The Concept of ‘Grammatical Words’ as Reflected in the Works of Rabbi Abraham ibn Ezra

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Abstract


Ibn Ezra did not use the grammatical terms prevailing in modern Hebrew, such as ‘mylm ḅdqwqwt ‘grammatical words’, ‘mylw ṭḥṣ ‘prepositions’, ‘mylw ḥbdwr or ‘mylw ḥṣwr ‘conjunctions’, etc., but sorted these words into groups that he labelled ‘bdym ‘slaves’, ‘mlwt ‘nyyn ‘words of matter’, and ‘lwtywt ‘ḥr ‘letters of matter’, ‘mlwt ‘f ‘m ‘words of sense’ and ‘mlwt ḏwq ‘words of adhesion’.

These terms appeared in his writings as the topic and context required. Examination of Ibn Ezra’s writings shows that by these terms he meant the words that constitute a third word class, neither nouns nor verbs. This class includes prepositions (independent and citlic), conjunctions, adverbs and interjections. The definitions change from one work to another, as do the groups of words that the labels refer to, so that some grammatical words may belong to more than one group according to Ibn Ezra’s definitions.

Introduction

The present essay is concerned with one of the delicate grammatical issues in the study of Rabbi Abraham ibn Ezra’s language, and redeﬁnes the concept ‘grammatical words’ as reﬂected in Ibn Ezra’s writings overall. The deﬁnition of this concept was based on an investigation of all of Ibn Ezra’s writings: (1) translations from Arabic into Hebrew; (2) original compositions, including Ibn Ezra’s grammars; (3) biblical exegesis.

It was found that Ibn Ezra touched on the subject of grammatical words only in the following works: ‘ywd ḅdqwq (Yēsōd diqdūq), ‘mzn lšwn hqdš (Mōz’nē ḥēšōn haqqōdeš), ‘spr ṣḥwt (Sēper šḥḥt), ‘ph bwrhw (Sāpāh bērōrāh), ‘spr sp tṛ (Sēper šṭpat yter), the commentary on the Pentateuch, and the commentary on Ecclesiastes.

The results of the examination enable to delimit the concept both by distinguishing it from the other word classes and by comparing it to similar groups of words with which it shares common items. The article starts with a brief overview of the life and works of Abraham ibn Ezra and with the deﬁnition of ‘grammatical words’ in the scholarly literature. The main part of the article presents in detail the research ﬁndings showing how the concept of grammatical words is reﬂected in Ibn Ezra’s language, focusing on the various grammatical deﬁnitions this word class was given in all his writings.

The deﬁnition of each label used by Ibn Ezra includes the list of words classed under that label, the rules governing their appearance in phrases, determination, vocalization, inﬂection, form in genitive constructions, etymology, derivation, function etc., in all contexts. Presented in detail, these explanations remove all vagueness from the deﬁnition and delimitation of the concept of ‘grammatical words’ in the language of Ibn Ezra.

1 ‘Grammatical words’ is the term chosen in this study to designate the group of words that are neither nouns nor verbs but constitute a third word class, which includes prepositions and conjunctions of all sorts.

2 That is, in the three bodies of his work: translations from the Arabic, works that are essentially original Hebrew compositions, and biblical exegesis.

3 This study will not be concerned with the use of the grammatical words in Abraham ibn Ezra’s writings but with Ibn Ezra’s deﬁnition of these words and the list of words included in that group. On the use of grammatical words under the inﬂuence of Arabic see at length Kizel (2013).

4 The grammars of Judah Hayyuj: ‘spr ṣḥwt hnḥ (Sēper Ḫṭṭy hnnhn), ‘spr ṣḥwt ḥkl (Sēper Ḫṭṭy ḫkqepel) and ‘spr ḥqwd (Sēper Ḫqqwpd). Ibn Ezra’s translation of these works was edited by Dukes (1844).

5 Such as the books ‘ywd ṭspr, ‘kly nhwšt, ‘hṭr, ‘h’wlm, ‘h’ybrw, ‘h’ṣnmym, ‘ywd mw’ (Hmspr, ‘ḥm, r’Syt ḫkmh, ‘ght ḥššt, but as will be noted below, evidence was found only in the five books ‘ywd ḅdqwq (Yēsōd diqdūq), ‘mzn lšwn hqdš (Mōz’nē ḥēšōn haqqōdeš), ‘spr ṣḥwt (Sēper šḥḥt), ‘ph bwrhw (Sāpāh bērōrāh) and ‘spr sp tṛ (Sēper šṭpat yter). Edition details will be given below.

6 All the exegetical works ascribed with certainty to Ibn Ezra were examined in the course of the research, but evidence was found only in the commentaries on Genesis and on Ecclesiastes. Edition details will be given below.

7 Allony 1984. Allony maintains that this work is only an introductory chapter to a larger book that has been lost (ibid.: 66–67).

8 Heidenheim 1791.

9 Lippmann 1827.

10 Lippmann 1839. This work is also found in Wilensky 1978: 46–82.

11 Lippmann 1843.

12 More speciﬁcally the second commentary on Genesis [br’Syt Sțḥṭ ‘ḥrt] (Weiser 1976, I).


14 For the purpose of deﬁning and delimiting the concept of ‘grammatical words’, all the references that Ibn Ezra made to the grammatical behaviour of this word class in all his writings were collected and sorted.
Abraham ibn Ezra

Rabbi Abraham ben Meir ibn Ezra (1089–1164) was born at the end of the 11th century in Tudela, in an area of Islamic Spain that was under Christian rule.15 Ibn Ezra was a poet, grammarian, translator, exegete and philosopher. An outstanding medieval thinker, he also interested himself in astrology, mathematics and astronomy. In the early stages of his writing career Ibn Ezra travelled all over Islamic Spain and was associated with the Jewish circles in Andalusia, where he composed a large body of secular poetry. In later years he travelled in lands such as Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria. Following the conquest of Spain by the Almohads,16 Ibn Ezra fled to Christian Europe, arriving in Rome in 1140, at the age of fifty.17

At that time Ibn Ezra began writing many works, and thus he is counted among the Hebrew writers of the period following the expulsion from Spain. Ibn Ezra introduced the Jews of Italy to Sephardic poetry, which they adopted with enthusiasm and adhered to for many years, gradually abandoning the style of the piyyûṭ (liturgical poetry). To be able to assimilate the Andalusian culture, the Jews of Christian lands needed texts written in Hebrew, including new scientific treaties. Ibn Ezra was the first to author Hebrew texts on a variety of subjects for the Jews of Provence and Italy, and in his writings transmitted the Sephardic culture in original Hebrew compositions.18 He translated from Arabic the grammars of Rabbi Judah Hayyuj and other authors, and also wrote biblical commentaries.19 His literary work spanned approximately twenty-five years. Whereas little has survived of his literary output in Spain, most of the works he wrote in Christian Europe have been preserved, and through them his extensive literary activity may be appraised. The many upheavals in Ibn Ezra’s life make it difficult to determine the chronological order of his works’ composition and publication.20

Ibn Ezra’s language derived largely from biblical Hebrew, in which he saw a literary standard and a primary linguistic source. Aside from the forms and terms that he himself coined, he preferred biblical Hebrew words to Mishnaic Hebrew ones.21 His writing is characterized by language purism, and he strove to avoid as much as possible direct loans from Arabic and even words originating from Arabicized Hebrew.22 He repeatedly criticized the exegetic methods relying on rabbinic midrâshîm, voicing his opinion that such interpretation was unproductive and unoriginal.23 Many researchers investigating Ibn Ezra’s exegetical style have noted that his writings tend to be vague and inconsistent.24 It appears that the language of Ibn Ezra’s commentaries is ambiguous.25

The grammatical issues discussed in Ibn Ezra’s writings have been described by Bacher.26 Del Valle Rodríguez has also investigated Ibn Ezra’s grammar27 and published a critical edition of Sēper saḥôt.28 Prijs’ dictionary of the grammatical terms in Ibn Ezra’s writings29 was favourably reviewed by Ben-Hayyim for its contribution to the understanding of the grammatical concepts in Ibn Ezra’s writings.30

Bacher holds that the writing of Ibn Ezra was unremarkable and uninnovative, merely giving the legacies of Judah Hayyuj and Jonah ibn Janah a new setting in Hebrew.31 Chomsky agreed with him in asserting that Ibn Ezra formulated in Hebrew the concepts of Hayyuj and Ibn Janah.32 Tene, too, similarly ascribes to Ibn Ezra the role of promulgating the Hebrew grammar of Hayyuj and Ibn Janah’s school of thought, determining that his works are a summarization of the work...
of other scholars from the golden age of Jewish culture in Spain.\textsuperscript{33} It seems that Allony thinks so too, though he surmises that Ibn Ezra was mainly influenced by the ideas of Ibn Janah, which he frequently quotes and alludes to in his writings.\textsuperscript{34}

It appears that Ibn Ezra adopted the thinking of the Andalusian grammarians of the 11th century, in particular that of Hayyuj, of Ibn Janah, of Samuel HaNaggid (Samuel ibn Nagrilla) and of Moses ibn Jiqatilla (Moses HaKohen). Yet he does not refrain from formulating his personal opinion.\textsuperscript{35} While discussing various issues Ibn Ezra often mentions the scholars who discussed them before him, occasionally giving their names explicitly and expressing the esteem he has for them.\textsuperscript{36} It is thus apparent that Ibn Ezra had great respect for R. Eleazar Kalir,\textsuperscript{37} R. Saadia Gaon, Menahem ben Saruq,\textsuperscript{38} R. Moses ibn Jiqatilla, R. Judah bar David,\textsuperscript{39} Dunash ben Labrat,\textsuperscript{40} R. Samuel HaNaggid and R. Jonah. Yet Ibn Ezra does not always mention the Sephardi grammarians by name, and on occasion he indicates his source only vaguely: “there was a scholar in France”, “a wise man”, “another man who said”, “said one of the scholars of this age”, “some say, the philosophers”, “the translators”, “others”.

In presenting his exegetical ideas Ibn Ezra provided extensive explanations and few examples, which required his readers to be fully versed in all the details and grammatical issues in connection with the verses in question in order to understand his commentaries. In the introductions he wrote to his grammars and commentaries he appealed to the “educated”, “wise of heart”, “men of truth”.\textsuperscript{41} He discussed linguistic minutiae and attempted to resolve morphological and syntactical difficulties presented by forms and phrases that had been ignored by previous grammarians.\textsuperscript{42}

2 The Concept of ‘Grammatical Words’

Grammatical words, also called ‘structure words’ and ‘function words’, form a relatively closed group in the language. In Hebrew they are also frequently referred to as ‘words of relation’, a term that properly designates prepositions only, due to the blurring of the boundaries between prepositions and other grammatical words, such as conjunctions — a consequence of the fact that prepositions occasionally serve as conjunctions.\textsuperscript{43}

The greatest of the medieval grammarians, R. Jonah ibn Janah, mentions in the introduction to Kitāb al-luma‘ (in Hebrew translation Sēper hāriqmāh) “the words of sense and the nouns that are not derived of verbs”. In chapter 1 Ibn Janah notes that the words in Arabic and in Hebrew are divided into three parts of speech, which are nouns, verbs and ‘words of sense’ (mwl t (m) such as gm “also”, ky “because of that”, rq “only”, k “but, only” and so on.\textsuperscript{44} In chapter 4 Ibn Janah asserts that the ‘letters of sense’ (cletic prepositions) are “that which points to the matter in another”, like l “to”, l “on”, ky “because of that”, gm “also”, rq “only”, k “but, only”, to which he later adds the words im’n “for the sake of so as to”, bity “besides”, bwr “in order that”.\textsuperscript{45}

The importance of delimiting and defining the concept of ‘grammatical words’ is felt in the writings of Ibn Ezra, where he addresses this issue in various contexts though it leads him to digress from the topic at hand. In the following pages I shall attempt to characterize Ibn Ezra’s conception of this group of words, as evidenced both indirectly by his language itself and directly by his references to the matter.

3 Findings

\textsuperscript{33} Tene 1971.
\textsuperscript{34} Allony 1984.
\textsuperscript{35} Cf. Sáenz-Badillos 2001. Sáenz-Badillos believes that the mere fact that Ibn Ezra translated the works of Hayyuj attests to the appreciation in which he held that grammarian.
\textsuperscript{36} Ibn Ezra held the Sephardic grammarians in high regard and was wont to quote their words, particularly in his grammar books.
\textsuperscript{37} “The piyyûtim of Rabbi Eleazar Kalir, may he rest in peace, contain four difficult things, most of his piyyûtim being riddles and parables” (Commentary on Ecclesiastes 5:1).
\textsuperscript{38} “And Rabbi Menahem ben Saruq the Sephardi has also written a book wherein good words are found” (Commentary on Ecclesiastes 9:11). Ibn Ezra always mentions Menahem ben Saruq among the first grammarians, even if he does not agree with all his judgements. For a comparison between Ibn Ezra’s judgements on grammatical matters and Menahem ben Saruq’s opinions see Sáenz-Badillos 2001: 245.
\textsuperscript{39} Commentary on Ecclesiastes 9:11.
\textsuperscript{40} “And the father of nobles, HaLevi ben Labrat, Maghrebi from the city of Fes, also answers them with true words” (Mō’znē ḥēlōn haqqādeš, 89). It is evident from his words, however, that he does not appreciate Dunash’s criticism of his teacher Saadia Gaon. It also appears that he does not always agree with him on grammatical matters, for instance on the classification of the letters d and f as ‘servant letters’, the plural of personal nouns and the issue of linear word formation.
\textsuperscript{41} For instance in his introductions to the works spr ḥwrt, sph brwrh and kly nhwšt and to his commentaries on Ecclesiastes and on Isaiah.
\textsuperscript{42} Netzer 1994: 1–21.
\textsuperscript{43} For details on these terms see Nir 1979: 16; Sarfatti 1978: 36; Lyons 1968: 435.
\textsuperscript{44} Wilensky 1928, Ch. 1, 30.
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., Ch. 1, 33.
\textsuperscript{46} Ibid., Ch. 1, 35.
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid., Ch. 4, 41–42; Ch. 6, 47.
3.1 The definition of the concept of ‘grammatical words’ in the writings of Ibn Ezra

Grammatical terms such as mylwt ḭṣ (prepositions, literally ‘words of relation’), mylwt ṭḥ (grammatical words), prevalent in modern Hebrew, do not appear in Ibn Ezra’s writings. Bacher has noted that he labels such words as ‘bdym ‘slaves’, mlwt ṭḥ ‘words of matter’ and ‘ṭwyt ṭḥ ‘letters of matter’, mlwt ṭḥ ‘words of sense’, and mlwt ḳḥ ‘words of adhesion’. These terms appear in his writings as the topic and context require.48 Charlap devoted a chapter of her study to prepositions, discussing their position in the sentence, their meaning and their syntagmatic roles. Her discussion does not, however, include a detailed examination of the concept of grammatical words as reflected in Ibn Ezra’s writings overall.53

The present research shows that in Ibn Ezra’s original writings on grammar, the definitions of the grammatical words vary from one work to another. In Mōz넟 lēšōn ḥaqqōdeš these words are termed ‘slaves’ (‘bdym), ‘servants’ (mṣṭym) and ‘words of matter’ (mlwt ṭḥt).54 In Yēsōd diqḍqūq they are labelled ‘words of adhesion’ (mlwt ḳḥ) and in Sēper ṣaḥōt ‘words of sense’ (mlwt ṭḥ).55 Some of the terms presented above appear in the introduction to the second commentary on Genesis as well, where Ibn Ezra writes: “every tongue is divided into three facets: noun […], verb […], and the third part words of sense and adhesion [and] matter, or letter[s], such as mn [‘from’], gm [‘also’], rq [‘only’], b [‘in’], k [‘as’], l [‘to’], and also the w [‘and’] to join the matters”.52 This definition by Ibn Ezra is in line with the definition given in Sēper hāriqmāh by R. Jonah ibn Janah, who labelled the third word class ‘words of sense’ (mlwt ṭḥ), including under this label those words that Ibn Ezra mentions.56 Elsewhere he discusses the declension of these words and their syntagmatic behaviour: he asserts that some words are in singular form and others in plural form, and that some words may combine with others, as in the case of k1 ‘according to’ ( Isa. 59:18)57 and l’m ‘for the sake of/so as to’ ( Job 19:29), while other words, such as k ‘but, only’, y ‘(there) is not’ and gm “also”, cannot combine in such a way and are not declined.55

Ibn Ezra repeatedly mentioned the grammatical words’ various functions and the flexibility in their meanings, as he sees as two qualities serving the writer’s needs. The grammatical words’ syntagmatic rules emerge from his discussion of other topics, such as prefixing and suffixation,56 the vocalization of grammatical words, the occurrence of grammatical words before verb forms, particularly verbs in the past tense,57 the combination of grammatical words with nouns, the rules of genitive construction, the occurrence of grammatical words in construct or absolute form, singular and plural.58

3.1.1. The ‘slaves’

According to Ibn Ezra, the term ‘slaves’ (‘bdym) refers to the clitic prepositions b ‘in’, k ‘as’, l ‘to’ and m ‘from’ alone: “The slaves are the letters added before it, at the beginning of the word, and are not primary and their sign is b-κ-ι-ω-μ”.59 This is in contrast to the ‘words of matter’ (mlwt ṭḥt), ‘words of sense’ (mlwt ṭḥ) and ‘words of adhesion’ (mlwt ḳḥ) that cover the words belonging to the third word class, namely the words that are neither nouns nor verbs. In his opinion “the slaves serve in initial position with word[s] of matter, nouns and verbs, and they are b-κ-ι-ω-μ, as in: b‘l ſykw (Lam. 4:14), ƙ‘l ḥyw (Obad. 1:16), w‘l ḥb h’ (Deut. 6:10 [23:6]), l‘l ḥbr (Amos 6:13), mblty ykwlt h’ (Num. 14:16), as well as with the word šr [‘that’]”.60 Immediately afterwards he retracts this generalization, holding that “the slaves […] therefore do not serve as do all words of matter, such as l [‘to’], rq [‘only’] and k [‘but, only’]; though we have found wysm ḥt (Job 24:25), we do not say k‘l”.61 At the end of his book Yēsōd diqḍqūq Ibn Ezra states:

b-κ-ι-ω-μ, these four are for matters, for the [letter] bet is for a vessel, therefore it is called so; the kap is for a likeness, therefore it is called so; the lamed is for the essence of instruction; and the mem is for the like in the way of the language, and its meaning is like mhm [‘from them’], a thing derived from other things. And in truth, like the case of the parts from

48
Bacher 1882: 72.
49
50
Mōz넟 lēšōn ḥaqqōdeš 11b–13a, 38a–39b. In that book, Ibn Ezra lists the various classes of Hebrew grammatical terms, and researchers therefore see it as a dictionary of grammatical terminology. See Bacher 1882: 72 n. 4.
51
Yēsōd diqḍqūq 105–107 ; Sēper ṣaḥōt 32b–34b.
52
Introduction to the second commentary on Genesis, 10.
53
Sēper hāriqmāh Ch. 4, 41.
54
The biblical references are given here as provided by Ibn Ezra. Some of the references he gives are mistaken, in which case the correct reference is added in brackets.
55
Ibn Ezra talks of words that combine with what he calls knwym, by which he probably means prepositions. Yēsōd diqḍqūq 105–107.
56
For instance: “And the [letter] yod is found added [= superfluous] at the end of the word, as in ḥmgbyh (Ps. 113:5) […] and with word[s] of matter such as bly [‘besides’] and axly [‘except’]; you may see that it is said ky ‘yn bltk (1 Sam. 2:2)” (Mōz넟 lēšōn ḥaqqōdeš 15b).
57
“And should a grammarian say, how does the [letter] lamed join a verb in the past, there being no such case? The answer is that the bet and the lamed are equal” (Commentary on Ecclesiastes 3:18).
58
For instance: “Some words of matter do not occur in the construct, such as šr [‘that’], rq [‘only’], k [‘but, only’] and gm [‘also’], and there are some that do, such as hr [‘after’]; you say ḥry [‘after me’], ḥryk [‘after you’] in the plural, and the singular construct is not found; and there are some that are found in both manners, such as lḥt [‘under’]; it is said ṭhny [‘lower’, here as an adjective] (Josh. 15:19), and thnt [‘under me’] is an exception” (Mōz🗜 lēšōn ḥaqqōdeš 30a).
59
Mōz🗜 lēšōn ḥaqqōdeš 3a.
60
Mōz🗜 lēšōn ḥaqqōdeš 11b–12a.
61
Mōz🗜 lēšōn ḥaqqōdeš 12a–b.
Ibn Ezra refers in that book to the rules of vocalization of this group of letters, stating that b-w-k-l, these alone are set in one way, with a mobile šewa, as I mentioned about the word šm’wn ["Simeon"]. Not so the [letter] mem, for it is always set with a híreq or a short qamas [= šédel] with the letters ‘h-h-‘r. But the waw alone is read as an ‘alep vocalized with a šuruq, as I have mentioned. And if a mobile šewa follows the letters b-w-k-l, they are all vocalized with a híreq: k’rbn (kîré‘ûbên), l’rbn (lîré‘ûbên), except for the [letter] waw as I have mentioned.63

3.1.2. The ‘servants’

Ibn Ezra included in the ‘servant’ group — in contradistinction to the ‘slaves’ and the ‘words of matter’ — the clitic prepositions b-k-l-m, the letters ‘y-t-n used as prefixes in the imperfect conjunction, and the letters š-w-h (subordinating conjunction, coordinating conjunction and definite article, respectively), which may be prefixed to verbs and nouns:

One half of the letters of the sacred tongue are primary […] and one half of the letters are sometimes primary and sometimes servants, and the sign is k-s-t-y-l ‘b-h-m-w-n, as is my name [‘b hmwn ‘father of a multitude” being a reference to the Biblical Abraham]. And since the [letters] ‘alep and he are light on the tongue they were set as servants, not so the bet and the ‘ayin, which therefore remained primary.64

Ibn Ezra also noted in Yêsdî dîqîq: “b-k-w-l-m, these are the signs of the servants, they are at the beginning, as in bšm’wn [in Simeon], kšm’wn [‘like Simeon’], lšm’wn [‘to Simeon’], wšm’wn [‘and Simeon’]. Further on in that book he mentioned this term while discussing “the ten formats for nouns and verbs”: “And since the signs ‘alep mem are among the servant letters, I shall state how each and every letter serves”.65 Ibn Ezra also states: “The servants are the letters that are sometimes radical and sometimes servants, and they are š-w-h b-k-l-m ‘y-t-n”.66 In Sêper sêpat yeter he remarks: “And the Gaon further added that the servant letters are half of all the letters. And R. Adonim said that the ăng and the d are servants too, which is contrary to the opinions of all the earlier and latter grammarians.”67 Ibn Ezra further defines each servant letter:

The ‘Aleph

Always the speaker’s sign of for himself, it is set at the beginning of the word in all verb stems (bînyanim), as in ‘rdwp [‘I will pursue’], ‘syy [‘I will overtake’]. ‘Aleph is also found at the head of the word replacing he: ‘tḥbr yhwšpṭ [for hîbîb] (2 Chron. 20:35) and is quiescent and invisible [= unmarked in the script] at the end of the word as the mark of the feminine instead of he, as in q’a ly mn [for mnh] (Ruth 1:21 [1:20]) […] It is also found added at the beginning of the word, as in b’zrw’k [for bznw k] (Jer. 32:21), and is inside the word, as in whʾnzhyw nhrwt [for whznhyw] (Isa. 19:6); also found replacing the geminate letter, as in b’zw nhrym [for bzbw] (Isa. 19:10 [18:2]). And it is found added in final position, as in wʾtyqyḥ [for wʾtyqyḥ] (Ezek. 41:15).68

The Bet

Serves in initial position, as in btrby wbdstî (Gen. 48:22) and replacing a mem [in a partitive meaning], as in whnwtr bbsr wblhm (Lev. 8:32).69

The bet serves in initial position in two known ways, one is [locative] as in bbyt ḫd [‘in one house’] and the other [partitive] as in whnwtr bbsr wblhm [‘and the remainder of the flesh and the bread’]. And sometimes bet replaces b’bw [in the sense of “about, concerning”], as in whw nhš ynhš bw (Gen. 44:5 […] and it is not as in bhwmn addbr bw (Num. 12:6), for here the tongue becomes as a tongue for the Lord ‘in dream I speak through him’, instrumental; and this is right in my view, but many said it means ‘in dream I speak with him’ [comitative]. And sometimes bet is added [= superfluous] in the beginning, as in brʾšwnh (Gen. 13:4), for it is written rʾšwnh nw (Num. 2:9); and so also bfrm [‘before’], there is no distinction between it and frm. […] But the bet of brʾšyt [“in the beginning”]” is not added in my opinion because it has a meaning; and there are many words without bet, such as šš ṭmrhm.70

And a bet is found with a past verb, which is an exception: bhkyn lw dwd (2 Chron. 1:4). […] The bet serves in initial position with all nouns, like the lamed, and does not serve at the end.71

The He

In Yêsdî dîqîq and Sâpâh bërûråh Ibn Ezra lists several grammatical functions of the letter h, of which the principal are:
1. Interrogative he:
The letter h at the head of a word serves to indicate wonder, as in ouchers kzh byn (1 Sam. 24:17), and is always vocalized with a šewa and patah ([= ḫaṭap patah]).

This letter serves in initial position for wonder, with the words of sense and the nouns and also the verbs, and the he is always vocalized with a šewa and patah ([= ḫaṭap patah]).

2. Definite article: according to Ibn Ezra another function for the h is determination, in which case the following letter is always geminated, as in ouchersl (haqqoqi) qwl yqṣb (Gen. 27:22).

3. Affix in certain verb stems:
The h is added at the beginning of the word as an addition to the heavy stem called hip’l, as in ḫkbyp [...], and in the stem ḥtptə̀l, as in ḫtḥqtšlyt, and in the infinitive of the nip’l stem, as in ‘m ḫmsḥ, as well as in the imperative [...]; also in a stem that has no infinitive [ḥop’l]: ḫwšlkh [...]. It is also found in initial position in place of an ’alep, as in ytr h’mnw that is h’mnw, as is written in the second book.

4. Suffix: Ibn Ezra listed three functions for the h appearing at the end of the word.

According to him,

the he in final position is of three manners: one is added, as in qdmh ["southwards"], mẓrḥh ["eastwards"], and also ḥš’r ḥṭṭwmh [for ḥṭṭwmn], bwr’l [for bwr’l] m’wph, the penultimate stress indicating that the he is added and is not the mark of the feminine, as in nṯḥ [for nḥ] br’l nps nw; and the he sometimes replaces 1 ["to"], which is a word of sense, as in yrwślym ["to Jerusalem"], mṣrmh ["to Egypt"] [= directional he].

And there is a he that is the mark of the feminine, and on verbs [as an accusative suffix] is quiescent and invisible [= unmarked in the script], as in smouth ["she has gardened"]. And if it is on a noun [as a genitive suffix] it will have a mappiq, as in ydh ["her hand"]. And the he is found added [= superfluous] in final position to a taw, as in ysw th [for ysw ḫ], ṣ’h[ for ṣ’h], bṣrh [for bs’h] [...]. It is also found added to the marks of the future in all verbal stems [cohortative], as in smouth [indicative "she"], ẓ’ykh [indicative "sheyky"].

Ibn Ezra addressed this issue again in Sāpāh bērūrāh, noting:
The he serves in final position as the mark of the feminine in nouns such as ṣdqḥ ["righteousness"], ẓqh ḥn’r (Deut. 22:27), and in verbs: smouth ["she has gardened"], ḥzrk yrwślym (Lam 1:7), h’mrh bbbh (Isa 47:8), and the he turns into a taw: h’mr [for hmrh], and so also wšbt [wšbh] lnsy’. [...] And sometimes he serves for the feminine [="genitive suffix"], as in ydh ["her hand"] and in the plural ydyh ["their hands"], ṣ’qh hn’r [...].

The Waw

Ibn Ezra lists several functions for the w, essentially:

1. Coordinating conjunction joining nouns and verbs:

It is found at the head of the word serving the purpose of a noun with a noun or a verb with a verb, as in emouth wsw’mn ["Reuben and Simeon"].

2. Converse waw:

And if not, it will initially point to a verb in the past and make it future, as in w’sw bs’l (Exod. 36:24), and so in the masculine and the feminine.

And the waw if it appears before a verb in the past may be a waw of coordination, as in my p’l w’shw (Isa. 41:4) or a waw

72 Yĕsōd diqdqūq 99–102.
73 Sāpāh bērūrāh 44b.
75 Yĕsōd diqdqūq 99–102.
76 Yĕsōd diqdqūq 99–102.
77 Yĕsōd diqdqūq 99–102.
78 Sāpāh bērūrāh 45a; cf. Mō’znē lĕšôn haqqōdeš 12b, Sēper šaḥōt 19b–20a.
79 Yĕsōd diqdqūq, 102–103.
80 Yĕsōd diqdqūq, 102–103.
that turns it into future (waw of conversion), as in wšh bsšl (Exod. 36:1), and the context will distinguish them.

3. Introducing a clause: “and there is an added [= superfluous] waw, as in wyh w’nh (Gen 36:24).”

4. Part of the word radical:

And the waw is never found as a radical at the head of the word, unless substituting a yod [...] neither it is found as a radical at the end of the word, unless substituting a he. As a radical it is always found inside the word.

5. As a vowel:

At the end of the word, if it was with a šuruq, it is the mark of the plural, as in ‘sw ["they did"], bnw ["they built"] [...] so it is in all the verb stems. And if there was a he added before the waw or a geminated nun, it is the mark of the singular [= accusative suffix] [...] and sometimes the he and nun are merged [...] and if there is a holam on the waw it is always the mark of the third person singular with nouns [= genitive suffix], as in ydlw ["his hand"], rglw ["his leg"], and with verbs [= accusative suffix]: wyb yršpw (Hos. 8:3), but it is a very rare with verbs. And a waw is found to be added [= superfluous] at the end of the word, as in bnw b’wr (Num. 24:3).

The Yod

Ibn Ezra touches mainly on the origin of the consonantal y in the radical and on its role in marking the gender and number:

1. In initial position:

And the [letter] yod in initial position is the mark of the masculine singular or plural in all verb stems, as in yšmwr ["he will guard"], yšmwr ["they will guard"], yšlyk ["he will throw"], yšlykw ["they will throw"] [...].

Ibn Ezra further writes:

It is a mark of the third person singular with nouns [= genitive suffix], as in yšlykw ["they will throw"].

In this context, he takes issue with the words of earlier scholars, stating:

And the grammarians have said that [yod] is found in final position as a radical letter in the word hywm ["life"], and they were all mistaken, for it is not found as a final radical except substituting a he, as in hšy npšy [from hšh], bkwhy [from bkh].

2. In final position: Ibn Ezra lists several functions:

And the [letter] yod is found added [= superfluous] at the end of the word, as in hmqbyh (Ps. 113:5) [...] and with word[s] of matter such as bly ["besides"] and zvly ["except"]; you may see that it is said ky ’yn bltk ["for there is none besides you"] (1 Sam. 2:2).

He further holds that

It is found at the end vocalized with a hāreg in three manners, one is the mark of the first person masculine or feminine singular with nouns or verbs [= genitive or accusative suffix]: rṣy ["my head"], ydy ["my hand"]; and the second manner is the mark of the gentelic, as in h’br ["the Hebrew"], hmsry ["the Egyptian"]; and the third manner is an added [= superfluous] yod as in bny atwnw (Gen. 49:11). And there is no need to mention the yod that is the mark of the feminine singular in all verbs in the seven verb stems.

3. As a vowel:

And know that the yod becomes quiescent with a broad qamaš in every plural with the mark of the third person, as in blyw (b’ilādāw) among the words of matter and all iyw (‘elāw) and iyw (‘alāw); and in nouns such as ydyw (yādāw).

The Kap

1. In initial position:

It serves at the head of the word: ḳšr ["as that"], ḳšmrn ["like Simeon"], ḳhwṣ’y’m ḳtn (Gen. 19:17), which is an
The kap serves in initial position like the lamed and it is for a matter that is similar, the kap of valuation and similarity.\textsuperscript{90}

2. In final position:

But it serves at the end of the word for the second person masculine, with a broad qamas, and for the masculine plural, the plural being with the addition of a mem and under the kap a short patah [= segol].\textsuperscript{91}

And at the end of the word for the second person the masculine it is vocalized with a qamaš and for the feminine with a šewa; and for the plural masculine and feminine it is vocalized with a short patah [= segol] with the addition of a mem and a nun in all nouns and verbs.\textsuperscript{92}

3. In prepositional phrases:

We have not found the kap to occur on a verb in the past, and Rabbi Jonah, may he rest in peace, has said: \textit{‘kmw \textit{h}šhr \textit{’}b\textit{r}} (Gen. 19:15) — why was it not said \textit{kmw \textit{h}šhr}? Because the mem and the waw in the word \textit{kmw} are added, and so as not to have a kap with a verb in the past, they were separated by the word \textit{hšhr’}; but he forgot \textit{rbw \textit{kmw tbw}} (Zech. 10:8).

The Lamed

1. In initial position:

The lamed serves in initial position only, with a letter of matter, as in \textit{lk} [“to you”], \textit{ly} [“to me”], and with a word of matter, as in \textit{lbly} [“test”], and with the nouns and with the verbs, except from any past and future.\textsuperscript{93}

Ibn Ezra further states that it serves in initial position: \textit{kmw wn} [“to Simeon”], and with the verbs, and it is my opinion that it is the infinitive and that it stands in place of a noun.\textsuperscript{94}

2. Meaning:

And the lamed is found for the word \textit{b’bwr} [in the sense of “about, concerning”]: \textit{pn y’mrw ly} (Judg. 9:14 [9:54]), and is added [= superfluous] in the word \textit{šfn} [for \textit{šn}] (Job 21:23), which is an exception.\textsuperscript{95}

3. In prepositional phrases:

And should a grammarian say, how does the lamed join a verb in the past, there being no such case? The answer is that the bet and the lamed are equal, and the joining of one is like the joining of the other, there is one way for all.\textsuperscript{96}

And there is a word of matter where lamed occurs with bet, as in \textit{lb/bwr} [“in order that”]; and the matter without the lamed would suffice, but those saying in their poetry \textit{bwr} [omitting the \textit{b} as well] are mistaken, for the meaning turns to another matter [\textit{bwr} as a substantive meaning “produce"], as when we remove the lamed of \textit{lmn} [“for the sake of/so as to”] (for then \textit{m n} would be derived from \textit{ky \textit{yn m nh}} [a substantive meaning “answer”]).\textsuperscript{97}

The Mem

1. In initial position:

It serves in initial position for two purposes; one is as in \textit{m l’ byk} (Gen. 49:25), which is vocalized with a short qamas [= šērē] so as not to geminate the following letter […] And it is found with the words of adhesion like its fellows that are \textit{b-k-l}, in \textit{m sr} [“from that which"], \textit{m l’} [“from with"], \textit{m l’} [“from over"], and does not come with other irregular words such as \textit{gm} ["also"], \textit{p} ["also"]; but \textit{mbly} is found (Num. 14:16).\textsuperscript{98}

\textsuperscript{90} Yēsōd diqduq 105–108.
\textsuperscript{91} Mōznē lēšōn haqqōdeš 12b.
\textsuperscript{92} Yēsōd diqduq 105–106.
\textsuperscript{93} Mōznē lēšōn haqqōdeš 12b.
\textsuperscript{94} Mōznē lēšōn haqqōdeš 12b. Yet he stated on page 12a that “the lamed is found with a verb in the past, as in \textit{lbmr h’llym} (Eccl. 3:18), as I have explained in the commentary to Ecclesiastes”. The commentary in question is quoted below.
\textsuperscript{95} Yēsōd diqduq 106–111.
\textsuperscript{96} Yēsōd diqduq 106–111.
\textsuperscript{97} Commentary to Ecclesiastes 3:18. Ibn Ezra’s reference to grammatical words in his exegesis attests to his many digressions from the topic at hand and his concern with odd grammatical issues.
\textsuperscript{98} Mōznē lēšōn haqqōdeš 39b.
\textsuperscript{99} Yēsōd diqduq 106–108.
And with the *mem* there can never be a verb in the past.\(^{100}\)

And the *mem* serves in initial position as a letter of matter, and it is *mn* ["from"]; therefore the letter following it is geminated, for the absence of the *nun*.\(^{101}\)

### 2. In final position to mark the masculine plural:

And the *mem* at the end of the word is the masculine plural in nouns, but there are irregular feminine words: *nsym* ["women"], *pylgśym* ["concubines"]; and in verbs […] both strong and weak.\(^{102}\)

#### The Nun

1. **As verbal affix in future tense forms:**

   It serves in initial position for the [first person] plural, masculine or feminine, in all verb stems.\(^{103}\)

2. **As marker of the nip'al stem:**

   And it is found added to the stem nip'al, and is not seen in the future, being incorporated in the gemination.\(^{104}\)

3. **As verbal affix in past tense forms:**

   At the end, the final radical letter is found to be incorporated if it merges with the *nun* of the first person plural, as in *wnydk ntntw* (nāṭannū) (1 Chron. 29:14), and for this the *nun* of the plural is marked with a *dagesh*; and so also with the *nun* that is the mark of the third person feminine plural.\(^{105}\)

4. **On nouns:**

   The *nun* in final position is the mark of the feminine plural in nouns, as in r'sn ["their head"], ydyhn ["their hands"]; so also in the verbs in all verb stems; and it is sometimes replaced with a *mem*.\(^{106}\)

#### The Šin

The *šin* is in the place of šr ["that"], as in *škkh* (Song 5:9), *šbšplnw* (Ps. 136:23).\(^{107}\)

It serves only in initial position, instead of šr ["that"]; with nouns, as in *šy'y alhw* (Ps. 144:15); and with words of adhesion: *škkh lw* (Ps. 144:15); and with verbs: *ššzptny hšmš* (Song 1:6).\(^{108}\)

#### The Taw

1. **As verbal affix in future tense forms:**

   It serves in initial position for the second person masculine singular [and] plural, as well as for the second person feminine singular and plural in all verb stems, for the future tense. And the *taw* is the mark of the third person feminine singular or plural instead of the *yod* that is the mark of the masculine.\(^{109}\) And in final position it is the mark of the second person for past verbs in all verb stems.\(^{110}\)

2. **In noun formation:**

   *Taw* is added in nouns, as in *tp'r* ["glory"], *tqwmh* ["ability to stand"].\(^{111}\)

3. **Letter substitutions:**

   *Taw* is found instead of *he*, as in *trgty* [for *hrgty*] *l'pym* (Hos. 11:3), where it replaces the *he*. In final position there is found *wšbt* [for *wšbh*] *Insy* (Ezek. 46:17), where it replaces the *he*.\(^{112}\)

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100 Mō'znê lĕšôn haqqōdeš 12a.  
101 Mō'znê lĕšôn haqqōdeš 12b.  
102 Yĕsōd diqdiq 106–108.  
103 Yĕsōd diqdiq 101–106.  
104 Yĕsōd diqdiq 102–108.  
105 Yĕsōd diqdiq 104–108.  
106 Yĕsōd diqdiq 101–108.  
107 Mō'znê lĕšôn haqqōdeš 12a.  
108 Yĕsōd diqdiq 110.  
109 Yĕsōd diqdiq 110–111.  
110 Yĕsōd diqdiq 110–111.  
111 Yĕsōd diqdiq 110–111.  
112 Yĕsōd diqdiq 110–111.  
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4. Vocalization:

For the masculine it is vocalized with a broad qamaš, as though there were a quiescent and invisible [= unmarked in the script] 'alep or he after it, and in the feminine it is vocalised with a quiescent šewâ under the taw as well as the letter before the taw. But if it is one of the guttural letters the letter will be vocalized with a broad pataḥ, and no word is an exception.113

It seems that in Ibn Ezra’s way of thinking, the term mšrtym ‘slaves’ is broader than ‘bdym ‘slaves’; the grammatical words classified under the latter, b-k-l-m, are part of the group of words classified under the former. The letters classified under both terms can function as letters of matter (see below) and some may be prefixed to the words of matter and of adhesion, as well as to verbs.

3.1.3. The ‘words of matter’

In this group are included grammatical words such as mn “from”, gm “also”, p “even”, l “to”, rq “only”, k “but, only”, l “to”, bly “besides”, zwly “except”, šr “that”, l “on” and d’ “up to”. Ibn Ezra defines this group of words as follows:

A letter of matter or word of matter joins a name and a verb, or two names; sometimes the letter of matter is unnecessary, as in wšmw’l mt [“and Samuel died”] (1 Sam 28:3), but he who says wplštm nlahmw [And the Philistines fought] (1 Chron. 10:1) needs one: bysr’l [“against Israel”], and so also every noun of place and time. And know that every intransitive or transitive verb requires a place and time, as in wšmw’l mt bmrh bywm plwny [“and Samuel died at Ramah on such a day”] and so always every verb. And sometimes the letter of matter is omitted for it is known: it is said hmnns’ byt [for bbył] h’ [“that is found (in) the house of the Lord”] (2 Kgs 12:11) […] and so for the letter of matter of time: it is said ky ššṭ ymyn ‘sh h’ [“for (in) six days the Lord made”] (Exod. 31:17), and the matter is bššt ymyn [“in six days”]. And there may be two nouns that are a substance joined with a letter of matter, as in r’wbn bbył [“Reuben is in the house”].114

Definition

In his definitions of their grammatical functions, Ibn Ezra appears to distinguish the ‘words of matter’ from the ‘slaves’ and the ‘servants’. These words have their own specific meaning and their role is to join through:

Form

According to Ibn Ezra some ‘words of matter’ are composed of two lexemes. “And know that the word b/l(dy “[apart from”) is composed of two words”115. “And some say that the word wyhs (Num. 13:30) is a word of matter and the matter is hs [“hush!”] […] The word l’ (“on”) comes from l’h [“to go up”], though it is for matter (a word of sense”).116

Inflection

Some of the words in this group are inflected in the singular alone, and others in the plural.

Word(s) of matter such as šl [“that”], rq [“only”] and gm [“also”] do not occur in the plural, but there are among them l [“on”] and also y’h […], as well as the word l’y [“to”] and the word d’y [“up to”], and when in juxtaposition [= genitive construction] they are always in the plural, as in l’yw, l’yw and d’yw (for the yo’ol is the mark of the plural).117

Later on in that book Ibn Ezra discusses the manner in which the words of matter are used in the construct or absolute form, stating:

Some words of matter do not occur in the construct, such as šl [“that”], rq [“only”], k [“but, only”], gm [“also”] and p [“even”], and some of them do, such as šl [“after”]; you say l’y, b’ryk in the plural, and the singular construct is not found; and some are found in both manners, such as l’tf [“under”]; it is said l’tfywt [“lower”, here as an adjective] (Josh. 15:19), and l’ttny [“under me”] is an exception.118

Determination

Ibn Ezra further delimits the ‘words of matter’ by saying that the definite article h does not attach to words of this group: “The he of knowledge [= definite article] never comes with a letter of matter or a word of matter.”119

114 Mō‘znê lĕšôn haqqōdeš 40a.
115 Mō‘znê lĕšôn haqqōdeš 12a–b.
116 Mō‘znê lĕšôn haqqōdeš 3a.
117 Mō‘znê lĕšôn haqqōdeš 17b.
118 Mō‘znê lĕšôn haqqōdeš 19b.
119 Mō‘znê lĕšôn haqqōdeš 17b.
120 Mō‘znê lĕšôn haqqōdeš 30a.
121 Mō‘znê lĕšôn haqqōdeš 22a.
interrogative particle] is found with a letter of matter: hrq 'k bmšh (Lev. 12:2); h'l lh (Isa. 36:6 [57:6]).

**Genitive constructs**

There are words of matter that occur in juxtaposition [= genitive construction] as nouns do, such as mn ['from'], l ['to'] and l ['on'], in the singular and the plural, and some that do not, such as šr ['that'], rq ['only'] and k ['but, only']; it is not said šry ['that I'], nor šrk ['that you']; and there are such words that do not join and are plural in form, such as šly ['unless'], and there are plural [words of matter] with a singular-[like] suffix that is not a [mark of] juxtaposition, such as Originally]. The word l ḫdrk ḫdrk ḫdrk (Jer 51:3) is juxtaposed to a verb in the future and I know no such other. And there are words of matter that vary according to their position [= pausal forms], such as ky ūn ('Ēn) kmhw (1 Sam. 10:26 [10:24]), bqs š hmhw w'yn ('āyin) (Prov. 14:6).

**Further on, Ibn Ezra writes:**

I have already mentioned elsewhere that the words l ['to', l ['on'] and suchlike, when joining a juxtaposition [= genitive construction] are always in the plural, as in l'y ['to me'], l'yw ['to him'], l'yh ['to her'], l'ykm ['to you'], l'yhm ['to them'], l'ynw ['to us'], and there are some that you may find in two manners, such as wbhw bh 'šryw (Prov. 16:20) and šmr twh 'šrhw (ibid. 29:18).

**In the same book Ibn Ezra adds:**

The juxtaposed […] some of them are found with endings of words of matter in the manner of juxtaposed nouns, as in ḫṣdk (ḥasek) with a short pataḥ under the third radical letter, ky ūn qdwš kh 'ky ūn bŏlk (bītekā) (1 Sam. 2:2) and some are in another manner such as k (lēkā), b(k bēkā), wtk ('ōtkā), t(k tīkā) and m(k 'imkā).

**Prepositional phrases**

And any verb that is joined with l [the accusative marker] sometimes remains in juxtaposition [= accusative suffix]: you say šmr ṣty or šmyy ['protect me'], and it is not so with the words l ['to'], l ['on'], šry ['happy …!'] and the bet of matter and the lamed of matter. And know that these adhesives come with intransitive verbs, and some are transitive, as in wbr l'h ['pleasing to the Lord'] (Mal. 3:4), yrb l'yw šhyy ['may my words be pleasing to him'] (Ps. 104:33), the lamed or the word l ['on'] cannot be removed; and so also the word bthw bh ['trust in the Lord'] (ibid. 115:10) […] The letter of matter or word of matter cannot be removed […] And nothing of this sort is found except for the lamed or the word l ['to'], thus we cannot say yḥlyk but yḥly lk or l'yk ['I long for you'] (Ps. 25:21), but the word wqwt lw ['I waited for him'] is found without lamed: ky qwtyyk ['for I wait for you'], and we always pursue what is found. And there are verbs with known words of matter, such as znh ['to lust'], where the verb comes joined with the object with the word šry ['after'], and also wbw ṣtyh ['and Moses entreated'] that joins with pnym ['the face'] in this matter, as in rybm ylw pnym ndyb ['many entreat the face of the generous'] (Prov. 19:6).

**3.1.4. The 'words of adhesion'**

This group of words is frequently mentioned in Ibn Ezra's writings, particularly when he lists the words included in that group and these words' rules of declension. It appears that the group of 'words of adhesion' includes the words of matter and the letters classified as 'servants' and 'slaves'. In his book Yēsōd diqdūq Ibn Ezra distinguishes three parts of the language: the noun ('which is the base'), the verb ('which is always the predicate') and the third part — the words of adhesion. He writes as follows:

The words of adhesion also, as in the case of gm [also], šr ['that'], rq ['only'], k ['but, only'], blyt ['besides']. And there is sometimes a letter instead of a word of adhesion, as in wyqr' yy lmsh (Exod. 19:20), and this is like l'msh ['to Moses']; and they are four letters, and the sign is b-k-l-m.

Ibn Ezra can be seen to include in his discussion of the words of adhesion a variety of issues, such as:

**Syntagmatic rules**

Ibn Ezra lists in Yēsōd diqdūq various rules concerned with the collocation of the 'words of adhesion' with verbs and nouns, writing as follows:

[…] and sometimes a mem and a waw are added and it becomes a word of adhesion: bmw py 'ronym lw ['with my own mouth I entreat him'] (Job 19:16), and so also kmw by kmw ḥrw ['the living like the burning'] (Ps. 58:10), and so also lmv py ['to my mouth'] (Job 40:4). Only with the mem does it not come at all. And when the bet is juxtaposed to a first person singular it is said by ['in me'], and for the third person masculine bw ['in him'] and for the second person masculine bk (bēkā) ['in you']. But with [the cantillation mark] etnäh and at the end of a verse it is bāk like the feminine;

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122 Mō'znē lēšōn haqqōdeš 24a.
123 Mō'znē lēšōn haqqōdeš 38b–39a.
124 Mō'znē lēšōn haqqōdeš 9a–b.
125 Mō'znē lēšōn haqqōdeš 25b.
126 Mō'znē lēšōn haqqōdeš 45a–b.
127 Yēsōd diqdūq 105.
and the [third person] feminine singular is bh ["in her"]; and the [third person] plural is bm ["in them"]; and with a waw it is said bmw; and with the addition of a he before the mem: bhmm; and for the feminine like bhn, bhnh: with the addition of a final he, for bhmm is for the masculine plural and not the feminine, although the nun is always the mark of the feminine plural. And it is not said with kap: ky ["like me"], for this would be confused with the word ky ["because/that"] that is for the adhesion of matters. But a nun and a yod are added to the word kmw ["like"], and it is said kmwny ["like me"], and the kap is vocalised with a qamaš. And in the plural: kmwnw ["like us"], kmwkn ["like you"] for the masculine, but kmwk for the feminine seems slightly difficult [is not found in the biblical text]. And the plural with the addition of a he: kmwhd ["like them"] [...] And the rule for the lamed is like that for the bet, and the rule for the mem in the singular is duplication, as in mmnny ["from me"].

Ibn Ezra gives this example:

For you say r'wbn kl ["Reuben has eaten"] or y'kl ["will eat"], and here are the substance and the event; and a noun does not join with a noun save with the addition of a letter or word, as in r'wbn byt ["Reuben house"], r'wbn ys' byt ["Reuben went out house"], these things have no sense until you say r'wbn bbyt ["Reuben (is) in the house"], r'wbn ys' mhbyt ["Reuben went out of the house"].

Etymology and derivation

Ibn Ezra describes in Yēsōd diqdūq the derivation of the words of adhesion, stating:

Some of them are derived from verbs, such as l ["from"] on] from lh ["to go up"], hr ["after"] from w' hr hn'r ["and the youth did not delay"] (Gen. 34:19), wthynw ["you thought it easy"] (Deut. 1:41) from the root of hn ["to!"], and it is that they said: hnnw w'lyynw ["we are here and will go up"] (Num. 14:40) [...] And tbnhw ["understanding"] is from the root of byn ["between"], for it is essentially to distinguish between things. m ["with"], like rzym l' ṭmnmw ["cedars could not compare with it"] (Ezek. 31:18). And some words of adhesion are not derived, and they are the majority, such as k ["but", only], gm ["also"], p ["even"].

He further holds that

There are compound words of adhesion, such as mzh ["from this"], my ["with me"], bl'dy ["apart from"] [...] and there are words whose first letter is duplicated: kh 'sw ["thus they did"] (Num. 32:8), kkh 'sh lkm ["thus it has done to you"] (Hos. 10:15). And we have not found it without he [kk] in the entire Scriptures, only in the Rabbinical tongue.

Inflection and genitive constructions

Ibn Ezra lists the inflection patterns of the words of adhesion, stating:

There are words of adhesion that are always singular, such as rq ["only"], gm ["also"]; others that are plural, such as lpny ["before"], and there are some that are in both manners, such as l msh ["to Moses"] (Exod. 2:19), ly mym ["to the water"] (Job 29:19). Also l ["on"], d ["up to"]. But when juxtaposed [= in genitive constructions] they are always plural: ly, ly, dy. And some are both plural and singular, such as lyy ["happy is he"] (Prov. 14:21). And there is a singular with the addition of a yod or without it, such as bl mšḥ ["no destroyer", bly ["without"], zwīl, zwiłty ["except"].

And sometimes the speaker may add a letter of adhesion: wbkn ydy ["and then I saw"] (Eccl. 8:10) [...] there may also be two, as in bšgm hw' bsr ["for he is fleshy"] (Gen. 6:3), and sometimes he may not add any, as in lyy ["if not, unless"] (Gen. 31:42).

Later on in that book Ibn Ezra adds that

There are some that are not juxtaposed, such as lw ["if"] l ["no, not"], k ["but, only"], gm ["also"], rq ["only"]. And most of the words of adhesion indicate the singular as well as the plural, masculine as well as feminine. Only a few words: zh ["this"] is masculine, as is zw: m zw yryty ly ["the people that I have formed for myself"] (Isa. 43:21), and the feminine is z't, and the word bly ["this, that"] is for the masculine and the feminine [...] and for the plural masculine or feminine: lh ["these"], also with the omission of the he: hhfbt h'l ["these abominations"] (Lev. 18:27). And some are inverted and the meaning is the same, as for l' m ["a no-people"], l tklw mmnmw ["do not eat of it"] (Exod. 12:9), and some interchange the letters y-h-w'. But the first person singular and the third person feminine singular as well as the plural is slightly difficult, it is also true. And with the word ydy ["with me"] alone, no other [personal pronoun] is juxtaposed to it at all.

Vocalization

Ibn Ezra addresses the rules of vocalization of some of the words of adhesion, stating that

The word of adhesion is found in the masculine with a quiescent šewa under the kap, the first letter vocalised with a qamaš, but mostly in pause: bty nh pl ik (lāk) ["if I sin, what do I do to you?"] (Job 7:20), and so also the word bāk ["in
you], as well as 'ydk (‘yātek) ["you", accusative], (‘mkk) ‘imāk ["with you"). And for the second person masculine [accusative suffix] on all verb stems the kap is vocalized with a broad qamas whether or not in pause [...] there is always a short pataḥ (= segol) before the kap. And for the feminine, it is vocalized with a quiescent šewa in the verbs, and under the first letter that precedes the kap there is always a [short] qamas (= šōŗēl), as in šbık (šēbārēk) bbb ymm ("wrecked you in the high seas") (Ezek. 27:26). And so also in nouns: ydk (yādék) ["your hand"], rāqîg (raglēk) ["your foot"]. And the words of adhesion are vocalized like the masculine pausal forms everywhere: kulāk yph ["you are altogether beautiful"] (Song 4:7).134

Ibn Ezra further adds that

the germination of the mem is for the assimilation of the nun and the germination of the nun is for the assimilation of another nun, and it is like [...] mmn̄ny. For the plural: mmnw (mimmennū), with the nun germinated for the omission of a nun, for the extant nun is the mark of the plural, as is the nun of bsl dlytwyv tšknh (tškonnā) ["will shelter in the shade of its branches"] (Ezek. 17:23). And for the third person masculine singular there is also found mmnw, wi’ fryw mmnw ["you shall not take anything from it"] (Deut 13:1) [...] It is also said mmnw ["from him"] alone. [...] and for the second person masculine singular: mmk (mīmkā) ["from you"]; and if it occurred in pause: mimāk, but we have not found mimāk at all. And for the feminine: mimēk, and for the plural with the addition of a he: mhm ["from them", masculine], mhn ["from them", feminine].135

3.1.5. The ‘words of sense’

It emerges from Ibn Ezra’s words in Sēper šaḥōt that the ‘words of sense’ (miwt t’m) constitute the third word class in the language: “Every tongue is divided into three parts, the first part is the noun [...] and the second part is the verb [...] and the third part is the sense”. In his opinion “it is sometimes a letter, or a word, and the sense is the reason of the event under discussion, and sometimes a single letter is found instead of the word of sense; and there are four such letters: šd”, “r’wbn”, “znh” šm’wn, “b” [“Reuben is like Simeon”], “r’wbn” qr’ lsm’wn [“Reuben called Simeon”], “r’wbn” nprd mšm’wn [“Reuben took leave of Simeon”]. But it is not the way of the šin to serve other than instead of “šr ["that"], therefore those who place šin in the sense of the letters have not said rightly, it is b-k-l-m alone. And there is no difference between wyr’ h’t mšh ["And the Lord called Moses"] and wyr’ h’t mšh ["And the Lord called Moses"] [sic.], it is also right to say wyq’ h’t mšh ["And the Lord called Moses"].140

The accusative marker ‘t

Ibn Ezra lists the accusative marker ‘t among the words of sense, writing as follows:

The word ‘t is one of the words of sense. I have searched and examined it and found that it is not like the words ‘l ["on"] and ‘l ["to"] vocalized with a pataḥ (= segol), for it is said on the verb and the object, or if omitted from the word it does no harm; whereas the meaning of bthw bh’ ["trust in the Lord"] (Ps. 115:10), bthw ‘l h’ ["trust upon the Lord"], you cannot say this thing without the bet or without ‘l. And znh bry ‘hy nkr ["lusted after foreign gods"] (Deut. 33:15 [= 31:16]), it is not said znh šm’wn ‘t ‘mtw ["Simeon lusted his maidservant"] for it damages the substance of the matter. Therefore it [= the

134 Yēsōd diqḏiq 106-107.
135 Yēsōd diqḏiq 107.
136 Sēper šaḥōt 32b.
137 Sēper hāriqmāh, Ch. 4, 41.
138 Sēper šaḥōt 33a-b.
139 Bacher 1882: 112.
140 Sēper šaḥōt 33b.

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accusative marker] is omitted and it is said b’syt br ‘lhym ‘t hámyw n’t h’rs ["in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth"] (Gen. 1:1).lnn hywm ‘sr br ‘lhym ‘dm l h’rs ["since the day that God created Man on the earth"], no accusative marker] (Deut. 4:32) […] And who so says that if someone says r’wbn hrg ‘t šm’wn ["Reuben killed Simeon"], that the word ‘t [the accusative marker] is the sign that Simeon is the killed one, is wrong; for we have found bn ykb’d ‘b ["a son honours his father", no accusative marker] (Mal. 1:6) and in reverse order ‘bym škw mym ["water wears away stones"], the object preceding the verb and no accusative marker] (Job. 14:19); and [instances of] the word ‘t [the accusative marker] being unhelpful since it came in places with the subject.141

Etymology

Ibn Ezra seems to sort the words according to their source: some of them are derived from verbs, such as ‘l ["on"] from l’h ["to go up"], h’ry ["after"] from h’r ["delay"] (Gen. 34:19), h’n from wthynw (Deut. 1:41); others are not derived from verbs.142

Ibn Ezra states:

For the word ‘l ["on"] is derived from ‘lywm ["superior"], and not so ‘l ["to"] vocalized with a patah [= segol], also pn ["test"] from ‘pwnh ["I am overcome"] (Ps. 88:16) or ‘pwnh from pn, which is the correct. h’r ["after"] from wl ‘hrr ["and the youth did not delay"] (Gen. 34:19) and it is sometimes said ‘hry in the manner of ‘l. And differently ‘şry ["happy is he", always plural […] and differently l ["no"], klw’ hyw ["as though they had never been"] (Obad. 1:16), ‘l b’pk ["not in your anger"] (Ps. 6:2) […] and this word is not juxtaposed [in genitive constructions] at all.143

Syntagmatic rules

Ibn Ezra notes that the mem sometimes joins one of the four letters b-k-l-m, leading to forms such as bmw (Job 19:16) and kmw (Ps. 58:16). He also presents the declension of the letter b with suffix pronouns: by ["in me"], bw ["in him"] etc. He further remarks that when a suffix pronoun is appended to m, another mn is added to it, giving mmny (mimmenni) ["[from me]" from mmnny (minmenni)], and so also mmnw ["from him"], and that caution must be taken when adding the first person suffix to the letter k: "It is not said ky for then it would be the coordinating conjunction, but it should be said kmwny ["like me"]).144

And differently are words to which you cannot add a letter except for pataḥ [="after"] from pwn, which is the correct. h’r ["after"] from wl ‘hrr ["and the youth did not delay"] (Gen. 34:19) and it is sometimes said ‘hry in the manner of ‘l. And differently ‘şry ["happy is he", always plural […] and differently l ["no"], klw’ hyw ["as though they had never been"] (Obad. 1:16), ‘l b’pk ["not in your anger"] (Ps. 6:2) […] and this word is not juxtaposed [in genitive constructions] at all.143

Inflection

Ibn Ezra writes on the inflection of several words from this group:

Some words of sense are singular and revert to plural in juxtaposition [= genitive construction], such as ‘l, l’y ["on"] […] and so also the word ‘l’y ["to"], and so is the rule of ‘l ["up to"], and some use ‘l in juxtaposition in the singular, like ‘l mšh ["to Moses"], but there is a great difference between the word ‘l vocalized with a patah [="segol"] and the word ‘l […]146

Ibn Ezra further notes:

And differently ‘sr ["that"], k’sr ["as, when"], l’sr ["to which"], m’sr yqtr b’yny ["because you are precious in my eyes"] (Isa. 43:4), and this word is said about singular and plural, masculine or feminine, and so is the word l’h ["these"], the he of knowledge [= definite article] being added to it: h’lh. […]

And the words of sense that are juxtaposed to others, such as ‘l mšh ["to Moses"], are said l’y (élay) ["to me"], lm’w (élénû ["to us"], l’k (élêkkî) ["to you", masculine], lk (élâyik) ["to you"], feminine], l’km (élêkem) ["to you", masculine plural], l’kn (élêkên) ["to you", feminine plural], l’yw (élâyîw) ["to him"], l’h (élêhâ) ["to her"], l’hm (élêhem) ["to them", masculine], l’hn (élêhen) ["to you", feminine].147

Demonstrative articles

Ibn Ezra also discusses the demonstrative articles in this chapter, stating:

ze ["this"] is the mark of the singular masculine, zw is plural masculine […] z’t is feminine, hiz is for masculine and feminine, db‘ l hn’r hiz ["say to that youth"] (Zech. 2:8), h’wmm’k hiz ["that Shunammite woman"] (2 Kgs 4:25), h’r’s hiz ["that land"] (Ezek. 36:33), with the addition of a waw it is a feminine. It may also be a masculine, or the word lzw is like l’z, for we have found n’tm r’s ["the land was burned"], the verb in the masculine (Isa. 9:18) and many such.148

3.2 Vocalization

141 Sêper šahóh 33b–34a.
143 Sêper šahóh 34a–b.
144 Bacher 1882:113, 145 Sêper šahóh 34b.
146 Sêper šahóh 34a.
147 Sêper šahóh 34b.
148 Sêper šahóh 34b.
Ibn Ezra made partial references to the vocalization of the grammatical words, mainly the letters, in various contexts. The main points are presented below:

**The Waw**

At the end of the word the waw with šuruq on the words of matter is the mark of the singular: kl p’l h’ lm’nhw (lammâ’ānēhû) ["the Lord made all for its purpose"] (Prov. 10:16[4]).

And at the end of the word it is always the mark of the third person singular, and found everywhere, it is found with a letter of matter such as bw (bô) ["in him"] and lw (lô) ["to him"].

**The Kap**

It serves at the start of the word. It serves at the end of the word only for the second person masculine singular with a broad qamas, and for the plural with the addition of a mem and under the cap always a short patah [= segol].

The matter is vocalized with a qamas on the kap, and if it was cantillated with an etnâh and sop pasûq, and sometimes with a zaqqep gadôl, the kap is set with a šewa, and the masculine is confused with the feminine, as

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149 Mō’znê lešôn haqqôdeš 12a.
150 Mō’znê lešôn haqqôdeš 11a-b.
151 Yēsōd diqdûq, 162–163.
152 Introduction to the second commentary on Genesis, 7.
153 Mō’znê lešôn haqqôdeš 20b.
154 Sāpâh bērûrāh 44b–45a.
155 Sāpâh bērûrāh 44b.
156 Yēsōd diqdûq 99–102.
157 Mō’znê lešôn haqqôdeš 7b.
158 Mō’znê lešôn haqqôdeš 6a.
159 Yēsōd diqdûq, 105–106.
in 'qwm lhwdvt lk (lāk) ["I rise to praise you"] (Ps. 119:63 [119:62]).

The Mem

Always with a ḥireq or with a short qamaš [= şārē] with the letters 'ḥ-h-r.'

The mem […] is min ["from"], therefore the letter following it is geminated (for the omission of the nun), as in msws (mēšśis), mgmi (mīgāmāl) […] If one of the letters 'ḥ-h-r follows the mem, the position of the ḥagēš will be quiescent and invisible [= unmarked in the script] after the mem, as in mih p (mēḥā dp) lmynhw (Gen. 6:20).

The Nun

And know that the letter that is the nun of the feminine plural will always be vocalized with a broad qamaš as in mšptn (mīspṭān) (Num 27:1), and if the word [on which the suffix is appended] is in the plural, it will be vocalized with a short pataḥ [= segol].

The Taw

The taw in final position is the mark of the second person for past verbs in all verb stems. For the masculine it is vocalized with a broad qamaš, as if after it were a quiescent and invisible [= unmarked in the script] 'aleph or he , and in the feminine it is vocalised with a quiescent šēwā under the taw as well as the letter before the taw. But if it is one of the guttural letters the letter will be vocalized with a broad pataḥ, and no word is an exception.

4 Conclusion

The study summarized the definition of the general concept of 'grammatical words', as reflected in the language of Ibn Ezra. It showed that Ibn Ezra uses the labels 'slaves' (bdym), 'servants' (mšrtym), 'words of matter' (mlt t'nym) and 'letters of matter' (wlyt t'nym), 'words of sense' (mlt t'm) and 'words of adhesion' (mlt dbq) to refer to the third word class, namely the words that are neither nouns nor verbs. According to Ibn Ezra this word class includes independent and clitic prepositions, conjunctions, adverbs and interjections, but also grammatical morphemes such as the affixes of verbal conjugations.

The various terms occur in most of Ibn Ezra's writings, including his Bible commentaries, as the topic and context require. It appears from the study that the definitions vary between the works specifically concerned with grammar and the unrelated works. Ibn Ezra repeatedly mentions the grammatical words' various functions and the flexibility in their meanings, which he sees as two qualities serving the writer's needs. The examination of Ibn Ezra's entire works enables to sort the various meanings and functions and the grammatical behaviour of the words listed under each of the labels used by Ibn Ezra in his discussion of grammatical words. Furthermore, Ibn Ezra's writings show that the terms are not synonymous. Ibn Ezra's comments on the word class to which this study refers as 'grammatical words' were presented here alongside each of the principal labels he uses for these words, and by this means each label is clearly delimited.

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160 Mō'znē lēsôn haqqōdeš 26a.
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163 Yēsôd diqdûq 101-108.
164 Yēsôd diqdûq 110-111.
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