South Asia has often been cited as a paradigm example of a linguistic area, cf. work by Masica (1976), Emeneau (1980) and others. This paper presents a reassessment of areal linguistic patterns in South Asia, in light of recent results emerging from the *World Atlas of Language Structures*, by Comrie et al. (in preparation).

The World Atlas of Language Structures will contain approximately 120 maps, each plotting the worldwide distribution of a linguistic feature, such as number of consonants in the phonemic inventory, case marking alignment, adjective noun order, and the like. In general, linguistic features may be classified in accordance with their distributions as follows:

(1) (a) Features distributed without significant patterns;  
(b) Features distributed in genealogical patterns;  
(c) Features distributed in areal patterns.

For example, a feature characteristic of Indo-European but not, say, Sino-Tibetan languages would be distributed genealogically, as per (1b), while a feature characteristic of South Asia but not Southeast Asia would be distributed areally, as per (1c). Among the features distributed areally, one may distinguishing the following four subtypes, with reference to the South Asian region:

(2) (a) Features whose distribution defines an area wholly including South Asia;  
(b) Features whose distribution defines one or more areas each of which encompasses part of South Asia and part of a non South Asian region;  
(c) Features whose distribution defines one or more areas wholly included in South Asia;  
(d) Features whose distribution defines an area coextensive with South Asia.

Of these four subtypes, it is the last, that in (2d), which lends the strongest support to South Asia as a linguistic area.

The main part of this paper consists of an attempt to classify the 120 features mapped in the World Atlas of Language Structures in accordance with above types. At the time of writing of this abstract, the 120 maps are still not all completed; hence it is not possible to state conclusive results. However, preliminary indications suggest that different features may be found instantiating each of the above types.

In particular, there is at least one candidate feature whose distribution is approximately coextensive with South Asia, namely, the formation of distributive numerals by reduplication. Thus, for example, in Indo-European, distributive numerals are formed by reduplication in South Asian languages from Assamese through to Pashto but not in Persian; in Sino-Tibetan, distributive numerals are formed by reduplication in Tibetan, Meithei, Garo and other South Asian languages but not in Mandarin or Burmese; while in Austroasiatic, distributive numerals are formed by reduplication in Mundari, Kharia and others but not in Nicobarese or Khmer.

To the extent that more such features will emerge, further new support will thereby be obtained for the traditional characterization of South Asia as a linguistic area.