"You have come a long way” is an example of a chunk, a relatively fixed combinations of words that English speakers regularly use and that has a particular meaning in a certain context. One could also say ”You have traveled far” or ”You should be proud of what you have accomplished”, but even though these expressions are grammatically correct, they do not convey the same message. Spoken language consists of approximately 60% of such combinations and to sound fluent and authentic second language learners should learn especially these kinds of expressions. However, there is very little room in current language teaching approaches for chunks as an analysis of course books and classroom observations in the Netherlands shows. Instead, teachers spend a relatively long time to teach grammar rules and testing grammar knowledge. It has proven very difficult to convince teachers of the need for a different approach. The reason is probably that there is a deep-rooted conviction that rules exist and forms the basis of language. If you know the grammatical rules, you master the language! In her paper, Verspoor argues that language is not a complex system driven by systematic rules, but a complex, dynamic, self-organizing system that is meant to convey meaning and grammar is just epiphenomenal. To express meaning, language users often use similar expressions over and over again, and some of these have regularities that are similar to rules and linguists describe as such, but they do not form the basis of language. Language Teachers must therefore make of the idea that grammar teaching is the most important. It is better to spend a lot more time on these phrases by listening to spoken and written language authentic material.

Keywords: