

UNIT FOUR

Causative constructions

A In Chinese, verbs such as 使 **shǐ** 'cause'/'make' and 让 **ràng** 'let'/'permit' are used to form causative constructions, in which the object of the first verb (e.g. 使 **shǐ** or 让 **ràng**) becomes the notional subject of a second verb:

她让我休几天假。 **tā ràng wǒ xiū jǐ tiān jià**
(我 **wǒ** is the object of 让 **ràng** and the subject of 休假 **xiūjià**)
She let me have a few days off.

'砰'的一声,使她吓了一跳。 **pēng de yī shēng | shǐ tā xià le yī tiào**
(她 **tā** is the object of 使 **shǐ** and the subject of 吓 **xià**)
A crashing noise made her jump.

B As well as 使 **shǐ** and 让 **ràng**, other verbs, ranging in meaning from request to coercion, also produce causative constructions:

请 **qǐng** 'ask someone to do something':
我请她看电影。 **wǒ qǐng tā kàn diànyǐng**
I asked her to go to the cinema with me.

叫 **jiào** 'tell'/'get someone to do something':
她没(有)叫我去照看孩子。 **tā méi(yǒu) jiào wǒ qù zhàokàn hái zi**
She didn't tell me to look after the child(ren)/babysit for her.

要 **yào** 'want'/'require someone to do something':
护士要病人吃药。 **nùshī yào bìng rén chī yào**
The nurse required the patient to take some medicine.

劝 **quàn** 'try to persuade':
大家劝他戒烟。 **dàjiā quàn tā jiè yān**
Everybody tried to persuade him to give up smoking.

催 **cūi** 'urge':
妈妈催她快点儿起床吗? **māma cūi tā kuài diǎnr qǐchuáng ma**
Did mother urge her to get up quickly?

命令 **mìnglìng** 'order':

排长命令士兵冲锋。 **páizhǎng mìnglìng shìbīng chōngfēng**

The platoon leader ordered the soldiers/troops to charge.

逼 **bī** 'force':

强盗逼银行经理交出钥匙。 **qiángdào bī yínháng jīnglǐ jiāo chū yàoshi**

The robber forced the bank manager to hand over the keys.

禁止 **jìnzhǐ** 'forbid':

学校禁止学生打架。 **xuéxiào jìnzhǐ xuéshēng dǎjià**

The school forbids the pupils to fight (with one another).

允许 **yǔnxǔ** 'permit':

父母允许孩子周末看电视。 **fùmǔ yǔnxǔ háiǐ zhōumò kàn diànshì**

The parents gave the children permission to watch television at weekends.

C The verb 使 **shǐ** or 让 **ràng** (and sometimes more colloquially, 叫 **jiào** or its variant 教 **jiào**) may also be used with a second verb which is derived from an adjective:

这个消息使我很高兴。 **zhè/zhèi gè xiāoxi shǐ wǒ hěn gāoxìng**

This piece of news made me very happy.

她的话使他很难过。 **tā de huà shǐ tā hěn nánguò**

Her words made him sad.

儿子的行为让父亲着急。 **érzi de xíngwéi ràng fùqīn zhāojí**

The son's behaviour made the father worried.

这件事叫 (or 教) 我不安。 **zhè/zhèi jiàn shì jiào wǒ bù ān**

This matter made me feel uneasy/anxious.

Note: 令 **lìng** may be used in a similar way but has a more formal tone, particularly when used with 人 **rén** 'people/one':

这个消息令人高兴。 **zhè/zhèi gè xiāoxi lìng rén gāoxìng**

This news was encouraging. (*lit.* This news made people/one happy.)

她的话令人失望。 **tā de huà lìng rén shīwàng**

Her words were disappointing. (*lit.* Her words caused people/one to be disappointed.)

D To negate a causative construction one may make either the first or the second verb negative, depending on the meaning required:

(1) Negating the first verb:

他没叫你去游泳。 **tā méi jiào nǐ qù yóuyǒng**

He didn't tell you to go swimming.

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小李不准我去参加这次活动。

xiǎo lǐ bù zhǔn wǒ qù cānjiā zhè/zhèi cì huódòng

Xiao Li will not allow me to take part in these activities.

她不让我把门打开。 **tā bù ràng wǒ bǎ mén dǎ kāi**

She didn't let me open the door.

(2) Negating the second verb:

他叫你别去游泳。 **tā jiào nǐ bié qù yóuyǒng**

He told you not to go swimming.

小李准我不参加这次活动。

xiǎo lǐ zhǔn wǒ bù cānjiā zhè/zhèi cì huódòng

Xiao Li allowed me not to take part in these activities.

她让我别把门打开。 **tā ràng wǒ bié bǎ mén dǎ kāi**

She told me not to open the door.

E 有 **yǒu** (see *Basic Chinese*, Unit 11) is often used in a pattern similar to the causative structure. Sentences of this type begin either with 有 **yǒu** or with a time or location phrase followed by 有 **yǒu**:

有人找你。 **yǒu rén zhǎo nǐ**

There is someone looking for you.

这儿有火车去伦敦。 **zhèr yǒu huǒchē qù lúndūn**

There are trains to London from here.

早上有个朋友给你打电话。 **zǎoshang yǒu gè péngyou gěi nǐ dǎ diànhuà**

A friend phoned you this morning.

Exercise 4.1

Complete the Chinese sentences below selecting an appropriate verb from the list given:

让 ràng	使 shǐ	请 qǐng	叫 jiào
劝 quàn	催 cūi	逼 bī	命令 mìnglǐng
禁止 jìnzhǐ	允许 yǔnxǔ	吩咐 fēnfù	要 yào

1 他 _____ 我坐在他旁边。 **ta _____ wǒ zuò zài tā pángbian**

He told me to sit beside him.

2 我女朋友 _____ 我吸烟。 **wǒ nǚ péngyou _____ wǒ xiyan**

My girlfriend won't allow me to smoke.

- 3 朋友 —— 我去吃饭。 **péngyou** —— **wǒ qù chīfàn**
A friend invited me to dinner.
- 4 医生 —— 病人好好休息。 **yisheng** —— **bīng rén hǎohǎo xiūxi**
The doctor advised the patient to have a good rest.
- 5 经理 —— 秘书打一封信用。 **jīnglǐ** —— **mìshū dǎ yī fēng xìn**
The manager requested the secretary to type a letter.
- 6 政府 —— 捕杀大熊猫。
zhèngfǔ —— **bùshā dà xióngmāo**
The government forbids the capture and killing of giant pandas.
- 7 老朋友 —— 我忘了那些不愉快的时间。
lǎo péngyou —— **wǒ wàng le nà/nèi xiē bù yúkuài de shíjiān**
My old friend persuaded me to forget those sad times.
- 8 王老师 —— 我们赶快交作业。
wáng lǎoshī —— **wǒmen gǎnkuài jiāo zuòyè**
Wang the teacher urged us to hurry up and hand in our homework.
- 9 房东 —— 他今天交出房租。 **fángdōng** —— **tā jīntiān jiāo chū fángzū**
The landlord forced him to pay the rent today.
- 10 警察 —— 强盗放下枪。
jǐngchá —— **qiángdào fàng xià qiāng**
The police ordered the robber to put down the gun.
- 11 请 —— 我说一下我的意见。
qǐng —— **wǒ shuō yíxià wǒ de yìjian**
Please allow me to state my opinion.
- 12 工程师 —— 我帮她一下儿忙。
gōngchéngshī —— **wǒ bāng tā yíxià er máng**
The engineer wanted me to give her a hand.
- 13 爷爷的病 —— 他很担心。 **yéye de bìng** —— **tā hěn dānxīn**
His grandfather's illness worried him a lot.
- 14 她 —— 妹妹去洗手。 **tā** —— **mèimei qù xǐ shǒu**
She instructed her younger sister to wash her hands.
- 15 他的话 —— 我们都笑了。 **tā de huà** —— **wǒmen dōu xiào le**
What he said made us all laugh.
- 16 她真 —— 我生气！ **tā zhēn** —— **wǒ shēngqì**
She really makes me angry!

Exercise 4.2

Rewrite the Chinese sentences below in the negative to match the second English translation or translations:

- 1 父母允许孩子吃巧克力。 **fùmǔ yǔnxǔ háizi chī qiǎokèlì**
The parents allow their children to eat chocolate.
The parents don't allow their children to eat chocolate.

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- 2 这个消息使我很难过。 **zhè/zhèi gè xiāoxi shǐ wǒ hěn nánguò**
This piece of news made me very sad.
This piece of news didn't make me sad at all.
- 3 他劝我买这双鞋。 **tā quàn wǒ mǎi zhè/zhèi shuāng xié**
He urged me to buy this pair of shoes.
He urged me not to buy this pair of shoes.
- 4 经理准我出席这次会议。 **jīnglǐ zhǔn wǒ chūxí zhè/zhèi cì huìyì**
The manager allowed me to attend the meeting.
The manager allowed me not to attend the meeting.
and
The manager didn't allow me to attend the meeting.
- 5 她叫我开灯。 **tā jiào wǒ kāi dēng**
She told me to turn the light on.
She didn't tell me to turn the light on.
and
She told me not to turn the light on.
- 6 我让儿子学汉语。 **wǒ ràng érzi xué hànǔ**
I got my son to learn Chinese.
I didn't let my son learn Chinese.

Exercise 4.3

Translate the sentences below into Chinese using 有 **yǒu**.

- 1 There was once a child who lost her way in the forest.
(曾经 **céngjīng** 'once', 迷路 **mílù** 'lose one's way')
- 2 Who knows you here?
- 3 Some friends are coming to my place tonight.
- 4 There is a bus to London going at six o'clock.
- 5 Someone is waiting for you outside.
- 6 Is there anyone here who can speak Chinese?

Exercise 4.4

Translate the following sentences into Chinese using an appropriate causative verb in each case:

- 1 The mother told her child to tidy his clothes.
- 2 My elder sister urged me to get out of bed quickly.
- 3 My younger brother wanted me to help him repair his computer.
- 4 I didn't dare to persuade her not to smoke.
- 5 She is unwilling to let me go with her.
- 6 The teacher would not allow the pupils to climb the trees.
- 7 The coach ordered the players to assemble on the playing field.
- 8 My elder brother forced me to give him my best toy.

UNIT FIVE

Serial constructions

A A serial construction consists of two or more verbs used in a series, often without any conjunctive devices. The second verb may follow the first verb directly, or the first verb may take an intervening object:

我去买报纸。 **wǒ qù mǎi bàozhǐ**

I'm going to buy a newspaper.

你找他要什么？ **nǐ zhǎo tā yào shénme**

Why are you looking for him? (*lit.* You look for him want what.)

There are various kinds of serial construction, some of which are discussed below.

B Sequence. One action is completed before the next one takes place:

孩子吃了饭回家去了。 **háizi chī le fàn huí jiā qù le**

After eating, the child went home.

(The actions 吃饭 **chīfàn** 'eat' and 回家 **huí jiā** 'go home' happen one after the other.)

他把信封好，贴上邮票，投进邮筒。

tā bǎ xìn fēng hǎo | tiē shàng yóupiào | tóu jìn yóutǒng

He sealed the envelope, stuck a stamp on (it) and dropped (it) into the letter box.

C Purpose. The second action explains the purpose of the first action. The verb expressing the first action is usually either 来 **lái** 'come' or 去 **qù** 'go' (as in the first example under A):

朋友们来我家看望我。 **péngyoumen lái wǒ jiā kànwàng wǒ**

My friends came to my house to visit me.

(The second action, 看望 **kànwàng** 'visit', explains the purpose of the first action: 来我家 **lái wǒ jiā** 'came to my place'.)

我们全家去海边度假。 **wǒmen quán jiā qù hǎi biān dùjià**

The whole family went to the seaside on holiday/to take a holiday.

More colloquially, 来 **lái** 'come' and 去 **qù** 'go' may be placed at the end of the sentence:

他上街去买菜了。 **tā shàng jiē qù mǎi cài le**
他上街买菜去了。 **tā shàng jiē mǎi cài qù le**
He has gone out to buy some food.

她到图书馆去还书了。 **tā dào túshūguǎn qù huán shū le**
她到图书馆还书去了。 **tā dào túshūguǎn huán shū qù le**
She has gone to the library to return her books.

工人来修理水龙头了。 **gōng rén lái xiū lǐ shuǐ lóng tóu le**
工人修理水龙头来了。 **gōng rén xiū lǐ shuǐ lóng tóu lái le**
The plumber has come to mend the tap.

Note: (没)有 (**méi yǒu** + noun may be used as the first action in a serial construction where the second action expresses purpose:

我有机会学汉语。 **wǒ yǒu jīhuì xué hàn yǔ**
I have the opportunity to learn Chinese.

你有时间教我开车吗？ **nǐ yǒu shíjiān jiāo wǒ kāi chē ma**
Have you got time to teach me to drive?

你没有理由这么说。 **nǐ méi yǒu lǐyóu zhè me shuō**
You have no reason to say that/talk like that.

我没有钱买香烟。 **wǒ méi yǒu qián mǎi xiāng yān**
I have no money to buy cigarettes.

D Instrument or vehicle. The first action explains the means (the instrument or vehicle) by which the second action is carried out:

中国人用筷子吃饭。 **zhōngguó rén yòng kuàizi chī fàn** (instrument)
Chinese people eat with chopsticks.
(The first action, 用筷子 **yòng kuàizi** 'using chopsticks', indicates the instrument with which the second action, 吃饭 **chī fàn** 'eat', is carried out.)

他坐火车上班。 **tā zuò huǒchē shàng bān** (vehicle)
He goes to work by train.
(The first action, 坐火车 **zuò huǒchē** 'by train' (*lit.* sit on train), indicates the means by which the second action, 上班 **shàng bān** 'go to work', takes place.)

Note: This construction is similar to the coverb structure.

In a 把 **bǎ** construction (see Unit 1), the verbal phrase expressing the instrument or vehicle should come before the 把 **bǎ** phrase.

我用吸尘器把地毯吸干净了。 **wǒ yòng xīchénqì bǎ dìtán xī gānjìng le**
I vacuumed the carpet. (*lit.* I cleaned the carpet with the vacuum cleaner.)

One does not usually say:

*我把地毯用吸尘器吸干净了。 **wǒ bǎ dìtǎn yòng xīchénqì xī gānjìng le**
to translate, 'I cleaned the carpet with the vacuum cleaner'.

E Accompanying circumstances. The first action is marked with 着 **zhe** indicating that it takes place at the same time as the second action (see *Basic Chinese*, Unit 15):

她握着我的手说：‘谢谢’ **tā wò zhe wǒ de shǒu shuō xièxiè**

Holding my hand, she said, 'Thank you.'

(The first action, 握着我的手 **wò zhe wǒ de shǒu** 'holding my hand', takes place at the same time as the second action, 说 **shuō** 'said'.)

他微笑着回答我的问题。 **tā wēixiào zhe huídá wǒ de wèntí**

He smiled as he answered my questions. (*lit.* He smiling answered . . .)

孩子抱着玩具熊睡着了。 **háizi bào zhe wánjùxióng shuì zhāo le**

The child went to sleep holding the teddy bear in his/her arms.

F Negative reinforcement. The second action is a negative expression reinforcing the meaning expressed by the first action, which is usually marked with 着 **zhe**:

爷爷坐着不动。 **yéye zuò zhe bù dòng**

Grandpa sat completely still/motionless. (*lit.* Grandpa was sitting and did not move.)

(The first action, 坐着 **zuò zhe** 'sat'/'sitting', is reinforced by the second action, 不动 **bù dòng** 'not moving'.)

奶奶握着我的手不放。 **nǎinai wò zhe wǒ de shǒu bù fàng**

Grandma held my hand firmly in hers. (*lit.* Grandma was holding my hand and did not let go.)

Exercise 5.1

Form serial construction sentences in Chinese with the words and phrases given in each case below and then translate the sentences into English:

- 1 他 **tā** 给 **gěi** 拿出 **ná chū** 打开 **dǎ kāi** 衣柜 **yīguì** 我 **wǒ** 一件衬衫 **yī jiàn chènshān**
- 2 去 **qù** 看望 **kànwàng** 买了 **mǎi le** 医院 **yīyuàn** 我 **wǒ** 我的朋友 **wǒ de péngyou**
一束花 **yī shù huā**
- 3 戴上 **dài shàng** 她 **tā** 眼镜 **yǎnjìng** 文件 **wénjiàn** 看 **kàn**

- 4 门 mén 病人 bìngrén 打针 dǎzhēn 护士 hùshì 病房 bìngfáng 走进 zǒu jìn
给 gěi 推开 tuī kāi
5 问题 wèntí 问 wèn 老师 lǎoshī 学生 xuésheng 有 yǒu 几个 jǐ gè
6 需要 xūyào 房租 fángzū 我 wǒ 一些钱 yìxiē qián 付 fù

Exercise 5.2

Complete the following Chinese sentences to match the English translations:

- 1 经理 _____ 去上海开会。 jīnglǐ _____ qù shànghǎi kāihuì
The manager went to Shanghai by plane to attend a meeting.
2 他们 _____ 谈话。 tāmen _____ tánhuà
They chatted in Chinese.
3 小猫 _____ 洗脸。 xiǎo māo _____ xǐ liǎn
The kitten washed its face with its paws (爪子 zhuǎzi).
4 我们 _____ 渡过黄河。 wǒmen _____ dù guò huánghé
We crossed the Yellow River by boat.
5 孩子们 _____ 说话。 hái zǐ men _____ shuō huà
The children stood talking.
6 妹妹 _____ 上学。 mèimei _____ shàng xué
My younger sister goes to school by bicycle.

Exercise 5.3

Translate the following sentences into Chinese using the colloquial format with 来 lái or 去 qù at the end of the sentence (in some cases followed by 了 le):

- 1 He goes to work by train.
2 We returned home to see our grandma.
3 He will set out for Spain tomorrow.
4 All my friends came to my birthday party.
5 She went off to work.
6 Xiao Liu has come to baby-sit for me.

Exercise 5.4

Complete the Chinese sentences below with 不 bù + verb, to match the English translation:

- 1 士兵们站着 _____ 。 shìbīngmen zhàn zhe _____
The soldiers stood completely still.
2 孩子睁着眼睛 _____ 。 hái zǐ zhēng zhe yǎnjīng _____
The child kept his eyes wide open and refused to go to sleep.

- 3 小狗咬着骨头 ————。 **xiǎo gǒu yǎo zhe gútou** ————
The puppy gripped the bone firmly in its mouth.
- 4 他留着一双新鞋 ————。
tā liú zhe yī shuāng xīn xié ————
He keeps a pair of new shoes he never wears.
- 5 她只顾说话拿着一杯咖啡 ————。
tā zhǐ gù shuō huà ná zhe yī bēi kāfēi ————
She was so involved in what she was saying that she didn't drink any of the (cup of) coffee she was holding. (*lit.* She only paid attention to talking, holding a cup of coffee without drinking.)
- 6 病人躺着 ————。 **bìng rén tǎng zhe** ————
The invalid lay there without getting up.

Exercise 5.5

The Chinese sentences below all contain errors. Rewrite each one to make it a correct translation of the English:

- 1 我把地毯用吸尘器吸干净了。 **wǒ bǎ dìtán yòng xīchénqì xī gānjìng le**
I vacuumed the carpet. (*lit.* I vacuumed the carpet with a vacuum cleaner.)
- 2 我说英语没有机会。 **wǒ shuō yīngyǔ méi yǒu jīhuì**
I have no opportunity to speak English.
- 3 孩子们看电影去电影院买票。
háizimen kàn diànyǐng qù diànyǐngyuàn mǎi piào
The children went to the cinema to buy tickets for the film.
- 4 我把门用白油漆漆了一下。 **wǒ bǎ mén yòng bái yóuqī qī le yíxià**
I gave the door a coat of white paint.
- 5 船卸货靠码头。 **chuán xièhuò kào mǎtóu**
The ship docked to unload its cargo.
- 6 叔叔来拜年到我家带着他的孩子。
shūshu lái bài nián dào wǒ jiā dài zhe tā de hái zi
Bringing his children with him, uncle came to our place to wish us a happy new year.