

Some famous Indo-European sound laws

1. Grimm's Law

<i>PIE</i>		<i>Sanskrit</i>		<i>Greek</i>		<i>Latin</i>		<i>Germanic</i>
*p	>	p	:	p	:	p	:	f
*t	>	t	:	t	:	t	:	θ
*k	>	ś	:	k	:	k	:	h (< x)
*k	>	k/č	:	k	:	k	:	h (< x)
*k ^w	>	k/č	:	p/t	:	k ^w	:	h ^w (< x ^w)
*b	>	b	:	b	:	b	:	p
*d	>	d	:	d	:	d	:	t
*g	>	ḍʒ	:	g	:	g	:	k
*g	>	g/ḍʒ	:	g	:	g	:	k
*g ^w	>	g/ḍʒ	:	b/d	:	v	:	k ^w
*b ^h	>	b ^h	:	p ^h	:	f	:	b
*d ^h	>	d ^h	:	t ^h	:	f	:	d
*g ^h	>	h	:	k ^h	:	h	:	g
*g ^h	>	g ^h /h	:	k ^h	:	h	:	g
*g ^{wh}	>	g ^h /h	:	p ^h /t ^h	:	f	:	w

2. The Law of the Palatals

<i>PIE</i>		<i>Sanskrit</i>		<i>Greek</i>
*k/k ^w	>	k/č	:	p/t
*g/g ^w	>	g/ḍʒ	:	b/d
*g ^h /g ^{wh}	>	g ^h /h	:	p ^h /t ^h

- Sanskrit č, ḍʒ, and h before front vowels
- Later phoneme merger (e, o > a) in Sanskrit obscured this environment
- Similarly Greek t before front vowels
- Analogical leveling can obscure the effects, particularly with o/e ablaut alternations

3. Consonant Clusters - Bartholomae's Law

- Voiceless stops are protected from the effects of Grimm's Law /C__

	<i>Sanskrit</i>	<i>Greek</i>	<i>Latin</i>	<i>Germanic</i>
*p	paś-	—	spek-	speh- (Goth.) 'see' (cf. <i>spy</i>)
*t	ašta:u	okto:	okto:	ahtau (Goth.) 'eight'
*k	nakt-	nukt-	nokt-	nahts (Goth.) 'night'

4. Grassmann's Law - Dissimilation

- A prohibition against two aspirated stops in a single word
- Voiced aspirate apparent from Germanic or from reduplication
- Occurred independently in Sanskrit and Greek

<i>Sanskrit</i>	<i>Greek</i>	<i>Gothic</i>	
bo:d ^h a	peut ^h a	biudan	'awaken'
band ^h a	—	bindan	'bind'
dád ^h a:ti	tít ^h e:ti	—	'places'
ḍzang ^h a: 'leg'	—	gag	'street'

5. Verner's Law

- Germanic non-initial voiceless fricatives are voiced, when they precede an accented syllable
- Sanskrit and Greek tend to preserve PIE accent; Latin and Germanic shifted the accent
- Verner's Law must have applied before Germanic accent shift

<i>Sanskrit</i>	<i>Greek</i>	<i>Latin</i>	<i>Gothic</i>	
saptá	heptá	séptem	síβun	'seven'
pítár-	paté:r	páter	fáðer	'father'
śatám	hekatón	kéntum	húnda	'hundred'

The discovery of several Laws that accounted to apparent exceptions to Grimm's Law led to the Neogrammarian's slogan:

"Sound laws suffer no exceptions."

This was an early realization that language has a systematicity and has led to a guiding principle underlying much of modern linguistics.