

# A STUDY OF *KPAKPA-JIALA* OF EDO DIASPORA IN ITAOGBOLU, ONDO STATE OF NIGERIA

By

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## Abstract

In the contemporary age, musical acculturation has become a global enterprise. Internal and external migration with cultural affiliation culminated in musical diffusion. During the pre-colonial period in Nigeria, internal migration was rampant due to the incessant wars of expansion and opportunities of cultural attractions. The presence and the role of the Edo folks in the Itaogbolu community and their connection to the source are so significant and evident in terms of their cultural heritage that linked the source. This study explored the musical activities of the post-burial rites of the people of Benin descent in Itaogbolu, popularly known as *Kpakpa-jiala*, but called *Ọkpọ ọkpa ozi gha la* in Benin and environ. The music is performed among the Edos to honor and ease the passage of departed elders and titled folks. This article employs an ethnographic method of research where interviews were conducted, and participant and non-participant observation were used to collect data at the locale of the research as well as the source. Findings revealed that *Kpakpa-jiala* musical culture has remained preserved despite the effects of modernity on it as an expression of change in its performance style and dynamic nature as an art. However, it concluded that the musical instruments, the repertoire of songs, and the performance practice remain intact with original formation.

**Keywords:** *Kpakpa-jiala*, people of Edo descent, musical culture, *Ọkpọ ọkpa ozi gha la*

## 0.1 Introduction

Music plays a major role in traditional societies and is intimately linked with individuals and groups within the larger society. It is considered a powerful part of the culture and everyday life, inseparable from sacred and secular ceremonies. According to Merriam (1964), music is a global

phenomenon that is embedded in every culture. It is a part of the culture of a people, and culture moves through time and thus through music. Traditional music is still practiced and performed widely despite the influence of globalization on world cultures. But globalization is not the only threat to cultures and groups, acculturation, Christian, and Islamic religions are other forces that developed within communities over time, threatening existing aspects of culture or subcultures. It is in view of this threat that this paper brings attention to and documents *Kpakpa-jiala* music of the Edo people who, in the past, migrated from the old Benin Kingdom to Itaogbolu for settlement. This music first drew the attention of the researcher during a burial rite in the year 1975 in Itaogbolu, a mixed community of Yoruba and Edo, where the general language is Yoruba. The burial rites and the music's language differed from those commonly performed in this community. The songs were sung in what was supposed to be Edo language, and the dance and costume were not of Yoruba culture.

The music as a system, repertoire, and culture of the Benin settlers was passed down through subsequent generations. The music of *Kpakpa-jiala* is made up of elements from the folk music of the people's culture, along with the traditional musical materials of their home location of Benin in Edo State, Nigeria. It is also part of their cultural identity in Itaogbolu, in Akure North Local Government Area of Ondo State, Nigeria. The music is called *Kpakpa-jiala* among the Edo community, being a mispronunciation of the original name from the Edo language, called *Ọkpọ ọkpa Ozi gha la*. According to <sup>1</sup>Iyase of Udo, it connotes, "*crab moving in succession in a straight line.*" The meaning given to the music in the Yoruba language is "*ẹni ọmọ sin ló bí'mọ*" (children only become the pride of their parents when they live to bury them). From the perspective of the names in both Yoruba and Edo languages, there seems to be a meeting point but a departure in meaning.

The significance of this music is its use as a rite of passage, musical identity, and cultural indicator of the Edo people of Itaogbolu. The conduct of the rite and performance of the music was exciting and captivating to the non-Edo indigenes that gathered to appreciate the activities performed for seven days. This study looks at the effect of modernization and increased

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<sup>1</sup> Iyase of Udo, His Royal Highness Patrick khoerutomwen Igbidun is the traditional head of Udo community in Edo State where the researcher went to authenticate the facts about the origin and the musical culture the Benin people in Itaogbolu claim. He was interviewed on post burial activities of the people including the Okpo kpo ozi gha la music on the 25<sup>th</sup> November, 2015.

homogenization of cultures in Itaogbolu on *Kpakpa-jjala* music among the users and explores ways of salvaging the music from going into extinction.

## **0.2 Theoretical framework**

Based on the expounded scope and frames of reference of the study of *Kpakpa-jjala* burial rite music, which was studied within context, it is found appropriate and more relevant to adopt the model of acculturation developed by John Schumann. It was derived from his Acculturation Theory which he developed based on studies of second language (L2) acquisition among schoolchildren. The theory states that the more second-language learners are immersed in the L2 culture, the faster and better they will become acculturated. This explains 'why children become acculturated far and quicker than their parents.' Parents are already established on their original culture while their children are not fully grounded, 'so can be more open to hybridizing their L1 spoken at the home culture and the L2 culture they encounter outside', (Anmelden, n.d.).

Furthermore, Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits (1936) defined acculturation as "the process of cultural change that occurs when individuals from different cultural backgrounds come into prolonged, continuous, first-hand contact with each other" (p. 146). This first-hand interaction causes changes in social and cultural institutions as well as individual values, attitudes, beliefs, and identities (Berry, 2003) (see <https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent>).

*Kpakpa-jjala* is a traditional music performed in a related traditional cultural environment by the descendants of the earlier Benin emigrants in Itaogbolu. The main issue is that the earlier performers and singers of *Kpakpa-jjala* songs sang in the original Edo language and melodic construction. The long stay of the people in the community and their contact with people of other cultures were responsible for the changes in character and musical culture. The texts of the songs now are neither in Yoruba nor fully in Edo. The instruments were also constructed in conformity with the model of the new environment. The organisation of the musical group and the elements were also influenced by the new cultural background.

## **0.3 Clarification of the concept of Benin or Edo**

The people whose music is under research claim to have their origin in the old Benin kingdom and, as such, are described as 'Edo' or 'Ado' at Itaogbolu. Suffice it to mention that the name 'Edo', according to Edo (2001: xxiii), refers to a group of related languages and dialects spoken by the majority of the inhabitants of the Benin kingdom and empire. It is one of the Kwa groups of the Niger-Congo language group. Furthermore, the old Benin kingdom was one of the earliest states formed in the forest region of West Africa. It existed before the thirteenth century A.D. It comprised Edo and non-Edo-speaking groups (Edo, 2001: xviii). The name Benin has three connotations:

First, it denotes the empire, which was made up of loose conglomeration of states that acknowledged the Oba's authority. Second, it stands for the kingdom, a smaller area, which may now be regarded as distinct from Ishan, Etsako, Ivbiosakon and Urhobo who are linguistically classified with the Edo....Lastly, it is applied to the capital city of the empire and kingdom, the seat of the Oba's government and the focal point of all political, economic, and social activities of the pre-colonial period.

The identity of Benin emigrants in Itaogbolu manifested in their music and musical behaviour distinguish them from the other ethnic groups. Among the communities that were part of the Benin Empire like Itaogbolu were those where the Edo people settled. The settlers migrated due to positive economic attraction and other factors, and they were called *Ado-Itaogbolu*. However, most can no longer trace their homes in the Kingdom. The original Benin names that the people initially bore such as Odiase, Igbinokun, Iyare, Omoregha etc, have completely changed in part or whole to Yoruba names. Most individuals and families that bore Benin names in the past have died, and their descendants neither understand nor speak the Edo language, except only the few who still relate with their place of origin.<sup>2</sup> Arala and Odu argue that 'one means by which the people could identify their individual family pedigree is from their distinct morning salutation. For example, the various forms of family salutations in Benin, which *her* indigenes in Itaogbolu also use for identification, include *lamogun*, for Edo royal family; *lagiesan*, for Ezomo family; *delakun*, for Ogie of Ugo family; *delahe* for the Elawure of Usen family, and so on. These

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<sup>2</sup> Arala Peter Imafidan And Odu Jimoh Joshua are two notable individuals who currently relate with the source and the custodian of Benin culture. They were interviewed on the subject of Benin descents in Itaogbolu in relation to those who still maintain their family names and salutations as means of identification. The interview took at place itaogbolu on the 16<sup>th</sup> August, 2016.

could also be used to trace the origin of individual families (Ayeyemi 2017). Another marker of the Ado-Itaogbolu is the *Kpakpa-jiala* which is still performed among them. This music is still performed in communities in Benin, especially in Udo, which this study used in establishing the Edo origin. Presently, a continuous link exists between the Benin people in Itaogbolu and the Udo people. This link tightens the relationship between both parties and, as such, acquaint the Itaogbolu people with the current activities and help them to stick to the culture.

#### **0.4 Brief background on Itaogbolu**

The approach to this paper would be in the brief historical background of the Edo people in Itaogbolu and their music as a cultural identity being practiced *beyond the capital*. Itaogbolu is one of the major towns in the Akure-North Local Government of Ondo State and, in the mid-colonial period, was reported to be the next largest town to Akure in the former Akure local Government before the creation of Akure-North Local Government (Captain Weir cited in Olugbeyiro, 2015). He further stresses that:

since the creation of Akure North Local Government, Itaogbolu and its environs have witnessed population explosion due to her strategic location, exposure to commerce, industries, government and educational facilities and peaceful co-existence, thereby attracting non-indigenes such as Hausas, Ebiras, Kwales, Urobos, Igbos, Ogojas Oyos, Tivs, Calabas to mention a few.

It is necessary to highlight the history of Itaogbolu community to reveal the mode of settlement of the Edo people in the town. Many factors, such as trade and security, were responsible for the migration of the Benin people from their sources into the various parts of Nigeria, especially the Northeast Yorubaland, Usuanlele (2018). The history of Itaogbolu, like any other Yoruba town, was not documented, but the histories are transmitted through oral traditions. A version of the history has it that there were two friends in the early 12th century who co-founded Itaogbolu town, while the present monarch of the community, Oba Samuel Idowu Faborode, in an interview, stated that an Oyo Prince founded Itaogbolu called Ogbolu, a slave trader who left Oyo and moved through many towns until he finally settled in at Itaogbolu.

Another version has it that in the days of inter-tribal wars of expansion, two men met at a place called Iju-Odo; Ogbolu, a trader from Oyo, and Edugie, a great Benin warrior and became great friends and partners in soldiering and slave trading. After taking captives, they

would take them to Benin to sell. Ogbolu and Edugie soon became a menace to their neighbours, who, out of fright of war from Edugie, the people of Iju-Odo decided to expel them through spiritual means when Edugie was away at war. When Edugie returned and could not find his friend, he was told that Ogbolu had gone beyond a river now called *Ona*, meaning 'big river.' Edugie then went to join his friend, and when they found that the land was fertile for agriculture, they decided to settle there and engage in farming. (*Memorandum to the Ondo State Judicial Commission of Inquiry on Chieftaincy Matters*, 1997:1)

The new camp where the two friends settled was an *orita*, (a junction) that linked neighbouring towns like Akure to Ekitiland and Ijare. Ogbolu, being the first to settle there, practiced farming and hunting, while his wife Odoro started trading in leaves that were abundant in the area. As a result, the junction became a popular depot for buying and selling as well as rest stop for travelers. Odoro, who sold at the junction, was addressed by customers as 'Eléwé' or 'Eléwé-ìta'. The news of the place continued to spread through the customers such that when anybody asked where they got their leaves, they would say from 'Ita-Elewe'. Because of this explanation, the Ogbolu was named *Elewe* of Itaogbolu. From the foregoing, it is established that the 'first original inhabitants of the camp, which later became a settlement as Itaogbolu were mainly Ogbolu and his wife Odoro, Edugie and his wife Oseere, and Jinginni, the domestic servant of Edugie' (*Memorandum to the Ondo State Judicial Commission of Inquiry on Chieftaincy Matters*, 1997:2).

After a period of stay in the settlement, the quest for expansion was raised by Ogbolu, who was made the *Baale*, head of the people, since there is no community without a head. Hence, Itaogbolu came into being and Ogbolu was made the head. Edugie was obliged to perform some rituals for the growth of the new community. He did that through the spread of the feathers of a fowl around the place by a very heavy storm in the night which blew wider and wider. People started migrating and settling with these two great men for security reasons, having known that they were warriors. Itaogbolu continued to grow until it became what it is today.

According to the Edo people's account, having ruled for some time, in his old age Ogbolu, suggested that the headship of the settlement be rotated between himself and Edugie, but Edugie stuck to the Edo custom that it was against Edo custom for any Benin man to be

made an Oba (a king) or wear any crown anywhere else since he was under an Oba reigning in Benin. He further educated Ogbolu on the custom of the Benin people that Odionwere is the highest title that could be conferred on any head of a Benin community outside Benin city and that those in Itaogbolu, and elsewhere should adhere to the custom. In their memorandum, the Edo folks said that both Edugie and his friend, formerly called *Elewe* of Itaogbolu, agreed to adhere to the custom in Itaogbolu. Since that time, the Odionwere has been the title of the head of the Benin community.

At the initial settlement stage, the Benin people did not intend to stay permanently at Itaogbolu. However, at some point in time, they threatened to go back to Benin en masse, their permanent settlement was further encouraged by Omo N’Oba Erediauwa Uku Akpolokpolo, the Oba of Benin, during his visit to Itaogbolu in 1982, he counseled them to settle where they were and that there was no need to return to Benin again since they had established themselves there for long. They had since settled and mixed with other ethnic groups in Itaogbolu and lived harmoniously within the town.

### **0.5 The concept of music in culture**

Music varies widely between times and places in every known culture, past and present. Okafor (2005) claims that ‘music is more integral with life in Africa and among Africans than it is in most other societies... In this respect, it is central to life in much the same way as is culture’. A culture’s music is influenced by all other aspects of that culture, including social and economic organizations, climate, and access to technology. The emotions and ideas that music expresses, the situations in which music is played and listened to, and the attitudes toward music by players and composers vary between regions and periods. Music is the expressive voice of a culture, which is often clearest in one city, country, or region (Wright and Simms, 2006). Tagg (2002) described music as a particular type of human sound production; the sounds are associated with the human voice or human movement. These sounds have functions involving aspects of communication, social and cultural situations.

There are many types of traditional music as there are occasions and demands. People in Yorubaland and some parts of Nigeria are made to experience intrinsically pleasant occasions where there is togetherness in enjoyment, and elements of such occasions may become

associated with them as when the sound of music is contextual (Keil, 1979; Waterman, 1990; Lawal, 1996). The various occasions and their exigencies determine the type of music to be performed, and wherever music is heard, something important is happening and because it is ethnically based, it manifests variations in form, structure, and context of performance (Omibiyi-Obidike, 2002).

As a piece of contextual music, *Kpakpa-jiala* falls into the category connected with music for social institutions, such as: birth songs, lullabies (cradle songs), initiation, rite of passage, love and marriage, coronation, praise songs, campaign and funeral; This is what Nzewi calls “event-music” Nzewi, cited by Onyiuke, (2011). *Kpakpa-jiala* music is a major event-music whose performance is part of the post-burial event of titled and elderly men among the Benin indigenes in Itaogbolu. In other words, the music is never performed outside of its designated life event.

#### **0.6 Death and burial belief associated with *Kpakpa- Jiala* music.**

Generally, socio-cultural activities among the Benin people are communally performed. Edofolk.com (n.d) states that there is little value attached to individualism, self-sustaining and an independent self. The Benin culture was defined, tested, practiced, and proven for thousands of years as the basis for natural adaptation, living, social growth and cohesiveness of the human environment. The burial of an elder Benin person was a social event for all members of the same society in those days when social integrity was superior to individual whims.

According to Omoigui (n.d), among the Edo-speaking people, burial customs depended primarily on whether the deceased had children; it was very uncommon for childless people to be buried by brothers or sisters with the same degree of fanfare as occurs with those with children. This informs the idea of *Kpakpa-jiala* (Okpo okpa ozi gha la in Edo) as a name of musical genre, which is interpreted into Yoruba ‘*eni omọ sin ló bí’mọ*’ and Edo ‘*owennobiomo yenyagbon*’ (children only become the pride of their parents when they live to bury them). Parents are proud of their children, especially when they grow into well-to-do members of society. The parents are not viewed to have been successful until the children properly bury them.



## 0.7 Highlights of the procedures of burial rite among the Edo in Itaogbolu

### (a) *Isinku* (Ihe Orinmwini-Edo) Interment)

According to the *Odionwere*,<sup>3</sup> (the traditional leader of the Benin people), interments were done at night among the Benin people in Itaogbolu in the past, according to the custom they brought from their homeland, but now, that tradition has become obsolete. Nonetheless, a major rite attached to burials is the performance of *Kpakpa-jiala* music at the place of interment, which still holds. This is significant because, with the music, it is believed that the spirit of the departed will be happy as it proceeds to the world of the ancestors.

### (b) *Ìje* (UGIE-Edo for festive celebration)

Traditionally, *ìje* means the seventh day (*ojo keje*). It is also known as a ceremony or rite performed on the eve of the seventh day after burial. *Ìje*, called ***Okpovbie*** (though used for any wake keep) in the Edo language, is significant in burial ceremonies among the Itaogbolu community. The *okpovbie* highly regarded among the Edo-speaking people in the town. No burial of a young adult or elder can be concluded without *ìje* being performed. Generally, this is significant because it is believed that without the observance of the *ìje*, the spirit of the dead would not be able to be admitted into the ancestors' company. But if it is observed, it is believed that the spirit of the dead can rest in the other world.

When all rites of *ìje* have been completed, the *Kpakpa-jiala* music performance commences as the grand finale to the *ìje* ceremony, where the seven songs would be sung and to which the children, brothers, *olóri ẹbí*, who is called ***okaegbe*** in the Edo language, sisters and other close relation dance. When the *ìje* ceremony is over, in the daylight, the widow or widower would be free to dress well, look gay and walk around the compound to relate with neighbours, prepare what she could eat by herself, and engage in other domestic activities.

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<sup>3</sup> Odionwere is the traditional head of the Benin people in Itaogbolu. The current Odionwere of the Benin people, is Hon. Chief Isaac Mesida Aiyeyemi who is also a custodian of culture of the people. He was interviewed on the mode of burial procedure from interment (*Isinku*) to the final burial ceremony (*ijahue*) on the 23<sup>rd</sup> August, 2014

It is the belief that the final aspect of the *ije* activity, which is singing, drumming and dancing (in the performance of *Kpakpa-jiala* music) accompanying the deceased as he or she goes away, and the performance of the rite makes him or her to be gladly accepted by the ancestors. Culturally, the belief that the deceased would happily join the ancestors informs the idea of taking good care of corpses in traditional societies and, as such, unequivocally establish the organisation of befitting burial ceremonies for the deceased.

(c) *Ijahue* (Izakhue-Edo)

It is important to note two words discussed in this section, namely *Ijahue*, (in *Itaogbolu*) which is also called **Izakhue**, in the Edo language. It is an activity that commences the full and final burial ceremony of a deceased person and is shared by the larger Edo community; the family and other close relations of the deceased go out (at an appointed time convenient for the family of the deceased) to inform the public about the ceremony. This tradition still exists among the Edo people in Itaogbolu and Udo, where the facts were verified. It is the first step of a full final burial ceremony which entails a day of singing, drumming, and dancing to the performance of *Kpakpa-jiala* music around the community. After this, the guests and the relations are taken care of, and exclusive social activities occur at the grand finale of the burial ceremony during the appointed time.

### **0.8 Recruitment, Training, and Membership of *Kpakpa-jiala* Ensemble**

According to Nketia (1974), two categories of performing groups exist in Africa. They are spontaneous and organized groups. Spontaneous groups are formed when people who operate outside of one associative relationship come together on their own accord to perform the music prescribed for a specific occasion. Sections of the community perform such music, that is, women, men or children. The groups are not, in any manner, permanent performing units within a social organization. *Kpakpa-jiala* musical group is an organised group that functions as a socio-cultural entity among the Benin settlers in Itaogbolu community. Worthy of note at this juncture is the name of the performing group, popularly called and known as *Ijigi*. *Kpakpa-jiala*

is a special performance used as burial rite music for the departed Benin elders by the *Ijigi* performing group.

According to <sup>4</sup>Ijaogun, the recruitment and membership of the musical group is based on the interest of any indigene of the Benin community in the town. The requirement for the enrolment is to write an application to the group, indicating interest and the desire to become a member. It is open to people irrespective of gender, but the person must be older than fifteen years. However, such individuals might have been going out with the group to understudy their activities before finally indicate his or her interest. Unlike Itaogbolu, the music in Udo, Edo State, is performed spontaneously. According to the monarch, the *Iyase* 'n Udo, the close family of the deceased come together to conduct the required burial rites for any departed elder. This includes the performance of **Okpo okpa ozi gha la**, or *Kpakpa-jiala* in Itaogbolu. When the emigrants settled at Itaogbolu, they organised themselves to preserve the procedure and required rites for burial ceremonies and other social activities.

### **0.9 Performance practice of *Kpakpa-jiala* music**

The performance practice of *Kpakpa-jiala* music of the Benin folks in Itaogbolu features songs with instrumental accompaniment and dance. They are characterized by call-and-response, solo-chorus and solo forms. *Kpakpa-jiala* music is performed with the accompaniment of musical instruments like *ilù* (drums), *agogo* (metal gong) and *şèkèrè* (rattles). Culturally, the central focus of the performance is neither the dance nor the instrumental accompaniment but the songs because of their significance in the context in which they are used. However, the three are inseparable because of their dependence on each other at the formal level of performance.

### **0.10 The place of songs**

The performance of *Kpakpa-jiala* music centers on seven songs and their significance to the social context in which it exists although they are more in the repertory but each performance feature only seven. Each song is sung repeatedly between three and five times or more (depending on the length of the song) with or without improvisation before changing to the

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<sup>4</sup> Ijaogun Saka is a Chief under the Odionwere of Itaogbolu who was also interviewed alongside with High Chief Odionwere on the on the 23<sup>rd</sup> August, 2014.

next one for the purpose of emphasis. The meaning of the songs was collected from the source that is Udo and adopted for a better understanding of the performance. This is because the descendants of the Benin immigrants to Itaogbolu can no longer speak or understand the Edo language. They stick to the pattern of performance handed down by the earlier generations.

**Note:** The musical score of the songs are outlined in the appendix section of this article.

### **Song 1: Kpakpa-jiala**

#### **Textual excerpt: Itaogbolu version**

##### **Cantor**

*Kpakpa-jiala*

*Kpakpa-jiala*

*Olomo jiala*

*Agan'ribi doohe eren owan ree o*

*Kpakpa-jiala*

##### **Chorus**

*Uro*

*Uro*

*Uro*

*Uro*

*Uro*

##### **Edo version**

*Okpo okpa ozi ghala*

*Okpo okpa ozi ghala*

*No mwen osaa do gha si, ahen vba gha rhiowa oo*

*Okpo okpa ozi ghala*

*Uho000*

*Uho000*

*Uho000*

*Uho000*

##### **Translation**

##### **Cantor**

One by one the crabs pass

One by one the crabs pass

All creditors are invited to collect what was owed them now

One by one the crabs pass

##### **Chorus**

in a single file

in a single file

in a single file

in a single file

##### **Cultural interpretation**

This song expresses the passing away of every individual one by one, like the crabs moving in a single file. Therefore, all creditors are invited to collect whatever is owed them now because

everyone passes away individually. It is not unusual for the dead to be indebted, and the debt is expected to be paid by the heir, with the money lender being requested to notify the heirs.

### **Song 2: Agoga**

#### **Textual Excerpt: Itaogbolu version**

##### **Cantor**

*Ee agoga, agoga yoo wo rinmi*  
*Agoga yoo wo rinmi*  
*Loo somoba, loo somoba*  
*Yigiyigi loha yegbe*  
*Agoga yoo wo rinmi*  
*Agoga yoo wo rinmi*

##### **Chorus**

*Ee agoga*  
*Ee agoga*  
*Ee agoga*  
*Ee agoga*  
*Ee agoga*  
*Ee agoga*

##### **Edo version**

*Agoba ne ovbiorimwin*  
*Agoba ne ovbiorimwin*  
*Osomwukpon vbe owa Alele*  
*Zighizighi no he yegbe*  
*Agoba ne ovbiorimwin*  
*Agoba ne ovbiorimwin*

*Ee agoba*  
*Ee agoba*  
*Ee agoba*  
*Ee agoba*  
*Ee agoba*  
*Ee agoba*

##### **Interpretation**

###### **Cantor**

Agoba, child of the deceased  
The eldest son of the dead  
Kinds of rags in Alele's house  
Dressed anyhow with rags  
The eldest son of the dead  
The eldest son of the dead

###### **Chorus**

Ee eldest son  
Ee eldest son  
Ee eldest son  
Ee eldest son  
Ee eldest son  
Ee eldest son

##### **Cultural interpretation**

The song is directed to the first son of a dead person called *orimwin* in the Edo language. In Itaogbolu, it is *orinmin*, one who lies lifeless on the floor. This son dresses like a warrior indicating that Edo people are warriors and as the first son, he takes on life challenges from where the deceased stopped and to defend his territory.

### **Song 3: Iserere Iserere**

### Textual Excerpt: Itaogbolu version

**Lead:** *Iserere iserere O, Iserere isebaba/iseyeye, Iserere iserere O, Omo sowa silopa*

**Chorus:** *Iserere iserere O, Iserere iserere O, Iserere iserere O, Omo sowa silopa*

### Edo version

**Lead:** *Isuehe isuḗhe o, Isuehe isuḗhe o, Isuehe isuehe o, Omo su' omwan s'ulakpa*

**Chorus:** *Isuehe isuḗhe o, Isuehe isuḗhe o, Isuehe isuehe o, Omo su' omwan s'ulakpa*

### Translation

#### Lead

Escort him o, escort him papa/yeye, escort him o, children escort ONE to the depth of the earth

#### Chorus

Escort him o, escort him o, escort him o, children escort ONE to the depth of the earth

### Cultural Interpretation

This song expresses the pride of witnessing the last moment and having the opportunity to escort the departed father or mother to the world of the ancestors and to the depth of the earth, which is described in the Edo language as *ulakpa*; in the Itaogbolu language it is referred to as *àjà-alè*. Therefore, a befitting burial rite should be organised by the children of the deceased.

This song is sung in Itaogbolu depending on who died among the parents. *Baba* (father) or *yeye* (mother) is mentioned where appropriate during the performance of the song, to which the children would dance.

### Song 4: *Do ihomo diomo*

#### Textual Excerpt: Itaogbolu version

##### Cantor

*Nama bia do ghe*

*Agan ri bi do ghe*

##### Edo version

*Noma bie do ghe*

*Agan, do ghe*

##### Chorus

*Do ihomo diomo Oo*

*Do ihomo diomo Oo*

*Do ghe vbọ ọmọ rhu nọ mwan*

*Do ghe vbọ ọmọ rhu nọ mwan*

### Translation

#### Cantor

One who has no child! Come and see,  
Barren person! Come and see

#### Chorus

See how children celebrate parents  
See how children celebrate parents

### **Cultural interpretation**

Like some others, this song further esteems children's quality and usefulness when they demonstrate affection for their departed father or mother. It also mocks those people without children. It beckoned to them to witness how worthy children joyfully celebrate their parents (father or mother).

### **Song 5: *Omo homo***

#### **Textual Excerpt: Itaogbolu version**

##### ***Cantor***

*Omo homo*  
*Omo homo*

##### ***Chorus***

*Ee Omo*  
*Ee Omo*

##### **Edo version**

*Ghomo ghomo*  
*Ghomo ghomo*  
*(Ghe Omo Ghe omo.*

*Ee ghomo*  
*Ee ghomo*  
*Omo ne Ogie)*

##### **Translation**

##### ***Cantor***

Children are greater than children  
Children are greater than children  
(Look at child, look at child

##### ***Chorus***

so it is  
so it is  
child that is king)

### **Cultural interpretation**

This song expresses the impression created by the children during the burial of either of the parents. The demonstrated features shown during the burial ceremony is different from the way other children who are not natured treat their dead. The result of this is what the song explains as 'Children are greater than children'.

### **Song 6: *Omo ree***

#### **Textual Excerpt: Itaogbolu version**

***Lead:*** *Omo ree o, Omo ree Baba (Yeye) oo*  
***Chorus:*** *Omo ree o, Omo ree Baba (Yeye) oo*

##### **Edo version**

**Lead:** *Omo ghe o, omo ghe rhawmen ooo*

**Chorus:** *Omo ghe o, omo ghe rhawmen ooo*

#### **Translation**

**Lead:** These are children, children of a father/mother

**Chorus:** These are children, children of a father/mother

#### **Cultural interpretation**

This song expresses the amusement children demonstrate at the burial of either of the parents. As in song number 5, this song is sung addressing the parent that passed on. *Baba* (father) or *yeye* (mother) is also mentioned where appropriate during the performance of the song, to which the children would dance.

#### **Song 7: Iyaroro Gbiese**

##### **Textual Excerpt: Itaogbolu version**

**Lead:** *Iyaroro Iyairoro aroro gbie O*

**Chorus:** *Iyaroro Iyairoro aroro gbiese*

**Lead:** *Iyaroro Iyairoro aroro gbie O*

**Chorus:** *Iyaroro Iyairoro aroro gbiese*

**Lead:** *Iyaroro Iyairoro aroro gbie O*

**Chorus:** *Iyaroro Iyairoro aroro gbiese*

##### **Edo version**

**Lead:** *Igha rhore emwen erha mwen, aro mwen vie sien*

**Chorus:** *Igha rhore emwen erha mwen aro mwen vie sien*

**Lead:** *Igha rhore emwen erha mwen aro mwen vie sien*

**Chorus:** *Igha rhore emwen erha mwen aro mwen vie sien*

**Lead:** *Igha rhore emwen erha mwen aro mwen vie sien*

**Chorus:** *Igha rhore emwen erha mwen aro mwen vie sien*

#### **Translation**

**Lead :** When i think about my father, tears flow down my eye

**Chorus:** When i think about my father, tears flow down my eye

**Lead :** When i think about my father, tears flow down my eye

**Chorus:** When i think about my father, tears flow down my eye

**Lead :** When i think about my father, tears flow down my eye

**Chorus:** When i think about my father, tears flow down my eye

#### **Cultural interpretation**



As earlier mentioned, the death of a father or mother leaves in the hearts of the children, spouse and close relations pain and grief. It also creates a vacuum that the departed had filled in people's lives while they were alive. The song describes the sustained grief, which makes tears run down from the eyes of the bereaved and as well creates deep thought in them.

These songs indicate that the children of a departed individual rejoice in celebrating their father or mother and witnessing his/her transition to the world beyond. The songs' theme dwells on children giving befitting burial to their parents and beckoning (in form of mocking) the childless to see the glory accorded people with children even at death. One of the songs has its theme as *Kpakpa-jjala*, which means 'children only become the pride of their parents when they live to bury them'. This indicates that the music takes its name from the theme. Since it is the main theme among the songs and the name of the body of the music, other songs support the main theme, regardless of whether it is sung first, within the performance, or at the end. Therefore, irrespective of the numbering of the songs, *Kpakpa-jjala* is considered the main theme of the music.

### 0.11 Instrument section

*Kpakpa-jjala* music makes use of two of categories of musical instruments. The first is membranophones, from which there are two drums; *iyá ilù*, mother drum called **emanokhua** while *omo ilù*, child drum called **emanekhere** in Edo language. Both are double-headed drums, unlike the ones at the source (Udo-Benin), which are single-headed drums. The *iyá ilù*, the mother drum, is the bigger of the two drums. It has a lower voice than the *omo ilù*.

Idiophonic instruments used in the performance of *Kpakpa-jjala* music are agogo (metal gong) which is called **egogo** in Edo and *Şèkèrè* (rattles) called **Ukuse** by the Edos.

The main role of *agogo* in the ensemble in Itaogbolu and Udo is to keep the timeline for the other instruments and for the purpose of enriching the music with its sound. The instrument in both communities has the same shape, but the sizes determine the sound it produce. *Şèkèrè* is a shaken idiophone made of materials such as painted gourd (in some other musical groups, the gourds are not painted). The paint done by its maker is for aesthetic purposes. Other materials

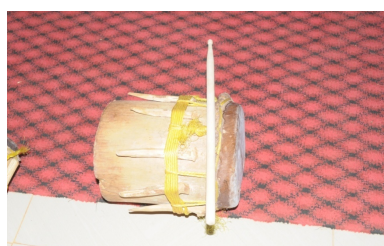
include beads and twine wounds around the gourd. In *Kpakpa-jiala* music in Itaogbolu, only one *sèkèrè* is used as a variant to that of the source where many *ukuse* are used.

**Figure 1- The performers of Kpakpa Ijala Music in Itaogbolu using the four musical instruments.**



**Figure 2: The four musical instruments during the performance of *Kpakpa-jiala* music. The pictures of the Musical Instruments used for Okpo okpa ozighala in Udo, Edo State. They were taken at the Palace of the Iyase N' Udo, His Royal Highness Patrick Ekhoerutomwen Igbiduru after interview section in his palace.**

Source: Field survey, 2015.



**Emanokhua**



**Emanekhere**



**Egogo**



**Ukuse**

### **0.12 Conclusion**

This paper studied the *Kpakpa jjala* music of the Edo Itagbolu, also known as the *Edo ne Ekue* community of Itagbolu, in the Akure North local government area of Ondo State. It showed that the Edo people of the Benin area of present-day Edo state had migrated during the Benin Kingdom's period of imperial expansion to engage in trading and military activities. The Edo migrants who settled in the Northeast Yoruba territories took along their musical culture. The musical culture practiced as part of their funeral rites after hundreds of years is still extant in Itagbolu. An aspect of their music called *Kpakpa Ijala-Yoruba (Okpo Okpa Ozi gha la* -in Edo language) was compared with its practice in Udo in Ovia South-West Local government of Edo State. It was found that the musical culture and songs remained the same. Still, the songs have been modified because of their inability to speak and pronounce Edo words correctly under the dominant Yoruba language of Itagbolu.

From the foregoing, it is concluded that Benin culture is rich, attractive, and difficult to abandon by users despite the long migration period from home and immersion in Yoruba and modern global culture. The major propelling factors that facilitate continuity in *Kpakpa-jjala* music and which also dominate in Yoruba traditional musical societies are historicity and functionality anchored in the use of the music from the perspective of socio-cultural bonds that link the music, music makers and users. The performance of *Kpakpa-jjala* music to the Benin people in Itaogbolu, who owns and use it, is to sustain and maintain the culture that links them to their homeland. It is obvious, therefore, that the geographical movement of musical item is subject to change (Ayeyemi,2017).

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## Appendix

### **Song 1**

### **Kpakpa-jiala**

A Study of Kpakpa-Jiala of Edo Diaspora in Itaogbolu, Ondo State of Nigeria

*Cantor*

Kpakpa-ji-a-la - Kpakpa-ji-a-la\_ o lo mo ji-a-la

*Chorus*

U - ro U - ro U -

4

A -gan ri - bi do - o - he e - ren o - wa re e o\_\_\_

ri U -

6

Kpakpa - ji - a - la\_\_\_ U - ro\_\_\_

ro U - ro\_\_\_

Song 2

Agoga

*Cantor*

Ee a-go - ga a-go-ga yo\_\_ wo-rin-mi a-go-ga yo\_\_ wo-rin-mi

*Chorus*

E - a-go - ga

4

Lo somo ba, lo so-mo-ba Yi-gi yi-gi lo-ha ye-gbe

E - a-go - ga E - a-go - ga

7

a - go - ga yo\_\_ wo-rin - mi

E - a - go - ga E - a - go -

9

a - go - ga yo\_\_ wo rin - mi E - a - go - ga

ga E - a - go - ga

**Song 3**

Iserere Iserere

*Lead*

I - se - re - re i - se - re - re o \_\_\_\_\_ *Chorus* I - se - re - re i - se - re - re

I - se - re - re i - se - re - re

5

o \_\_\_\_\_ I - se - re - re i - se - re - re o O - mo so wa si - lo - pa \_\_\_\_\_

o \_\_\_\_\_ I - se - re - re i - se - re - re o O - mo so wa si - lo - pa \_\_\_\_\_



### Do ihomo diomo

*Cantor*



Na-ma bi-a do he\_\_\_ A-gan ri bi do\_\_\_ he\_\_\_

*Chorus*

Do i-ho mo di-o- moo\_

4

Na-ma bi-a do he\_\_\_

Do - i - ho - mo di - o - moo\_ Do - i - ho - mo di - o - moo\_

7

Do he do\_\_\_ he\_\_\_ A-gan ri bi do he\_\_\_

Do - i - ho - mo di - o - moo\_

10

Do he do\_\_\_ he\_\_\_

Do - i - ho - mo di - o - moo\_ Do - i - ho - mo di - o - moo\_

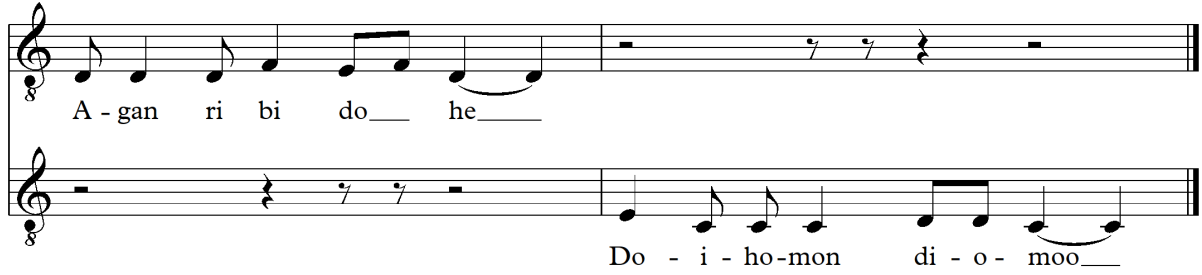
13

Na - ma bi - a do he\_\_\_

Do - i - ho - mo di - o - moo\_

A Study of Kpakpa-Jiala of Edo Diaspora in Itaogbolu, Ondo State of Nigeria

15

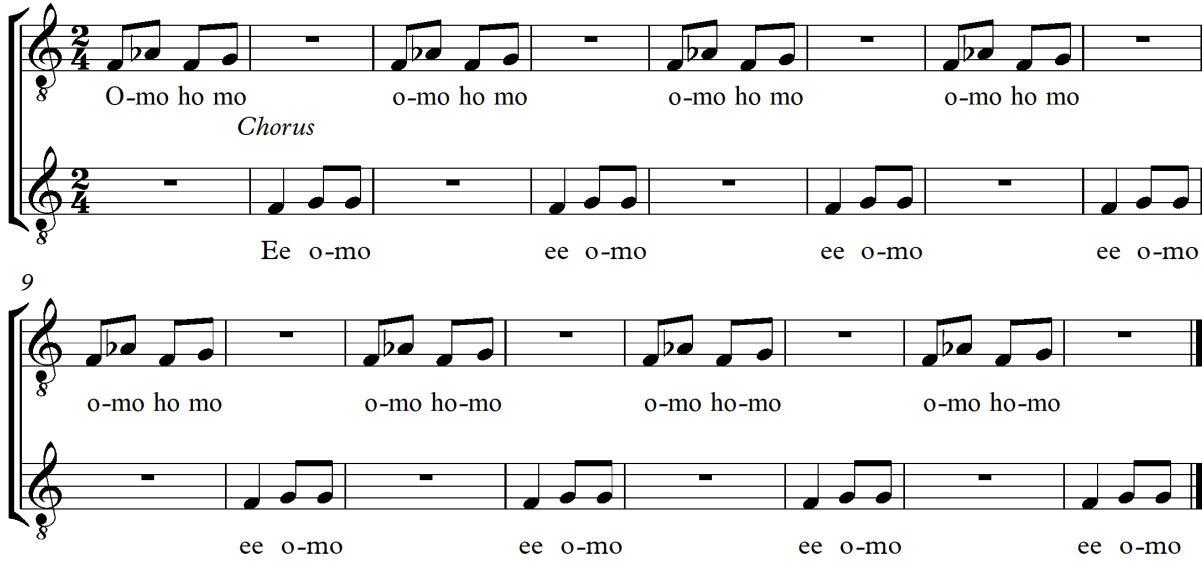


A - gan ri bi do he  
Do - i - ho-mon di - o - moo

Song 5

Omo homo

*Cantor*



O-mo ho mo o-mo ho mo o-mo ho mo o-mo ho mo  
*Chorus*  
Ee o-mo ee o-mo ee o-mo ee o-mo  
9  
o-mo ho mo o-mo ho-mo o-mo ho-mo o-mo ho-mo  
ee o-mo ee o-mo ee o-mo ee o-mo

**Song 6**

**Omo ree**

A Study of Kpakpa-Jiala of Edo Diaspora in Itaogbolu, Ondo State of Nigeria

*Lead*

'Mo re-e o, O-mo re-e ba-ba o

*Chorus*

'Mo re-e o, O-mo re-e ba-ba o

3

'Mo re-e o, O-mo re-e ba-ba o

'Mo re-e o, O-mo re-e ba-ba o

5

'Mo re-e o, O-mo re ba-ba o

'Mo re-e o, O-mo re-e ba-ba o

7

'Mo re-e o, O-mo re ba-ba o

'Mo re-e o, O mo re-e ba-ba o

9

'Mo re-e o, O-mo re-e ba-ba o

'Mo re-e o, O mo re-e ba-ba o

11

'Mo re e o , O-mo re-e ba-ba o

'Mo re-e o , O mo re-e ba ba o

Song 7

Iyaroro Gbiese

*Cantor*

I-ya ro-ro i-ya i-ro - ro a-ro-ro gbie o\_\_\_

*Chorus*

I-ya ro-ro i-ya - i-ro -

4

I-ya ro-ro i-ya - i-ro - ro a-ro-ro gbie o\_\_\_

ro a-ro-ro gbie - se\_\_\_

7

I-ya ro-ro i-ya - i-ro -

I-ya ro-ro i-ya - i-ro - ro a-ro-ro gbie - se\_\_\_

10

ro a-ro-ro gbie o\_\_\_

I-ya ro-ro i-ya - i-ro - ro a-ro-ro gbie - se\_\_\_