

A Grammar of the Xindvâ Language

Phonology

Consonants

- Xindvâ has 26–27 consonant phonemes:

		Labial	Dental	Alveolar		Palatal	Velar	Guttural
				central	lateral			
Nasal		m	n			ɲ/ɳ <nh>	ŋ <ng>	
Plosive	voiceless	p	t			tɕ <ch>	k	q ~ ʔ <q> ^{1 2}
	voiced	b ³	d ³			dʒ <j> ^{3 4}	g ³	
Fricative	voiceless	f <ph> ⁵	θ <th>	s		ɕ <x, sh> ⁶	x <kh>	h
	voiced	v ~ w <v> ⁷		z		ʒ <zh> ⁴		
Liquid	voiced			r ^{8 9}	l ¹⁰	j <y>		
	voiceless			(ɾ <hr> ¹¹)	ɬ <hl>			

- Most Byazuq dialects pronounce [q] as voiced [ɢ ~ ɣ] (or it may even be merged with /g ~ ɣ/ in some innovative varieties), /r/ as [r], word-final /l/ as [ɭ], and coda /v/ consistently as [w].
- [q] and [ʔ] are partially conditional allophones of one phoneme, with [q] being preferred word-initially and in coda position almost exclusively, and [ʔ] after obstruents (in some dialects such sequences are realized as ejectives) and intervocalically. In both phonemes, the two allophones alternate when they occur consecutively.
- /b, d, dʒ, g/ spirantize to [β, ð, ʒ, ɣ] in word-final position. [β] is rather unstable, and merges with /v/ for most speakers.
- The distinction between /dʒ/ and /ʒ/ largely exists only word-initially; elsewhere, the contrast is neutralized, with [dʒ] occurring after consonants, and [ʒ] occurring after vowels.
- [ɸ] is an allophone of /f/ when near front vowels.
- /ɕ/ is romanized as <x> syllable-initially, and as <sh> syllable-finally.
- [v] and [w] are partially conditional allophones of a single phoneme, sometimes represented as /v/. [v] is preferred word-initially, before /j/ and after long vowels and diphthongs, while [w] is preferred after consonants, even across word boundaries, and after short vowels. Where

conditions overlap, an in-between sound [ʋ] or [β] may be heard. Where [w] would occur after a palatal consonant, it fronts to [ɥ ~ ʍ].

8. /r/ is most commonly pronounced [r] intervocalically (and sometimes in clusters) and [ɾ] elsewhere. In many dialects, [ɻ~ɺ] commonly occurs as a word-final allophone; though this is seen as substandard by educated speakers, this realization can be heard even from upper class speakers.
9. In some dialects—most commonly in the Khechât and Suudve regions—the clusters /tr, dr, sr, zr/ are often realized as retroflex affricates and fricatives [tʂ, dʂ, ʂ, zʂ]. This pulls a following /i/ back into /ɨ/.
10. /l/ is realized as [ɭ] after /t/ and [ɮ] after /d/ in clusters.
11. /ɾ/ is not distinct in most dialects, being merged with the cluster /xr/. Ngâytsû dialects, as well as some Khechât dialects, preserve the sound.

- All of the voiceless plosives are unaspirated, and generally have no audible release when not followed by a vowel.

Vowels

- Xindvâ has 21 vowel phonemes:

	Front		Central		Back	
	short	long	short	long	short	long
Centering	iɿ <iê>		ɨɿ <ûô>		uɿ <uô>	
High	i <i, y> ¹	i: <ii>	ɨ <û>	ɨ: <eû>	u	u: <uu>
Mid-high	e	e: <ê>	ə <ô>	ə: <eô>	o	o: <ô>
Mid-low		ɛ: <ai, ay> ²				ɔ: <âu, âo>
Low ³	æ <a> ^{4 5}	æ: <ae> ^{2 5}			a <â> ⁶	a: <aa>

1. /i/ is romanized as <y> in a handful of monosyllables purely as an aesthetic choice.
2. Some dialects merge /ɛ:/ and /æ:/ into one phoneme; either sound, or an intermediate [ɛ:] can be the merged realization.
3. Some dialects re-merge /æ/ and /a/, both short and long, into one phoneme /a/. This merger is mutually exclusive with the ai-ae merger.

4. Word-final short /æ/ is often realized as [ɐ ~ ə].
5. Long and short /æ(:)/ are more central [æ(:)] in open syllables and when preceding velar consonants.
6. /a/ is fronted in the diphthong /aj/, ranging between [aj] to [äj].

- The short high and mid vowels are generally slightly more open in closed syllables and before /j/ and /v/: [ɪ, ɨ, ʊ, ɛ, ɜ, ɔ].
- When adjacent to [q], the high vowels lower to values approaching close-mid [e, ə, o]. In the same environment, the mid vowels take on their open-mid values, which avoids neutralization.
- Short vowels and the centering diphthongs can form a falling diphthong or triphthong with /j/ or /v/, while long vowels cannot. Front vowels may only be followed by /v/ (except /e/, which can be followed by /j/ as well), while back vowels may only be followed by /j/.
- Additionally, there are 10-11 nasal vowels:

	Front		Central		Back	
	short	long	short	long	short	long
High	ĩ ~ ě <ĩ>	ĩ: <ĩy>		(ĩ: ~ ũ:)	ũ ~ õ <ũ>	ũ: <ũu>
Low	ẽ <ẽ>	ẽ: <ẽy>	ã ~ ẽ <ã>	ẽ: ~ ã: ~ ã: <ãa>	õ <õ>	õ: <õu>

- Several nasal diphthongs are attested, including those created by lenition of coda /ɲ/: /ẽj̃ ãj̃ ãj̃/. Phonetically, these sequences begin with moderate nasalization which becomes stronger towards the end of the offglide.
- In general, most nasal vowels correspond to the oral vowel closest in quality; /õ/ corresponds to not only /ə/ but /æ a ɨ/ as well, and /ã:/ corresponds to /æ: a: ɨə ə:/.

Phonotactics and morphophonology

- Maximal syllable structure is sC₁C₂VGC₃, where C₁ and C₃ are any consonant, G is an offglide /j/ or /v/, and C₂ is a liquid consonant /j, v, r, l/ or /s ~ z/.
 - C₂ and G cannot be the same sound, hence */joj/ and */væv/ are not valid sequences.
 - Stops can be followed by any C₂, nasals and fricatives can be followed by any liquid but not /s/, /r l/ can be followed by /j v/, and /v/ can be followed only by /j/.

- Palatal consonants cannot cluster with any sound, except /ʊ/ in the onset. Therefore a diphthong and a palatal coda cannot co-occur in the same syllable; e.g., */tæwɕ/ is not a valid syllable.
- /ʊu/ and /ji/ do not occur, except in a handful of loanwords, while /ʊi/ does not occur at all.
- /sj si zj zi/ do not occur, instead automatically assimilating to /ɕ ʒ/.
- The prefix /s/ and the C₂ /s/ can only occur adjacent to stops; they cannot co-occur. They assimilate to /z/ next to voiced stops.
- Clusters of three consonants, such as /str-/ , /skr-/ and /spr-/ , are rare and considered exceptions to the general phonotactics.
- Some dialects may have loan clusters in the coda with unusual combinations, such as /lt/ or /mp/ , but they will not be pronounced by all speakers. For most speakers, these clusters will only be fully pronounced when they are followed by an initial vowel, else only the first consonant in the cluster is pronounced.
- Vowels in hiatus are not allowed except for sequences beginning with /i/ and /u/ (which generally generate epenthetic [j] and [w] anyway); where this would occur it is resolved with any of several methods: elision, metathesis, epenthesis, or a combination thereof.
- When morphemes are combined, several assimilatory processes occur at the boundaries, creating some phonotactical restrictions word-internally:
 - Morpheme-final /r/ generally becomes /n/ , or sometimes /l/ ; compare *xir* and *kvir* to the derived words *xinyâq* and *kvinme*. This alternation occasionally occurs morpheme-initially, as in *kerûth* and *neôth*.
 - The fricatives /f, θ, x/ at the end of morphemes are replaced by voiceless stops /p, t, k/ ; compare *lauth* and *lutbe*.
 - This is due to a former assimilatory process whereby the aspirated stops lost their aspiration when followed by another consonant.
 - Coda /ɕ/ can occur at a morpheme boundary if it derives from palatalization of /s/ , but not from that of /x/ , and in such words it will be replaced by /tɕ/.
 - /ɾ/ and /ʈ/ will be replaced with their voiced counterparts, both at the beginning and end of morphemes; compare *hlauk* and *kelku*.
 - Morphemes ending in /a/ will often cause voicing of the following consonant (or fortition in the case of the fricatives); compare *seng* and *lâzeng*.
 - Loanwords generally are not adapted to these constraints, but on occasion part of a loanword may be reanalyzed as a native morpheme, and the word thus altered.

- Some diphthongs and long vowels may alternate with short vowels in related words, or when words are combined with other morphemes, reflecting an earlier process of shortening vowels in these environments:
 - /æw/ and /aj/ alternate with /u/ and /i/ respectively, as in *lauth* vs. *lutbe*.
 - /i:/ and /u:/ alternate with /e/ and /o/ respectively.
 - /iə/, /iə/ and /uə/ alternate with /e/, /ə/ and /o/ respectively, as in *muôk* and *mochû*.
- Stress is not a contrastive feature; most words are phonetically stressed on the first syllable.
- Generally, diphthongs ending with /i/ are romanized with *y* in open syllables, and with *i* in closed syllables. Similarly, those ending with /u/ are romanized with *o* in open syllables, and with *u* in closed syllables.
 - Note, however, that the diphthongs /iw iw əw/ are transcribed as *iu*, *ûu* and *ôu* respectively in all contexts.

Grammar

- The demonstratives in Xindvâ follow a set of predictable patterns, each being a combination of an initial indicating the deictic distance, and a rime indicating the type of referent:

	Proximal ch-	Medial v-	Distal d-	Indeterminate m-
Determiner -uô	chuô “this”	vuô “that”	duô “that, yonder”	muô “which”
Object -os	chos “this thing”	vos “that thing”	dos “that thing over there”	mos “what”
Person -oti	choti “this person”	voti “that person”	doti “that person over there”	moti “who”
Place -oy	choy “here”	voy “there”	dvây “over there”	moy “where”
Direction -ogok	chogok “this way”	vogok “that way”		mogok “which way”
Time -ot	chot “now”	vot “then, later”	dot “that day, someday”	mot “when”
Manner -ôнна	chônna “like this, thus”	vônna “like that”		mônna “how”

Quantity –	ch- “this much”	v- “that much”	m- “how much”
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Related to the distal series is the definite article *vâ*.

- The demonstratives of place are nouns, which retain archaic locative-dative forms *uchoy*, *udvây*, and *umoy*.

Morphology

- Parts of speech are rather loose in Xindvâ, and many words pull double duty as multiple word classes. Nouns can be used like adjectives and vice versa, and many verbs are also nouns that denote a related concept.
- Affixation is no longer as productive as it was in earlier stages of the language. Those that are still at least somewhat functional include:
 - *pâ-*: derives place nouns from verbs
 - *se-*: derives past perfective adjectives from verbs; formerly the past tense conjugation of verbs
 - On transitive verbs, the derived adjective describes a patient state, while on intransitive verbs, the adjective describes an agentive state.
 - *la-/lâ-*: derives present continuous adjectives from verbs; formerly the progressive conjugation of verbs
 - *-(ò)n*: derives adjectives with the meaning of “having X” from nouns
 - *-sèk*: forms adjectives meaning of “lacking X” or “without X” from nouns; equivalent to English ‘-less’
 - *gi-*: forms adjectives meaning “like X” from nouns
 - *yû-*, *-kèr*: derives agent nouns from verbs and nouns
 - *yû-* is often associated with occupations, while *-kèr* is more general in meaning.
 - *ngo-*: derives object nouns from verbs
 - *mo-*: derives abstract state nouns from adjectives and nouns

Affixes that are fossilized include:

- *-be/-me*: derives causatives from verbs
- *-t*: derives abstract nouns from verbs
- *-(y)û*: a morpheme used in forming verbs; its exact meaning is unknown

- The -y- element is often not visible, having made the preceding consonant palatal.

In many older words, these affixes are altered in some way due to changes in the language.

- Compounding is a common way of creating new words, with some words seeing more extensive use in compounds than as standalone words.
- Reduplication is highly productive in verbs and adjectives, with the semantic effect varying from word to word based on the pattern used.
 - Full reduplication—complete duplication of the entire word. This pattern is primarily used on monosyllabic words, and generally serves as an augmentative, denoting a stronger quality or large amount of something:

dâung “big” > *dâung-dâung* “huge”

bon “flower” > *bonbon* “flowering”

preng “to talk” > *preng preng* “to blabber”

- V1 lengthening—in this pattern the initial consonant and the following vowel are duplicated, with the vowel lengthened. This is used on adjectives, and generally only in exclamations as an intensifier:

Zeô-zôu kho vâ gyao y choy. = The food here is **so good**.

- -ip reduplication—the first onset is repeated with -ip added to it, and placed before the word. This serves as a diminutive or endearing affix:

mâujû “bear” > *mip-mâujû* “little bear, cub”

proq “horn, antler” > *prip-proq* “stub, bud”

- n- reduplication—the first syllable is repeated before the word, with the onset changed to /n/. This serves as a generalizer, broadening the semantic scope of the noun in a way that emphasizes the root as a principal member:

rihyoq “sword” > *ni-rihyoq* “blade”, perhaps better translated as “swords and such”

hruân “wolf” > *nu-hruân* “canid”, “wolves and such”

Nouns

- Nouns are marked for case and number; both of these, however, are marked on separate particles rather than the nouns themselves. Grammatical number is marked on the article, and case is marked on particles preceding the noun.
 - The following cases are observed: nominative, accusative, genitive, dative-locative, and instrumental.
- All nouns besides proper nouns *must* be preceded by an article, even those that are uncountable and would not take one in English, such as *ryeng* ('life') or *luqtôy* ('employment'). The definite article may sometimes be dropped, however, in contexts where it is clear that a specific thing is being referred to: in a phrase like *suôy y'ôn* ('my tail'), there is clearly only one possible referent (one can only have a single tail), and therefore *vâ* can be omitted without creating ambiguity.
 - There are two articles: definite and indefinite, both of which inflect for number (singular and plural).

	Singular	Plural
Definite	vâ	hvâ
Indefinite	nû	pyô

- An article indicates whether a noun should be specific/unique and familiar to the addressee, and thus context and the listener's prior knowledge must be taken into account when marking a noun as definite or indefinite.
- All nouns that refer to *classes* of something, or to an abstract concept, are by nature definite.
- Demonstratives on their own do not provide the information given by an article. Consider for example:

genh vâ ngolluu chuô = I want *this* (particular) pen
genh nû ngolluu chuô = I want one of these pens

- When a noun can be viewed both as an individual instance and as a general concept (as is especially the case with verbal nouns), a singular definite article will be ambiguous between the two views. For instance, *nû myog* is always "a hunt", as in one non-specific trip, but *vâ myog* can mean both simply "hunting" as a concept, and

“the hunt”, referring to a specific occasion. To clear this ambiguity, a demonstrative or possessor can be specified:

vâ myog chuô = this hunt

vâ myog y zhēg = our hunt

With verbal nouns, the word *kraad* “act” can be used, with the noun as a modifier—

Zôu môt vâ myog kraad = The hunt went well

- The word order for noun phrases is as follows: article, case particle, number, (modifiers), head noun, (modifiers), demonstrative, possessor.
 - Note that modifiers can be placed on either side of the noun (but not on both simultaneously). Certain phrases appear to have preferred orders:
 - Colors tend to precede the head noun.
 - Temporal phrases are usually head-final, placing the unit of time second.
 - Compound words generally place modifiers first.
- Both the nominative and accusative cases are unmarked, indicated by word order instead.
- The genitive cases are primarily used for indicating possession; other types of relationships are expressed by simply placing one noun after the other like an adjective, with no modification:

gûôy Xindvâ = Xindvâ language

huyad Hlôngdao = Hlengdaonese flag

- A distinction is made between inalienable and alienable possessions.

vâ nixao y thaa = her milk (from her own breasts)

vâ nixao xo thaa = her milk (from an animal or another woman)

In general, a possession is marked as inalienable if the possessor created the marked noun or if the relationship between the possessed and possessor is innate or cannot be severed.

- It is not necessary to specify a possessor for words describing personal relations if it can be gleaned from context. For example, *Taru vâ qvâ umay?* often means “Is your mother well?” even though there is no pronoun in the sentence.
- The locative case indicates both static location and motion towards something depending on whether the verb itself denotes motion.

- Indirect objects are marked with the dative case, while agents in passive clauses are marked with the instrumental case.
- Surnames precede given names, and titles and honorifics follow names; e.g., *Ângkha-driêng* ('Queen Ankha'), *Xōchitl-langsō* ('Master Xochitl').

Pronouns

- In formal settings and when speaking to strangers or those of higher status, second-person pronouns are not used; instead one uses their name, either alone or with some form of title, honorific, or descriptor to address others. For example:
 - A child speaking to a teenager or young adult would use *sâmi* ('older sibling'), even when they are not related;
 - A shop owner may simply address patrons as *xvôy* ('guest');
 - A student would call their teacher *langsō* (roughly equivalent to Japanese *sensei*);
- If two people have a close relationship, the person of higher status may permit the other to use their name or a familiar pronoun *lôy/miêt* in combination with their honorific.
- The use of the demonstrative pronouns *choti*, *voti*, and *doti* is only appropriate when one does not know any information about a person; it is otherwise seen as disrespectful to use. For substituting a previously named person to avoid repetition of their name or title, the pronoun *thaa* can be used.

Verbs

- Verbs in Xindvâ do not conjugate; most verb tenses and aspects, as well as the passive voice, are marked by particles. These particles precede the verb, with the passive marker always placed immediately before the main verb.
 - Tense markers are not needed on each individual verb to denote all of them as taking place at the same time; in fact, a tense marker is only used once on the first verb in a clause, sentence, or even paragraph, and this sets the timeframe for the rest of the verbs that follow. If a more specific temporal indicator is used (e.g., *khaim semōt* "yesterday"), then the tense marker is dispensed with altogether, while if both are used, then the verbs are in that tense relative to the specified time:

Laphor byâvô , ue lauth sum vâ pâhō. = He'll have left the city by tomorrow morning.

Semōt khaim , ue bem Horu. = I already met with Horu yesterday.

- The word order for verb phrases is as follows: negation, tense marker, adverbs, auxiliaries, passive marker, main verb.
- The continuous aspect can be constructed in two ways. The more formal construction is formed by using the verb *lôm* “to be” as the main verb with the content verb in its adverbial form. The more colloquial construction is formed by simply using *lôm* as an auxiliary:

Dûbeû lôm vâ jûn. QR Lôm beû vâ jûn. = The baby **is sleeping**.

- While the verb *lôm* is often translated as “to have”, its usage in that sense is identical to the sense of “there is”, simply using a genitive construction as the subject:

Lôm cham-giêr viêo y Ragnith. = Ragnith has eighteen children. (literally, ‘There are eighteen children of Ragnith’s.’ or ‘Ragnith’s eighteen children exist.’)

The locative case can be used in place of the genitive to indicate that something is currently in that person’s possession:

Lôm vâ seyam yao Livân. = Liwan has the book (right now/with her). (literally, ‘The book is at Liwan.’)

Lôm yao Livân vâ ayn. = Liwan is in love.

- In many verbs, full reduplication has a frequentative or continuative effect:

Ue preng preng Pâqxi ngep tem pyô nesh senhaet. = Paqshi **talked on and on** but he didn’t tell me anything. (literally, “...but there were no things told.”)

- Most verbs can be used as verbal nouns without modification, as a preceding article will indicate that the word is a noun and not a verb. In verbs that already have a nominal definition that isn’t the verbal noun, however, the prefix *ra-* serves as a nominalizer:

gyao “to eat” (nominal meaning: “food”) > *ragyao* “eating”

- The habitual aspect sometimes is used to convey basic or general anthro behaviors.
- Many of the old inflectional affixes verbs formerly had have either been fossilized in set words, or have changed their function to be derivational.

Syntax

- Basic word order is verb-subject-object (VSO), but a more detailed order of components is as follows:
 1. Temporal clause
 2. Conditional clause
 3. Verb phrase
 4. Instrumental
 5. Locative/dative
 6. Subject
 7. Object
- Many parts of a sentence can be omitted if they can be ascertained from context or are implicit properties of something. This can create ambiguities in identifying whether a transitive verb's single argument is the subject or object. For example, without further information, the phrase *niêph thaa* can mean either “he helped” or “[I/you/they] helped him”.
- In negative sentences, the subject may optionally be fronted, with the negative remaining at the beginning of the sentence.

Y'ăa kho chuô. = This is mine.

Tem chuô y'ăa kho. = This is not mine.

- The copula *kho* is not required to connect adjectives to a subject, but they are required to equate one noun with another.

Yekh Khep'rô. = Khepra is tall.

Nû xinyâq kho Khep'rô. = Khepra is a woman.

Further, markers of tense, aspect and mood come *before* the adjective or noun:

Tem ue nû jûn xas kho Khep'rô. = Khepra was not a small child.

This syntax suggests that adjectives and noun-copula phrases are taken to syntactically be stative verbs with the meaning of “to be X”.

- If the noun in the predicate has a relative clause, e.g., “the boy who will become king”, that clause does not precede the verb, and instead is placed at the end of the sentence:

Vâ jûn kho thaa, gi ho driêng deoxâ. = He is the boy who will become king.

- When it comes to describing people, a copular construction implies the complement is an integral part of that person's nature, while using a verbal predicate implies more of a state or habit that person has.
- Clauses specifying a time are placed at the beginning of a sentence:

Semôt khaim, *phwâr vâ yao samsath nû xireph nâug*. = A strange man came into the teahouse **yesterday**.

- Relative clauses are often avoided in Xindvâ when they are not complex. Except in copular sentences, verbs are rendered into modifiers and simply placed after the noun:

nû xinyâq lapur byeôt = a woman **who loves to read** (literally, “a reading-loving woman”)

vâ muneph sevô vâ yao veyân mûr nông = the man (**whom**) **I saw in the garden** (literally, “the man seen in the garden by me”)

Note that in both of these sentences, the relative pronoun *gi* “who” is not present, despite being translated as such. As a general rule of thumb, if a relative clause is not rendered as a parenthetical in English, it will likely not be a relative clause in Xindvâ.

- Xindvâ has very few adpositions corresponding to English “in”, “over”, “behind”, etc.; to specify a location or direction one uses the locative/dative particle *yao* (‘at’) with a location noun such as *dri* (‘inside’), *nhũ* (‘space above’), or *kuôt* (‘back’), followed by the main noun in the genitive case:

Kho vâ yao dri nû y veyân. = I am in a garden. (literally, “(I) am **at the inside of a garden**”)

This phrasing is very formal, however, and sounds quite stilted in vernacular speech. Making use of Xindvâ's propensity to drop already known information, the genitive marker and the article of the location noun are dispensed with, and the article of the possessor moves to the front of the phrase to mark its boundaries clearly, leading to the shorter construction:

Kho nû yao dri veyân. = I am **in a garden**.

- No special marking occurs to denote questions; interrogative words are left in their canonical positions in the sentence. In the spoken language a rising pitch at the end of a sentence indicates a question.

Mos kho vâ nesh vuô? = **What** is that thing? (literally, 'That thing is what?')

Sepû thaa mos? = **What** is he drinking? (literally, 'He is drinking what?')

Ue phvâr yao byukher y'âa moti? = **Who** came to my house?

In archaic texts the word *mûy* may be found as a question marker.

- Xindvâ numerals use the decimal system, and number words are formed through additive and multiplicative compounds:

cham-giêr = eighteen (10 + 8)

ven-cham = forty (4 × 10)

gvâ-cham-gvâ = seventy-seven (7 × 10 + 7)

- Spoken in isolation, i.e., when counting or as a lone noun, 100 is *ti-lûyông*, but the *ti* element can be dropped when used as a demonstrative. This holds for higher powers of 10 as well.

...phenh-cham-phenh, ti-lûyông, ti-lûyông-ti... = ...99, **100**, 101...

but

lûyông thôyal = **one hundred** people

Orthography

- Xindvâ is written with the Lunar script (*liume Nixo*; so called because according to tradition the goddess of the moon gifted writing to man), an abugida developed in (?)
- The Lunar script is written left-to-right, with vowels placed above and below consonants, and subjoined consonants indicating glides.
 - Each consonant letter has an inherent vowel /ə/ which is not otherwise represented in writing.
 - Vowel-initial syllables are represented with independent vowel letters.
 - There is one additional letter which does not have its own sound, but which serves to mark a preceding vowel as long (although historical sound changes have caused the long values to no longer line up with their short ones).
 - The Lunar script lacks a vowel suppressor character, so vowel-less consonants must be inferred by the reader.

- The Lunar script has additional letters and diacritics for phonemes not found in Xindvâ, derived from existing letters with some modification, most commonly an added horizontal stroke: <bh> /v~β/, <dh> /ð/, <w> /ɥ/ (the main letterform is a repurposing of the /uj/ ligature, but the subjoined form is an innovation), <ɰ> /y/, <ə> /ø/, <è> /æ/.
- A number of historical elements remain in Xindvâ orthography, particularly with regards to vowels:

Spelling	Original value	Modern value	Romanization
e	/e/	/e/	e
è	/ɛ/		
o	/o/	/o/	o
ò	/ɔ/		
eh(e)	/eh(e)/	/e:/	ē
oh(o)	/oh(o)/	/o:/	ō
ou	/ow/		
òu	/ɔw/		
aa	/a:/	/æ:/	ae
		/iə/	ûô
a(a)ɓ	/a(:)ɸ/	/a(:)/	â, aa
a(a)h	/a(:)h/		
a(a)lC	/a(:)lC/	/a(:)C/	âC, aaC
ee	/e:/	/i:/	ii
oo	/o:/	/u:/	uu
èè	/ɛ:/	/iə/	iê
òò	/ɔ:/	/uə/	uô
ii	/i:/	/aj/	âi, ây
uu	/u:/	/æw/	au, ao
ai	/aj/	/æj ~ ɛ:/	ai, ay
au	/aw/	/ɔ:/	âu, âo
qh	/χ/ (< /qʰ/)	/x/	h
		/h/	
hs	/sʰ/	/s/	s
	/hs/	/s:/	ss

hm	/ḡ/ (< /hm/)	/m/	m
hn	/ḥ/ (< /hn/)	/n/	n
hnh	/ḥ̃/ (< /hḥ/)	/ɲ/	nh
hng	/ḡ̃/ (< /hḡ/)	/ŋ/	ng

- The mid vowels /e/ and /o/ have two spellings depending on their etymology.
- The vowels /a/ and /iə/ are not indicated directly with their own symbols, but through various conventions with the letter <a>, as these phonemes did not exist in Old Xindvâ.
- There are two letters used to write /h/, one of which formerly had the value of /χ/, which accounts for the *h/q* alternation some roots have.
- Non-initial <h>, which is silent, is retained.
- A letter <ɜ> is found in the orthography; it is usually silent, but serves to indicate the vowel /a/, and sometimes has the value /g/ (especially word-initially) or /q/. The letter formerly represented /ɛ/, a sound which has since disappeared in modern Xindvâ.
- The ____ diacritic, transcribed as <h>, originally indicated a preceding /h/ sound (on <s>, it was also aspiration). Subsequent sound changes however caused this diacritic to have multiple functions; it is now mostly silent, but on stops in particular it marks a geminate consonant.
- Nasal vowels are indicated with a following nasal consonant—*m*, *n*, *nh*, or *ng*; however, not all such digraphs represent nasal vowels. A few rules govern when a letter denotes a nasal vowel; in all contexts, the nasal letter must be a coda:
 - At the end of a word, nasal letters sometimes denote nasal vowels, and sometimes oral vowel-nasal consonant sequences; there is no pattern or predictability, these values must be memorized.
 - All nasal letters indicate nasal vowels when followed by homorganic voiceless stops and no following vowel; that is, the sequences <-mp>, <-nt>, <-nch>, <-ngk> and <-ngq> all indicate a nasal vowel followed by a stop.
 - <nh> always indicates a nasal vowel, with the /ɲ/ weakening into [j̃] and creating a diphthong with the preceding vowel.
 - <aung> always denotes a nasal vowel, either /ã̃/ or /õ̃:/ depending on when the nasalization occurred historically.
- Xindvâ orthography is partially morphophonemic, spelling words with sounds of their underlying roots, even when their realization is different:

- Morphemes that phonemically contain historically aspirated or voiced consonants retain those letters even when the sound is a plain stop. For instance, the word *lutbe* is spelled as ⟨luthbe⟩.
- The same applies to *r* when it is pronounced to /n/: *kvinme* is spelled as ⟨kvirme⟩.
- An ⟨l⟩ before a coda consonant is retained even when it is no longer pronounced, as it may resurface in related words or serve to indicate the vowel /a/.
- Morphemic syllable boundaries between a final consonant and an initial vowel or glide are generally preserved despite the final being pronounced as an onset, except in a few words where common practice has erased the boundaries.
- ⟨a⟩ can be somewhat ambiguous as to its sound value, representing three different phonemes: /æ(:), a(:), ɪə/. In certain contexts they are deducible, but in others it is simply up to the reader to know.
 - ⟨ai, au⟩ are always the long vowels /ɛ: ɔ:/, and ⟨aa⟩ before ⟨y⟩ or ⟨v⟩ is always /ɪə/, rendering triphthongs; these multigraphs generally take priority over other conditions.
 - ⟨a⟩ before any of ⟨q, qh, ʒ, h⟩ is automatically /a/, as /æ/ never occurs in those environments.
 - ⟨a⟩ before ⟨r, l ng⟩ is usually /a/, but may sometimes be /æ/ due to a sort of vowel harmony/umlaut process that took place at an earlier stage of the language.
 - ⟨a⟩ after *kv, gv, ngv* or *v*, is nearly always /a/.
- The letter pairs ⟨qh⟩/⟨h⟩ and ⟨g⟩/⟨ʒ⟩, whose names are homophonous, are distinguished with the names *hô/gô suôin* ('tailed h/g') and *hô/gô qônh* ('looped h/g'), based on their shapes. Similarly, the pairs ⟨e⟩/⟨è⟩ and ⟨o⟩/⟨ò⟩ are named *e hlôu* ('dagger e') and *e dveng* ('bowl e'), and *o thao* ('hook o') and *o zhiron* ('winged o'), with the names deriving from their diacritic shapes rather than their independent forms.