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TOWARDS FOCUS MARKING STRATEGIES:
 MODERN EASTERN ARMENIAN AND BEYOND

The aim of this paper is to describe focus marking strategies of Modern Eastern Armenian and to compare them with those of other languages of the Caucasus.

Perhaps one of the most prominent features of this linguistic area concerning focus marking is the usage of an auxiliary verb immediately after the focused NP. That is true for most of the Nakh-Daghestanian (e. g., Icaric Dargwa, Tsakhur, Lak) languages as well as for Eastern Armenian, cf.:

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|-----|---|--------------------------------|--|-----------------|--------------------------|
| (1) | Vard-n
rose-(NOM)-DEF
'The rose grows in a little garden' | ač-um
grow-IPFV | ē
AUX.PRES.SG.3
(<i>neutral</i>) | p'ok'r
small | partez-um.
garden-LOC |
| (2) | Vard-ə
rose-(NOM)-DEF
'The rose grows in a little garden ' | partez-um
garden-LOC | ē
AUX.PRES.SG.3 | p'ok'r
small | ač-um.
grow-IPFV |

But note, however, the obligatory change of basic word order within the NP (in an unmarked case it is an adjective that precedes a noun), which occurs in Armenian but is, in general, not typical for Nakh-Daghestanian.

The situation is even more different in contexts where synthetic verb forms are used. In Armenian focusing causes a change of word order within the sentence (for, according to Comrie 1984, "the focus of a sentence <...> occurs in immediately preverbal position"). On the other hand, for example, in Icaric Dargwa focus marking in contexts with synthetic verb forms is impossible (the verb form should be changed).

One more obvious difference concerns the usage of so-called discourse particles with focus semantics: in most of Nakh-Daghestanian they behave just like auxiliary verbs in analytic constructions (i. e., are positioned after the focused NP), while in Armenian they are used before the focused NP, or at the very beginning of the sentence.

These and some other features of focus marking strategies in Eastern Armenian and other Caucasian languages will be the object of this study.

References

Comrie, B. 1984. Some Formal Properties of Focus in Modern Eastern Armenian // *Annual of Armenian Linguistics*, vol. 5, 1-22.