Syntactic pattern recognition emerged in the early 60's as an alternative to the vector-space-based approach to pattern recognition. It distinguishes itself from the vector-space-based approach by placing particular emphasis on the structural aspects of the representation. As such, syntactic pattern recognition draws heavily from concepts of formal language theory which provide a useful way of manipulating and thinking about specific kinds of structures i.e. grammatical structures. Unfortunately, the area is not as popular as it was during the 70's and 80's. However, the main motivation lingers: how can structure be incorporated in the representation?

In this talk I will briefly discuss the history of syntactic pattern recognition and I will explain some of the central ideas, as well as problems, of the area.