semantics perspective.
IV. Analysis of the way selected nominal categories were mapped into P-Ez.

5.2 The Study of Nominal Categories using Frame Semantics

Due to their essential nature, most nouns tend to present different semantic information, as compared to verbal word classes. Further, nouns tend to proliferate frames, as opposed to verbs in general. From the preceding chapters it has become apparent that frame semantics alone may not be able to account for the semantics of every FE in a speech event. This notion will be explained in detail subsequently.

The following example may highlight the challenge that still remains when analysing translations from a frame semantics approach. The frame evoked by
the verb נתן in the Hebrew sentence below (excerpted from Ezekiel 3:20) can be understood as a PLACING frame within the linguistic culture of the Hebrew of Ezekiel.

5(a)
MT ונתתי מכשוף לפניו
TR And I place a stumbling block before him . . .

One can easily understand a PLACING frame by observing that the verb נתן instantiates a GIVING frame. However, seeing that the Recipient is not a sentient being, but a spacial configuration or an object juxtaposed to a sentient being, one then understands the LU as evoking a PLACING frame. The TGr (Theme—Goal relator) in this exemplary sentence helps one to understand this as a PLACING frame, rather than typically a GIVING frame. The insight that the illustration sentence 5(a) above is referring to a PLACING frame is reached despite the fact that the reader may have limited understanding of what the Theme FE מכשוף (stumbling block) actually denotes. The only facts available to the reader are the necessary minimal information that the FE has to be a transferrable object that represents the Theme FE.

It is unnecessary to have an in-depth knowledge of what the Theme FE in sentence 5(a) denotes, in order to understand a PLACING frame in that sentence. This can be demonstrated by the fact that one easily can replace the Theme FE מכשוף by any other noun (e.g., לחם [bread], חרב [sword] or ספר [book]), and still invoke a PLACING frame in all these cases.

Furthermore, it also becomes clear that the essential nature of the Theme FE麦克שוף provides little help in identifying the frame type, which is pointed out in this case as the PLACING frame. There certainly are finer nuances, which frame semantics can track, that each of the mentioned Theme FEs may bring to the PLACING frame in specific contexts. For example, the placing of bread before a person may be an act of serving a meal, the placing of a sword, a call to go to battle and the placing of a book, an invitation to consult a written document. However, these same Theme FEs can be removed from the PLACING frame and be placed in a totally different context to contribute to meaning in totally different frames. Any one of the above-mentioned Theme FEs can validly be employed in a COMMERCIAL TRANSACTION frame, for example. Thus, a single noun can be employed in various frames. Word classes such as verbs, are normally incapable of doing that. This observation about nouns implies that nouns generally pose a challenge in speech contexts when analysed from the point of view of semantic frames.