

Particles *teh* and *mah* as Topic Markers in Sundanese

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Many older studies on Sundanese generally refer to *teh* as an emphatic particle, and it has similarly been pointed out that *mah* shows contrastiveness. Furihata (1994) argues that both *teh* and *mah* function as topic markers, which introduce resumptive and contrastive topics, respectively. On the other hand, Müller-Gotama (1994, 1996) argues that *teh* is a marker of known information and *mah* is a focus marker that introduces new or thematized information.

Müller-Gotama (1996) explains that both *teh* and *mah* adjoin to the right of any maximal constituent. In my analysis (Furihata 1994), these two particles occur with constituents such as subjects, complements of the predicates (including object of the transitive verbs), prepositional phrases and adverbials (temporal, spatial, and so on), conditionals, and clauses (with or without conjunctions, with or without subjects).

As seen from the sentences below and many other examples, *teh* and *mah* take similar positions and usages. I will still insist that both *mah* and *teh* are topic markers, as opposed to Müller-Gotama's opinion.

If a phrase with *mah* is considered as focus, there must be a presupposition in the rest of the sentence or utterance. However, for example, *cengcelengan* 'piggy bank, cash cow' in (2) and *geus salamet* 'already safe' in (6) are not presuppositions; but, rather, are "what the speaker intends to convey to the hearer"; i.e., comments in information structures. Thus, the phrases introduced by *mah* (*Cikande* 'Cikande' and *ayeuna* 'now') behave as their topics. Also, if conditionals are considered as topics, as Haiman (1978) argues, conditional clauses with *mah*, such as in (9), also form topics.

- (1) Abdi *teh* bade ka Palabuan Jayanti. [subject + *teh*]
ISG FUT to port PLACE
"I will go to Jayanti Port."
- (2) Tong ah, Cikande *mah* cengcelengan. [subject + *mah*]
don't EXCL PLACE piggy bank
"Don't do that, Cikande is a cash cow." ("..., as for Cikande, it is a cash cow.")
- (3) Manehna geus lila matuh di dieu *teh*. [complement + *teh*]
3SG PERF long live at here
"S/he has lived here for a long time."
- (4) Tuh, tingali nu nangis *teh*! [object + *teh*]
look there! look at.IMP NMLZ cry
"Look there! Look at the crying one!"
- (5) Harita *teh* manehna make kaos wol. [adverbial + *teh*]
at that time 3SG wear shirt wool
"At that time, she was wearing a wool shirt."
- (6) Geus Emot, da geus salamet ayeuna *mah*. [adverbial + *mah*]
PERF NAME because PERF safe now
"It's okay, Emot, because you are safe now."

- (7) Ti dinya mah terus wae mulang deui ka Sumedang. [PP + *mah*]
 from there continue just go back again to PLACE
 “From there, (s/he) just continued to go back again to Sumedang.”
- (8) Mun kudu nunggak nepi ka tilu bulan teh
 if must not settle yet until to three month
 nya rek dikamanakeun beungeut kuring. [conditional + *teh*]
 EXCL FUT bring to where face 1SG
 “If I still cannot settle my debt after three months, well, I don’t know where to turn my face.”
- (9) Lamun aki palay uninga mah, nya di dieu
 if grandfather want know EXCL at here
 lembur kuring *teh*. [conditional + *mah*]
 hometown 1SG
 “If you would like to know, well, my hometown is here.”
- (10) Ti leuleutik kuring cicing teh di bibi. [clause + *teh*]
 when small 1SG live at aunt
 “When I was small, I lived at my aunt’s place.” (“..., it is at my aunt’s place that I lived.”)
- (11) Hade pisan ngibingkeun golekna teh. [clause (no subj) + *teh*]
 nice very dance puppet-DET
 “(He is) very good at dancing the puppets.”

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