

## *Fè l bouyi*: Null arguments in recipe contexts in Haitian\*

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**Abstract** This squib examines argument realization in recipe contexts in Haitian.

### 1 Licensing null arguments in recipes

Paul & Massam (2020, 2021) analyse the licensing of null arguments in recipes across a variety of languages. They show that null agents and patients are found in all the languages they examine, with the agent corresponding to the addressee of the instructions / the person following the recipe and the patient corresponding to the entities acted upon (generally ingredients and mixtures).

As Paul & Massam (2020: 99) stress, recipes are a particular type of instructional context as the instructions accompany a creative process. In how far medical bottle labels (Sadock 1975) and assembly instructions differ from recipes has to be left for future research.

Languages harness different syntactic means for the licensing of null agents such as imperatives (English, Niuean, Tagalog Paul & Massam (2020: 103), French (1)), infinitives (French,<sup>1</sup> German Paul & Massam (2020: 104), Spanish (2)), non-Actor Topic voice (Theme Topic or A-passive, Malagasy (5)), pro-drop (Japanese conclusive form Paul & Massam (2020: 104), (3), 1pl finite present form Spanish (4)) or reflexive passives (Bulgarian Paul & Massam 2020: 104, Romanian (6)).<sup>2</sup>

- (1) a. **Sift** the flour. (Paul & Massam 2020: 103, ex 14)  
b. **Ua**       halu e     talo (Niuean)  
   **NEG.IMP** peel ABS taro  
   ‘Don’t peel the taro.’ (Paul & Massam 2020: 103, ex 16a)  
c. **Faites**       chauffer le    sucre dans une casserole à feu moyen. (French)  
   **make.IMP.2PL** heat.INF DET sugar in    a     pot         at fire medium  
   ‘Heat the sugar in a pot at medium heat.’  
   <https://www.elle.fr/Elle-a-Table/Recettes-de-cuisine/Gateau-renverse-antillais-a-l-ananas-3441368>
- (2) a. **Faire**     fondre le    chocolat avec le    beurre dans une casserole. (French)  
   **make.INF** melt.INF DET chocolate with DET butter in    a     pot  
   ‘Melt the chocolate with the butter in a pot.’  
   [https://www.marmiton.org/recettes/recette\\_fondant-au-chocolat-plus-que-fondant\\_55396.aspx](https://www.marmiton.org/recettes/recette_fondant-au-chocolat-plus-que-fondant_55396.aspx)

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1 See also <https://www.elle.fr/Elle-a-Table/Recettes-de-cuisine/FLAN-ANTILLAIS-2031668>.

2 Abbreviations HC = Haitian Creole, MQ = Martinican Creole, SVC = serial verb construction. Abbreviations in the glosses follow the Leipzig glossing conventions with the following additions: CON = conclusive form (Japanese), NEG.IMP = negation in imperatives, TT = theme topic (Voice)

- b. Die Eier **trennen**. Das Eiweiß mit einer Prise Salz steif zu Schnee  
 DET eggs **separate.INF** the egg-white with a pinch salt stiff to snow  
**schlagen**. (German)  
**beat.INF**  
 ‘Separate the eggs. Beat the egg-white with a pinch of salt to stiff peaks.’  
<https://www.chefkoch.de/rezepte/1157481221922149/Apfelkuchen.html>
- c. Cocinar a la plancha hasta que esté dorado por ambos lados (Spanish)  
**cook.INF** a la plancha until that be.SUBJ.3SG golden on both sides  
 ‘Cook à la plancha until it is golden brown on both sides.’  
<https://www.bonviveur.es/recetas/anticuchos>
- (3) Toriniku-wa mawarini tsuiteiru abura-o teeneeni torinozoku (Japanese)  
 chicken-TOP around attach fat-ACC thoroughly **remove.CON**  
 ‘Remove excess fat from the chicken thoroughly.’  
 (Paul & Massam 2020: 104, ex 120, citing Shimojo 2019:515)
- (4) Tostamos las almendras en una sartén untada con una pizca de aceite (Spanish)  
**toast.1PL** DET almonds in a pan greased with a pinch of oil  
 ‘(We) toast the almonds in a pan greased with a pinch of oil.’  
[www.directoalpaladar.com/postres/dulces-de-navidad-receta-de-turrón-de-alicante](http://www.directoalpaladar.com/postres/dulces-de-navidad-receta-de-turrón-de-alicante)
- (5) a. Sasana Ø<sub>agent</sub> ny vary (Malagasy)  
**TT.wash** DET rice  
 b. ary arotsaka Ø<sub>agent</sub> ao anaty vilany Ø<sub>patient</sub>  
 and **APASS.pour** there in pot  
 ‘Wash the rice and pour into pot.’ (Paul & Massam 2020: 100,ex 4)
- (6) Se spală florile de soc și se pun pe fundul  
**REFL** wash.3PL flowers-DET.PL of elderbush and **REFL** put.3PL on bottom-DET  
 borcanului. (Romanian)  
 pitcher-GEN  
 ‘The elderflowers are washed and put on the bottom of a jar.’  
<https://www.e-retete.ro/retete/socata> (Elena Soare, p.c.)

As Paul & Massam (2020: 105,ex 22) stress, null patients are not generally available outside recipe contexts:

- (7) a. Add carrots and season. Boil for about 3 minutes.  
 b. \*I will add carrots and season. Then I’ll boil for about 3 minutes.  
 (Paul & Massam 2020: 105,ex 22)

Like null agents, null patients arise through different syntactic means. For Malagasy, Paul & Massam (2020: 101) argue that null patients - that can be ingredients as in (5)-b or the existing mixture as in (8)-a - are due to topic drop that is available independently. For Niuean, null objects of the type found in recipes are licensed independently as the inanimate 3rd person pronoun is null (Massam, Bamba & Murphy 2017).

- (8) a. Asiana sira  $\emptyset$ <sub>location</sub> dia ahena (Malagasy)  
 APASSIVE.put salt COMP APASSIVE.lessen  
 ny herin' ny afo  
 DET strength DET fire  
 'Add salt [to the soup] then lower the intensity of the fire.'  
 (Paul & Massam 2020: 102,ex 10b)
- b. Helehele ke kai mafanafan poke hahau (Niuean)  
 slice SBJV eat warm or cold  
 'Slice to eat warm or cold.'  
 (Paul & Massam 2020: 106,ex 25b, Traditional Niuean Recipes)

Paul & Massam (2020) propose that null topicalization can account for null patients in English and Malagasy, but also in Japanese and Niuean (see Paul & Massam 2020: 106-9 for details). The authors arrive at the conclusion that in recipe contexts null patients are licensed cross-linguistically by null topicalization (Paul & Massam 2020: 109, Paul & Massam 2021: 835).

## 2 Licensing null arguments in Haitian recipes

Haitian recipes use the imperative construction. There is no dedicated imperative morphology on the verb and the 2nd person imperative uses the bare verb form and appears without a subject.<sup>3</sup>

- (9) **Ajoute** 4 tas dlo nan yon gwo chòdye, (Haitian)  
 add.IMP 4 cups water in a big pot,  
  
**ajoute** pwa lave a nan chòdye a.  
 add.IMP bean washed DET in pot DET  
 'Add 4 cups of water in a big pot, add the washed beans in the pot.'  
 (for the complete recipe see Section 3.1)
- (10) **rele** m ! (Haitian)  
 call.IMP 1SG  
 'Call me!'

It seems that Haitian does not allow the null topicalization construction observed in other languages in (Paul & Massam 2020: 109). In all the recipes I have consulted, the patient is either realised as a lexical pronoun *l(i)* '3sg' (11)-a/d or *yo* '3pl' (11)-e or as a lexical expression like *melanj la* 'the mixture' (12).

<sup>3</sup> The imperative in the first person of plural is introduced by *an nou/ann* 'PRT PRON 1PL' (thank you to Mideline Dragon Jules-Saint for pointing this out).

- (i) An nou/n manje ! / An nou/n ale legliz ! (Haitian)  
 PRT 1PL eat / PRT 1PL go church  
 'Let's eat! Let's go to church!' (Mideline Dragon Jules-Saint, p.c.)

- (11) a. Mete kannèl, pò sitwon, bout jenjanm nan 4 tas dlo.  
 put-in.IMP cinnamon, skin lemon, piece ginger in 4 cup water  
 Fè'l bouyi.  
 make.IMP'3sg boil  
 'Add cinnamon, lemon peel, a piece of ginger in 4 cups of water. Make it boil.'
- b. Pran mwate pwa yo mete you nan blende avek dlo bouyi pwa  
 take.IMP half beans DET.PL put.IMP 3PL in blender with water boil bean  
 a. Blende'l byen.  
 DET blend.IMP'3sg well  
 'Take half the beans put them in the blender with the water from the beans. Blend (it) well.'
- c. Delye 1 tas akasan nan 1 tas dlo. Melaje'l byen.  
 dissolve.IMP 1 cup akasan in 1 cup water mix.IMP'3sg well  
 'Dissolve 1 cup of AK-100 in 1 cup of water. Mix (it) well.'<sup>4</sup>
- d. Apre vyann nan fin bouyi, retire l sou dife.  
 after meat DET AUX cook take-off.IMP 3sg on fire  
 Mete l nan lwil cho pou l fri vire l bò pandan l ap fri  
 put.IMP 3sg in oil hot for 3sg fry turn.IMP 3sg side while 3sg ASP fry  
 (ajoute pat tomat si l bezwen) oubyen mete l nan fou pou l  
 add.IMP paste tomato if 3SG need or put.IMP 3sg in oven for 3sg  
 griye.  
 roast
- e. Pran 1 pòm detè, 1 kawòt, 1 bètrav ; mete yo bouyi ak yon ti sèl apres a  
 take 1 ptato, 1 carrot, 1 beetroot ; put 3pl boil with a little salt after  
 koupe yo an ti moso  
 cut 3pl in small pieces... (Mideline Dragon Jules-Saint, p.c.)
- (12) Ajoute esans vaniy ak kokoye. Kontinye bwase **melanj la**.  
 add.IMP essence vanilla and coconut keep.IMP stirring **mixture** DET  
 'Add vanilla and coconut essence. Keep stirring (the mixture).'

It would be interesting (to cook some of these recipes, see Section 3) and to establish if the lack of null topicalisation in Haitian recipes can be related to the topicalisation constructions available in Haitian.

<sup>4</sup> In this context, *melanje yo byen* 'mix 3pl well' is also possible (Mideline Dragon Jules-Saint, p.c.)

### 3 Recipes

#### 3.1 Sos pwa nwa (Black bean sauce)

<https://timosotv.com/reset/sos-pwa-nwa/> (Note: The spelling in these recipes does not follow the current spelling of Haitian.)

##### Ingredients

2 Tas Pwa Nwa, 8-10 Tas Dlo, epis, pat tomat, Poud Epis,  
2 cup bean black 8-10 cup water, EPIS SEASONING, paste tomato, powder spice,  
Disèl, Luil Dou, Jiwòf, Ditèn, Pèsi, Lay  
salt, oil sweet, clove, thyme, parsley, garlic

##### Instructions

1. Triye pwa a anvan ou lave you omwen 3 fwa  
sort bean DET before 2SG wash 3PL at-least 3 times
2. Ajoute 4 tas dlo nan yon gwo chòdye, ajoute pwa lave a nan chòdye  
add 4 cups water in a big pot, add bean washed DET in pot  
a.  
DET
3. Ajoute, lay, luil dou, jiwòf, ditèn ak pèsi nan melanj la. Fè'l  
add garlic oil sweet clove thyme and parsley in mixture DET make'3sg  
bouyi.  
boil
4. Apre 2-3 èdtan pwa yo ap souf  
after 2-3 hours bean DET ASP soft/cooked
5. Si dlo a redwi twop, ajoute plis dlo. Kite'l bouyi ankò  
if water DET reduce too-much add more water let'3sg boil again
6. Pran mwate pwa yo mete you nan blende avek dlo bouyi pwa a.  
take half beans DET.PL put 3PL in blender with water boil bean DET  
Blende'l byen.  
blend'3sg well
7. Pase melanj blende a nan paswa a, ajoute sòs la nan melanj ou te  
pass mixture blend DET in sieve DET, add sauce DET in mixture you PST  
kite apa a.  
leave side DET
8. Ajoute dènye epis ak disèl pou ranje gou a. Sevi li ak diri blan.  
add last spice with salt for arrange taste DET serve 3sg with rice white.

### 3.2 Diri Kole ak Pwa Dekayet (Rice with Pinto beans)

#### Ingredients

3-4 Tas Diri 1 Tas Pwa Dekayet 8-10 Tas Dlo Epis Pat Tomat  
 3-4 Cups Rice 1 Cup Dry Pinto Beans 8-10 Cups Water Epis Tomato Paste  
 Epis Disèl Luil Dou Ditèn Jiwòf Pèsi Lay Bè Piman  
 Powdered Seasoning Salt oil sweet Cloves Thyme Parsley garlic Butter Pepper  
 Dou Pima Pike 1/2 Zonyon  
 sweet (green) Pepper hot 1/2 Onion

#### Instructions

Triye pwa a anvan ou lave you omwen 3 fwa. Ajoute 4 tas dlo nan yon gwo chòdye, ajoute pwa lave a nan chòdye a. Ajoute, lay, Luil dou, jiwòf, ditèn ak pèsi nan melanj la. Fè'l bouyi. Apre 2-3èdtan pwa yo ap souf. (see 3.1 for gloss)

Separe pwa a ak dlo bouyi pwa a. Pa jete dlo bouyi a, separate bean DET with water boil beans DET NEG throw-way water cook DET wap bezwen li pita. Nan yon lot chòdye, ajoute luil dou fwi yon ti 2SG-ASP need 3SG later in one other pot add oil sweet fry one small zonyon, pima dou, lay, epis ak pat tomat. Fè'l byen jonn. Ajoute onion pepper sweet garlik epis and paste tomato make-3sg good yellow add pwa kwit la, kite'l fwi pou 2 minit. Ajoute dlo bouyi pwa a, ajoute bean cooked DET let'3sg fry for 2 minute add water boil bean DET add pima pike a; fè'l bouyi. Pandan wap tann dlo a bouyi, lave diri pepper hot DET make'3sg boil while 2SG.ASP wait water DET boil wash rice a. Rense'l 3 fwa. Lè dlo bouyi, ajoute diri a. Kite'l kwit, sa ka pran DET rinse'3sg 3 times when water boil add rice DET let'3sg cook DEM FUT take 20 minit. Lè dlo a pweske fini redwi chale a. Kite'l finn kwit. 20 min when water DET almost finished reduce heat DET let'3sg finish cook

### 3.3 Epis (Épis)

<https://timosotv/reset/epis/>

#### Ingredients

1 tas pèsi, 1 tas lay, 1 zonyon, 2 piman dou, 1-3 pima pike si ou vle, 1 1 cup parsley, 1 cup garlic, 1 onion, 2 pepper sweet, 1-3 pepper hot if you like, 1 tas powo, 5 branch ditèn, 1/4 tas dlo, 1/2 tas dlo sitwon, 1/4 tas luil cup scallion/leek, 5 branches thyme, 1/4 cup water, 1/2 cup water lemon, 1/4 cup oil dou, 1 kiyè jiwòf, poud epis, poud jiwòf sweet, 1 spoon clove, powder spice, powder clove

#### Instructions

1. Koupe viv yo (sa ap fè'l pi fasil pou blende)  
 cut vegetables 3PL that ASP make'3SG more easy for blending

2. Ajoute luil dou, dlo sitwon ak dlo ak viv yo nan blendè a  
add oil sweet, water lemon and water and vegetables DET.PL in blender DET
3. Blende viv yo jouk viv you byen lis  
blend vegetables DET.PL until vegetables DET.PL well smooth
4. Ajoute melanj la nan yon veso, kite'l nan frijidè a  
fill mixture DET in a container let'3sg in fridge DET

### 3.4 Akasan - AK-100

#### Ingredients

1 Tas Akasan (semoule de mais, polenta), 5 Tas Dlo, 1 Kan Lèt Kokoye, 1-2  
1 cup akasan, 5 cups water, 1 tin milk coconut, 1-2  
Kan Lèt èvaporè, 3 Ani Etwale, Esans Vaniy a gou, Esans Kokoye a  
tin milk evaporated, 3 anis star, essence vanilla to taste, essence coconut to  
gou, Sik a gou, Disèl yon pense, Kannèl, Pò Sitwon, Jenjanm  
taste, sugar to taste, salt a pinch, cinnamon, skin lemon, ginger

#### Instructions

1. Mete kannèl, pò sitwon, bout jenjanm nan 4 tas dlo. Fè'l bouyi.  
put cinnamon, skin lemon, piece ginger in 4 cup water. Make'3sg boil
2. Delye 1 tas akasan nan 1 tas dlo. Melaje'l byen.  
dissolve 1 cup akasan in 1 cup water mix'3sg well
3. Vide melanj la nan dlo bouyi a.  
empty mixture DET in water boiled DET
4. Bwase melanj la detanzantan; wap wè melanj la epersi.  
stir mixture DET from-time-to-time 2SG.ASP see mixture DET thicken
5. Ajoute lèt èvaporè ak lèt kokoye a (Si'w wè melanj la two pwès,  
add milk evaporated and milk coconut DET if'2SG see mixture DET too thick  
ajoute plis lèt.)  
add more milk
6. Ajoute esans vaniy ak kokoye.  
add essence vanilla and coconut
7. Kontinye bwase melanj la.  
keep stirring mixture DET
8. Pandan melanj la cho pase'l nan yon paswa. (Wap fè sa pou asire  
while mixture DET hot pass'3sg in a sieve (2SG.ASP do that for ensure  
moun pap jwenn tout epis yo ki tap bouyi nan dlo a).  
people NEG.ASP find all spices 3PL REL PST.ASP boil in water DET
9. Drese Akasan a (Ou ka bwè'l chò ou glasè).  
arrange Akasan DET (2SG can drink'3SG hot or cold)

### 3.5 Taso (Goat or beef meat dish)

<https://potomitan.info/vedrine/reset.php>

**Ingredients** kabrit, bèf (goat, beef)

#### Instructions

1. Netwaye vyann nan, tranpe l epi mete l (nan yon chodyè pou l) bouyi.  
clean meat DET marinate **3sg** and put **3sg** in a pot for **3sg** boil
2. Pa kite vyann nan bouyi twòp.  
NEG let meat DET boil too-much
3. Apre vyann nan fin bouyi, retire l sou dife.  
after meat DET AUX cook take-off **3sg** on fire
4. Mete l nan lwil cho pou l fri vire l bò pandan l ap fri (ajoute pat  
put **3sg** in oil hot for **3sg** fry turn **3sg** side while **3sg** ASP fry add paste  
tomat si l bezwen) oubyen mete l nan fou pou l griye.  
tomato if 3SG need or put **3sg** in oven for **3sg** roast

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# **La grammaire est une fête**

## **Grammar is a moveable feast**

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