Cultural Exchange and Acculturation at Confucius Institute, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka

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Abstract
The cross-cultural experiences of Chinese teachers and Igbo learners of Chinese at Confucius Institute (CI) at Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka (Unizik) in Nigeria have in recent years received intense research, but only a few number of studies have considered how these teachers and students adapt to cultural exchange and acculturation strategies employed in their teaching and learning environments respectively. This study adopts Berry's acculturation framework (1980, 1997, and 2005) to address the academic gap. The study researches the challenges perceived by both the Chinese teachers and Igbo learners of Chinese in both their teaching/learning environments, their coping strategies and their respective pattern of adaptation to cultural integration and assimilation. Findings indicated that the Chinese teachers tended to develop close contact with the host community while maintaining their original culture, adopting integration and assimilation in their acculturation modes. Also highlighted is the teacher-student bonding between the Chinese teachers and the students through personal values, cultural adjustments/shifts, socialization, building networks, etc. The pedagogical implication of the findings suggested that cross-cultural communication has been enhanced between Nigeria and China through the teaching and learning of Chinese at CI in Unizik.
Keywords: Cross-cultural, Teaching, Learning, Cultural exchange, Chinese, Igbo, Acculturation

Introduction
Language, irrespective of its complexity has served man as a medium of communication over the ages. This is because language is a social phenomenon that accounts for social togetherness. Language teaching has always emphasized the development of four (4) basic skills: listening comprehension, reading comprehension, writing and speaking. The teachers as the mediators between cultures can freely choose, apart from the curriculum, different topics and phenomena which can easily meet their requirements of intercultural exchange. Virtually, all types of contact between individuals of diverse cultures are as old as man. People from one culture have always visited other societies for business, education, globalization of industry, educational exchange. Mobility of foreign teachers/students accounts for intercultural contacts across national and international boundaries.

The China-Nigeria cultural exchange via education was further strengthened with the establishment of the Confucius Institute (CI) at Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka (Unizik), in September 2008, in agreement with Hanban. The CI at Unizik is one of the 158 Confucius institutes in 146 different countries around the world. Over the years, there has been a steady increase in the number of Chinese teachers and students, teaching and learning the language at the institute. The CI at Unizik has expanded to include a Confucius Classroom (CC) at the Federal Polytechnic Oko, Confucius Teaching Point (CTPs) at Unizik Primary school and Unizik High school, The Chinese Cultural Center (CCC) at Abuja and the University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State. Other CI and learning centers are cited in Lagos, Kano, and Cross River.

The CI students' population is drawn from primary schools, secondary schools, tertiary institutions, the business community, artisans etc. Over the years, the CI at Unizik has trained over 10,000 students through the different academic programmes; HSK classes (comprising Levels 1-6), HSKK and the "B.A degree (which was established at the Faculty of Art in 2014 after full accreditation by the National University Commission (NUC) in 2017). The unprecedented academic records of the CI students are evident in their performances at various levels of external examinations such as; HSK (1-6), HSKK (including the advanced oral examination) and B.A Chinese degree. The pass level is adjudged as the highest in the world (according to the Statistics released by Hanban, 2018).

The above academic progress witnessed at CI in Unizik motivated the researchers to investigate how the Chinese teachers and the students perceive their teaching and learning environments, the adaptation processes employed to aid teaching and learning and how their perception and adaptation strategies have, over the years enhanced cross-cultural exchange and acculturation. The general belief is that when two different cultures come in contact (in this case via education), the tendency is for there to be culture shock emanating from different languages, values, foods, perceptions, etc. Going by the increasing numbers of Chinese teachers volunteering to teach at CI, and the corresponding numbers of students from CI studying in China through CI and government scholarships, it is enough to further strengthen the relationship between Nigeria and China. The ultimate goal of China in sharing her culture and language with the Nigerian youths/students, who enrolled via CI and China government scholarship, is that China- trained Nigerian youths may in the nearest future serve as volunteer ambassadors of Chinese culture. Therefore, it is important to investigate how the Chinese teachers and the Igbo - Chinese learners exchange cultures. The notion is that teachers and learners should be able to acculturate to the target language groups at the same time. The concern of the present study is to look at the cultural adaptation and acculturation strategies of Chinese teachers from China and Nigerian students teaching and learning Chinese as L2 respectively at CI in Unizik.

Research questions
The study was guided by the following research questions:
(a) How do Chinese teachers and Nigerian (Igbo) learners perceive their teaching/learning environments?
(b) What cultural strategies for acculturation do these teachers/students adopt in these environments?
(c) How do the teachers'/students' perceptions and the adaptation strategies they used to cope with their environments enhance cross-cultural relationships?

Theoretical Framework

Berry (1980) developed a working model of acculturation attitudes in which the different ways that people acculturate is outlined. The model involves two major claims; the extent to which people tend to maintain their original culture and the extent to which people tend to have contact with the people and the culture of the place of residence. Four strategies were developed by Berry from the model showing the possible outcomes between the two cultures; Assimilation, Integration, Separation/Segregation and Marginalization. According to Berry 'Assimilation is the acculturation strategy in which people do not maintain their original culture but tend to have close contact with the people of the target society, and in some instances fully accepts and adopts the culture of the place of residence. Integration is the acculturation strategy in which people both tend to maintain their original culture and have close contact with the people of the target society. That is, apart from retaining their original culture, they participate in and assimilate into the new culture. This is an important aspect of the fusion of different groups in a multicultural society. Separation/Segregation is the acculturation strategy in which people tend to maintain their original culture and avoid contact with the people of the target society. Marginalization is the acculturation strategy in which people neither tend to maintain their original culture nor tend to have contact with the people of the target society' (Sam & Berry, 2010) cited in Valid, Lins et al (2013)   The scale of the four (4) strategies can be summarized in table 1 below;

Table1: Acculturation strategies.
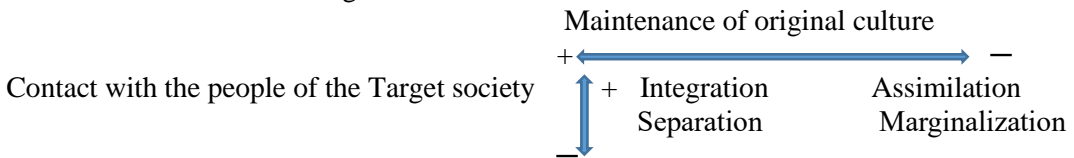
Other studies in the past have looked at how L2 learners' degree of acculturation affects L2 acquisition in different populations. Lybeck (2002) investigates the social exchange network model with English native speakers who acquired Norwegian as their L2. He found out that those who developed positive network connections with native Norwegian speakers exhibited more close to native Norwegian pronunciation than those who had greater difficulty establishing such relationship.

In a similar study, Hansen (1995) analyzes German–born American immigrants' acculturation on the varieties identified in Shummans' acculturation model and found that acculturation related with native-like phonation of successful older-arrival-age speakers was evident in both their careful reading and spontaneous speech tasks.

Margoret and Gardners (1999) investigate the Spanish-speaking participants who acquired English as L2 in Canada, the results show that participants' assimilation, assessed by linguistic assimilation, cultural assimilation and Berry's (1980) measure of assimilation affected self-rated L2 proficiency

Some past research on L2 learning has been done on population that speak Indo-European languages as their native language (see Bialystok & Miller 1979). It is discovered that acquiring L2 within the same language family may be quite different from learning a language of a different family. The current study is based on those who spoke a different language family (i .e Sino -Tibetan and Kwa) language families as their native languages

Other research on L2 looked at the teacher/student and the learning environment. Lee &VanPattern (2003) cited in Briggs (2014), claim that effective language teaching is centered on the teacher's role as facilitator and the students' roles as active participants in a student-centered, communicative classroom; the role of an L2 language teacher is imputing what students can understand and process in the minds; grammar instruction and other tenets of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) methodology, also the role of the students in acquiring L2 include the importance of interaction in the target language; using the language in a meaningful way to accomplish a set of tasks and communicative roles. He averred that a teacher should lead the students towards a communicative goal by giving them the tools to complete meaningful real-life activities; e.g. writing, video, pictures, verbal communication and so on. Lee and VanPattern described this as 'petroleum that can come in various forms and levels of quality'. Briggs (2014) notes that 'it is important to use the target language as much as possible in the classroom, even for beginners-level students'. He advocates that 'the target language be used at least 90% of class time by both teachers and students. The students are 'to process the input they receive in their memory, this becomes intake which eventually becomes part of the learners' interlanguage awaiting the time learners are expected to provide output (see Swam & Lapkan1998, Swam 2005, Briggs 2014)

In terms of classroom environment, Briggs (2014) presents the ideal classroom environment for SLA as 'one in which the teacher and the students interact in a relaxed, respectful, positive atmosphere, he provides a list of ten (10) commandments for motivating students; the use of authentic texts, technology- based to improve communication and motivation to study the target language (TL), lower anxiety level of the tasks assigned helped to increase students' confidence and their willingness to communicate (see Kreshen 1982, Maclntype 2007, Dorryen & Csizer 1998, Briggs 2014).

Methodology

The descriptive survey design is chosen for this research, while a quantitative and qualitative research approach was employed. For want of space, 60 students were selected to represent the Nigerian student studying Chinese at CI, while a sample of 20 Chinese teachers were selected to represent those teaching Chinese at CI. Ten people were randomly selected for interview. Instrument for data collection include oral interview; direct contact and through telephone, participation, observation. Others include, books, journals and online publications.

Data Presentation

Presented below are the tables and bar charts representing the numbers of students at CI, numbers of Chinese teachers at CI, and numbers of CI and government scholarships awardees over a period of ten years (2009- 2019).

Table 2: Statistical list about CI Students in Unizik

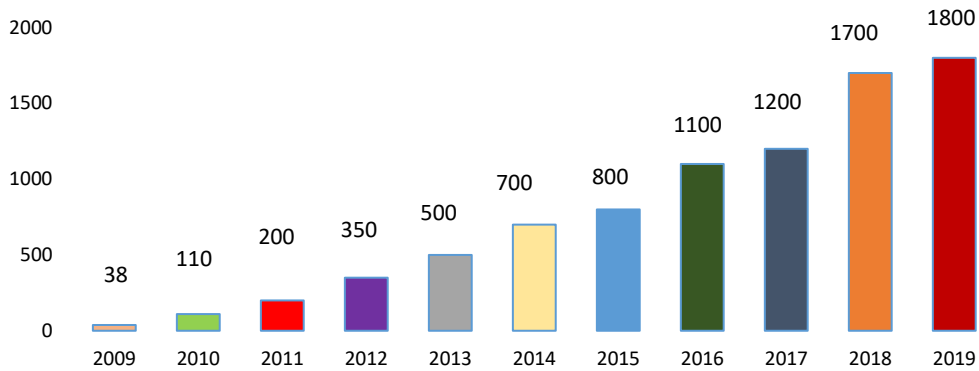| Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Number	38	110	200	350	500	700	800	1100	1200	1700	1800

Chart 1: Number of Students at CI Unizik   Source: Field Survey 2019

Table 3: Statistical list about Chinese Teachers in CI Unizik

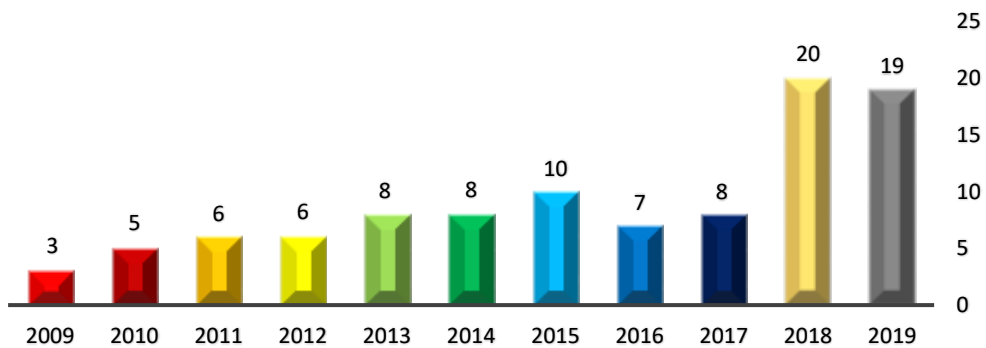| Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Number	3	5	6	6	8	8	10	7	8	20	19

Chart 2: Number of Chinese Teachers at CI Unizik.   Source: Field Survey 2019

Table 4:   Statistical list about CI Scholarships in UNIZIK

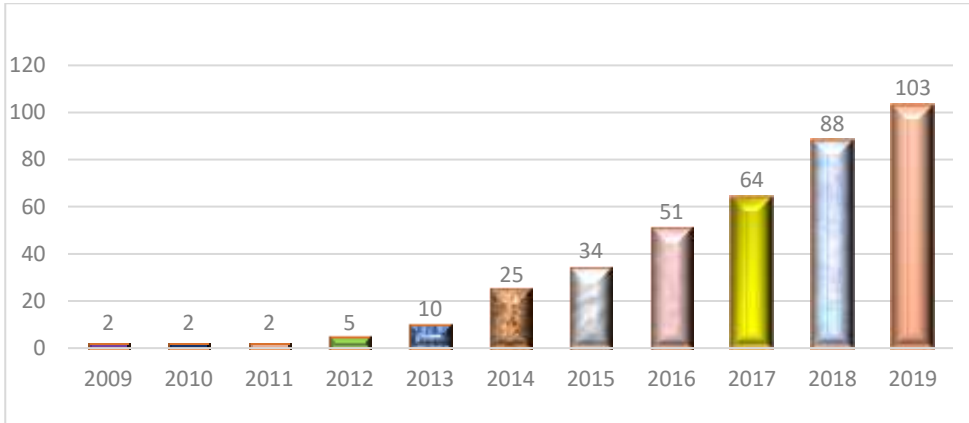| Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Number	2	2	2	5	10	25	34	51	64	88	103

Chart 3: Number of Scholarships at CI Unizik   Source: Field Survey 2019

It must be noted that the students that acquired scholarships are studying in various universities in China, such as Xiamen University, Nankang University, Communication University of China, Shanghai International Language University, South East University, Hebei University and Lanzhou University (to mention but a few).

Following a multiculturalism perspective, Berry's (1980, 1997, and 2005) two-dimensional model is adopted for the current study since it is believed to be the best cultural adaptation model for acculturation. In other words, when the Chinese teachers and the Nigerian students come in contact at CI for teaching and learning of Chinese as L2, Assimilation is not the expected result rather the result is 'integration'; trying to reconcile the original culture and the culture of the host community by 'creating an adaptive and coherent' whole (see Benet- Martinez & Haritatos, 2005).

Presented below (table 5 & 6) are the evidence of the socio-cultural shifts resulting in the adoption of Igbo names by the Chinese teachers and adoption of Chinese names by the Nigerian students teaching and learning Chinese respectively at CI in Unizik.

Table 5: Chinese teachers and the adopted Igbo names

S/N	Name of Chinese Teacher	Igbo Name	Meaning
1	Yuxu Hua	Onyinye	Gift
2	Yu Zhangbao	Chukwudi	There is God
3	Qin Fangfang	Ifeoma	Good thing
4	Qu Xuejiao	Chioma	Good God
5	Chen Xianbo	Ojiugo	Beautiful
6	Muchaochao	Chidi	There is God
7	Wan Shaojuan	Ifunanya	Love
8	Wang Bo	Chinedu	God leads
9	Yong Linna	Ngozi	Blessing
10	Wang Shan	Ifeoma	Good thing
12	Wang Hong	Mmesoma	Good deeds
13	Li Xiao Xiao	Ijeoma	Good journey
14	Xiong Meng Di	Amaka	Beautiful
15	Ma Ting	Amara	Grace
16	Huang Changbin	Okechukwu	God's share
17	Xu Wei	Chisom	God with me
18	Ji Nengwen	Chukwuka	God is greater
19	Yang Song	Ifeanyi	Nothing greater than God
20	Wu Qunbin	Emeka	He has done great things

Source: Field survey 2019.

Table 6: Nigerian students and the adopted Chinese names

S/N	Name of Student	Adopted Chinese Name	Meaning
1	Akinsehinwa Peace	宇文杰	Outstanding, prominent
2	Modesther Ani	唐乐明	Cheerful, bright future
3	Ajayi Anna	安乐雯	happy, carefree like the clouds
4	Muruako Emmanuel	张神智	Wise like the gods
5	Alli Abiodun	张墨君	knowledgeable gentleman
6	Alli Victoria	张晓红	Red
7	Onuora Blessing	谢小福	Blessed
8	Victor Onyidinma	习文胜	Knowledgeable ,victorious
9	Blessing Ezidinmma	丁姗	Lithe
10	Chinedu	张明凯	very bright future and victorious
11	Oluchi	林雅妍	Gracefully beautiful
12	Ugochukwu	何力勇	full of strength and ability
13	Chiamaka	韩乐乐	Happiness
14	Akachukwu	墨翰	Intellectual
15	Chibutom	白鸽	White dove
16	Kosiso	李诗娴	Elegant
17	Chisom	按李啥	Calm and beautiful
18	Chinelo	齐海闻	The famous one
19	Chiamaka	玫瑰	Rose
20	Oluebube	陆琪琪	Precious
21	Chinenye	海宁	Making peace
22	Nnabuike	周坤宇	God is powerful
23	Ugwuoke Onyinye	田笑文	Laughter
24	Lawrence Kelechi	宏伟	Great
25	Aniedfobe Emmanuel	爱玛	Emmanuel
26	Igwe Chidinma	李文晴	Bright like the sun
27	Daniel Olusanya	李丹阳	Having a male positive nature.
28	Agwu Progress	高晋	Progress
29	Ezewanne Chikezie	赵海生	deep like the sea
30	Samuel Sarah	刘佳欣	Beautiful and glad
31	Okoye Anigbogu	王希谋	Hopeful
32	Larry Nwankpa	石家博	Deep knowledge
33	Ugochukwu Peace	赵勤飞	Diligent
34	Miriam Emu	高美丽	Pretty
35	Nwobi Blessing	安乐福	Happily blessed
36	Ezugwu Ebuka	丁乐兵	Disciplined like a soldier
37	Amadi Precious	卢芳	Fragrant
38	Ezike Chinazo	顾天谋	Heaven's plan
39	Otika Anselem	王笛	King of the flute
40	Bartholomew Timothy	李君豪	Classic man
41	Muruako Pius	陈斯	Thinker
42	Innocent Chiemela	李刚毅	Iron will
43	Welumkalu Amobi	宇刚宝	Priceless
44	Okoye Chinenye	区天艺	Gift of nature
45	Ugoaru Chinaemerem	李中华	China plum
46	Onwualu Heaven	齐海闻	The famous one
47	Ugwu Chukwuemeka	马俊彦	Talented and accomplished
48	Heritage Onwualu	遗产	My inheritance
49	Nwaeke Emmanuel	马成功	Success
50	Okoye Prince	贤才	Genius
51	Obi Chinenye	许书摇	A precious lady
52	Mbah Amos	李晓龙	Superman
52	Ifunanya Olisah	可爱	Adorable
53	Okoye Meto David	大伟	David
54	Oledibe Raphael	强龙	Powerful dragon

55	Ugwu Chukwuebuka	何彦龙	Noble character and ability
56	Golibe Loyce	优美	Elegant and graceful
57	Obiora Kenechukwu	杨志城	Popular, full of aspiration and sincere
58	Umeojiege Onyiyechukwu	吴佳琦	Beautiful and valuable stone
59	Nwachukwu Adaeze	李昕然	Brightness
60	Emetu Lilian	苏秒妍	Clever and beautiful

Data Analysis and Discussion

Table 2-4 represent the number of students enrolled to study Chinese at CI, the number of Chinese teachers sent by Hanban to teach at CI Unizik and the statistical list of CI scholarships in Unizik. It is important to indicate the steady increase in the cases mentioned above over a period of the years under review (2009 - 2019). The number of students increased from 38 in 2009 to 1800 in 2019, the number of teachers also increased from 3 in 2009 to 20 in 2018, likewise the scholarships increased from 2 in 2009 to 103 in 2019.

From the data collected and the oral interview conducted, it is evident that the close relationship between the Chinese teachers and the Nigerian students in the classroom and outside the classroom help to foster cultural exchange and acculturation of both parties. This is in agreement with Berry's (1980, 1997, 2005) integration acculturation model which has evolved to that of a multicultural perspective. This is also in line with Hu's (2012) case study, which produced the same result; where there was constant contact between the Mainland students and teachers. Hence, the personal values of teachers may promote or inhibit acculturation of students. The personal values of the Chinese teachers at the CI about their own culture and the culture of the host community is very instrumental. From our observation through interaction, it is noted that most of the teachers are eager and curious to reach out to the local cultural content in order to enhance or promote the teaching and learning of Chinese. Table 5 & 6 represent the giant shifts of both the Chinese teachers and the Nigerian students towards integrating both cultures and at the same time maintaining their home culture. This they achieved by adopting the names from the other culture. In other words, the Chinese teachers adopted Igbo names and vice versa.

Note that of equal importance is the need to maintain a positive face for oneself and others in the coming together of different traditions and beliefs. This results in behavioural adjustments the Chinese teachers and Nigerian students made in order to cope with the new environment in which they are, this, according to Berry is 'usually done without difficulty'. Furthermore, analysis of the interview conducted reveal that cultural-exchange between the two communities help to enhance the socio-cultural adaptation, i.e. the ability of the Chinese teachers and the Nigerian students to fit in and execute effective interaction in a new cultural milieu (Ward 2001). The Chinese teachers and the Nigerian students, apart from adopting personal names from each other's culture (see table 5 & 6 above), also socialize by participating in all the social and cultural events of both communities, such as; Spring Festival, Dragon Boat Festival, Cooking of Chinese Dishes, Chinese Calligraphy, Chinese Library Exhibition, Chinese songs /dances, Chinese Bridge competition, Taekwondo, Tea culture, Chinese New year. Unizik Carnival, Igbo Traditional wedding, Igbo native dance New Yam festival (Iri ji), Chieftaincy title taking, Kolanut breaking (see 明德 MING DE Magazine 1& 2. 2016, 2017).

In terms of the length of time spent by the teachers at CI, depending on Hanban regulations, most of the teachers teach at least for two years or three years as the case may be. Despite the time spent, most are eager about experiencing the rich Nigerian (Igbo) culture. This is

evidenced in their adjustment to food, dress code, music, hairstyle etc. Since many obstacles oppose well- intended cross- cultural communication; obvious differences in language, religious beliefs, personal experience, social and political values etc. Learning and experiencing other people's cultural ways exposed the teachers and the students to culture shocks, which results in transformative learning (TL); in other words, former assumptions are modified to accommodate new and richer understanding about the new environment. At CI, such learning has over the years promoted personal growth, psychological health and intercultural maturation between the Chinese teachers and the Nigerian students. This agrees with Meizirow (1997) concept of transformative learning that takes place over time in cross- cultural communication group; 'this produces strong swings between the periods of destabilization, clarification and integration'. Interview and personal observations show that the Chinese teachers and the Nigerian students have maintained a very close teacher-student relationship; both within the classroom and outside the classroom. Through extra-curricular activities and interactions, they further consolidate the teaching and learning of Chinese and Igbo languages. In so doing, cultural diversity is explored, respected and tolerance for differences are fostered. It inculcates in the teachers and the students the capability of resolving cross-cultural conflicts, oppression, violence and tension thereby paving the way for global peace.

Conclusion

In this study, we focused on the factors that affects the cultural- exchange and acculturation of Chinese teachers and Nigerian students teaching and learning Chinese at CI in Unizik. The study adopts Berry (1980, 1997 and 2005) acculturation framework to establish that their modes of acculturation shift over time to the integration type. The findings of the study (table and graph 1-6) show that for the years under study (2009- 2019), there has been increase in the number of students studying Chinese at CI, with a corresponding number of Chinese teachers teaching Chinese, also noted is the increase in the number of scholarship awarded by both CI and Chinese government respectively. The students and the teachers had over the years established a strong teacher- student relationship. Regarding the cultural exchange and acculturation strategies employed. The results show that the Chinese teachers and the Nigerian students were eager and curious to accommodate and integrate the other culture; by adopting the language, personal names, dress codes, food, religion, social activities etc of the new culture.

In enhancing cross-cultural communication, the Chinese teachers and Nigerian students improved communication with one another through socialization, adjustment of personal values, teacher-student bonding, building networks, and creating a satisfactory environment for everyone involved. All these are factors essential for cultural exchange and acculturation. In this study, we focused on the cultural exchange and the model of acculturation strategies adopted by the Chinese teachers and the Nigerian students teaching and learning Chinese at CI in Unizik. Given the paucity of material in this area, in the future, we intend to do a follow- up studies on the acculturation of Nigerian students who travelled to China to study, in order to find out if Nigerian students have similar acculturation problems in China.

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