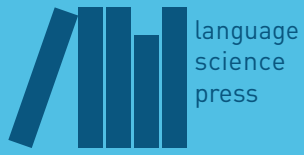
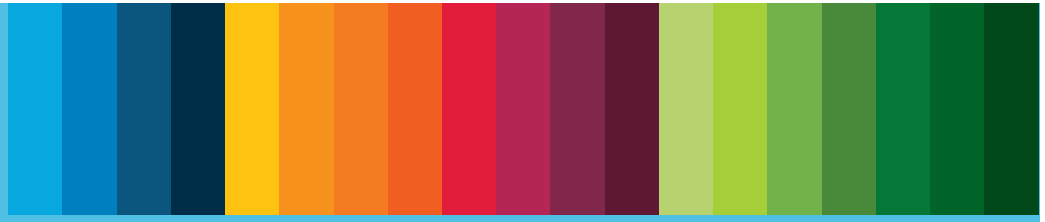




Scholar-led publishing and Diamond Open Access: the funding and business model of Language Science Press

Alena Witzlack-Makarevich (U of Bremen)

20.10.2026

Language Science Press

- LSP has been active since 2014
- Publishes monographs and edited volumes in linguistics
- Born from the insight that:
  - Community-based publishing of scientific literature (in linguistics) will be more cost-efficient than publishing by commercial publishers.
  - New technologies and collaborative work methods mean that many traditional tasks performed by publishers are no longer needed or can be provided at a fraction of the cost.

The beginning

- First contact: 2012
- Active since 2014
  - 2014–2016 FU Berlin (DFG seed funding)
  - 2016–2018 HU Berlin
  - 2019– non-profit limited liability company (gemeinnützige UG)

The team

- currently directed by Stefan Müller (FU Berlin), Oliver Czulo (U of Leipzig, Translatologie gGmbH), and Alena Witzlack-Makarevich (U of Bremen)
- press coordinator: Sebastian Nordhoff
- a small team of linguists and programmers
- in the early stages, there was also a business manager

The principles of LSP

1. **Diamond/Platinum Open Access:** No fees for authors or readers worldwide, low-cost print-on-demand copies, and open publication processes.
2. **Quality:** Mandatory peer review and high publication standards.
3. **Specialization:** Specialized series ensure quality according to subdisciplinary standards.
4. **Decentralized Organization:** Autonomous series editors manage submissions and quality.
5. **Community:** Researchers contribute through authorship, reviewing, and proofreading.
6. **Automation:** Standardized workflows and tools to streamline production and reduce costs.
7. **Lean Publishing:** OA publishing avoids legacy activities such as warehousing, royalties, and paywalls.

12 years later

- as of today, 376 books published
- all books Diamond/Platinum Open Access
- current goal: 33 books/year
- 39 series including
  - Studies in Diversity Linguistics: 33 books
  - Translation and Multilingual Natural Language Processing: 27 books
  - Textbooks in Language Sciences: 22 books
  - Open Germanic Linguistics: 17 books

Achievements 2025

2025 Publications

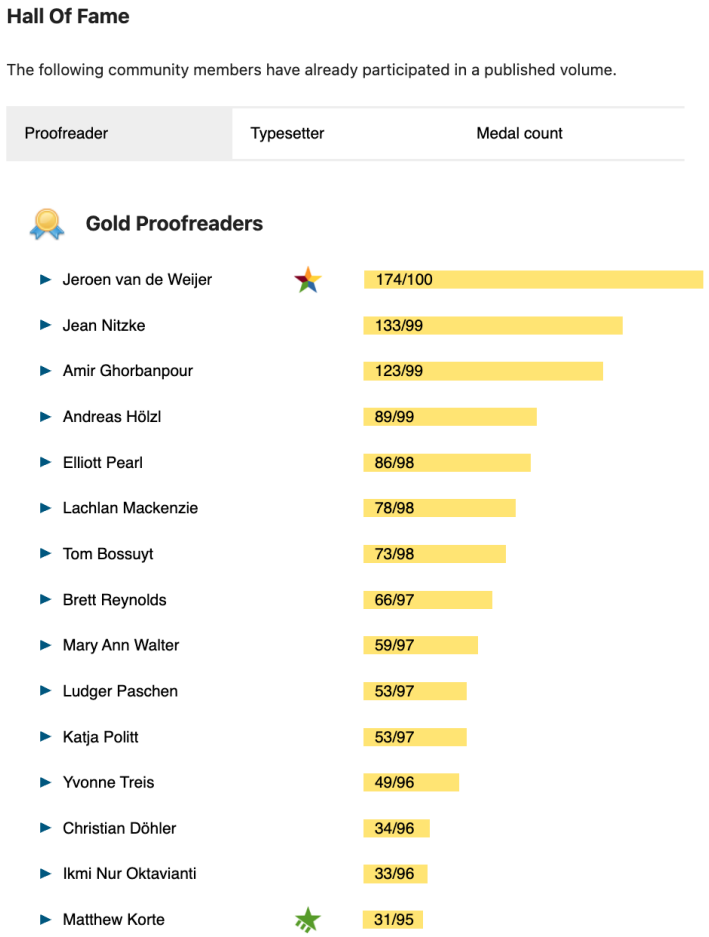
- 39 books were published
- 124 works were proposed to LSP
- compare to 95 in 2024 and 109 in 2023
- submission to decision: 75 days (median)
- submission to publication: 339 days
- the acceptance rate (incl. desk rejections): 57.88% over all series
- pdfs downloaded 656,276 times
- most downloaded: *Arabic and contact-induced change* (23,566)

Workflow

- initial submission of papers
- reviewing & acceptance/rejection of papers
- revised papers
- conversion to **LaTeX** (with **Overleaf**): editors' task, but assistance is given. LSP does a rough conversion, postprocessing is done by volume editors; the closer the initial papers follow the **templates** and the stylesheet, the less time-consuming it is.)
- proofreading (**Paperhive**) & indexing
- incorporation of proofreaders' comments
- final typesetting
- approval by volume editor and signing of contract
- approval by series editor and by press directors
- preparation of print-on-demand
- publication as pdf and print (+various online venues)
- announcement

The community

- over 1900 supporters
- an international Advisory Board of 13 renowned scholars
- over 1400 linguists have published a book or a chapter
- over 652 community proofreader, 314 in 2025 (see Hall of Fame)



Hall Of Fame

The following community members have already participated in a published volume.

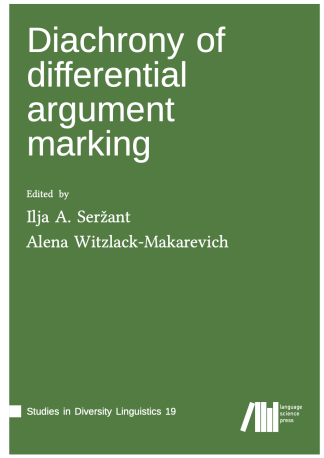
Proofreader	Typesetter	Medal count

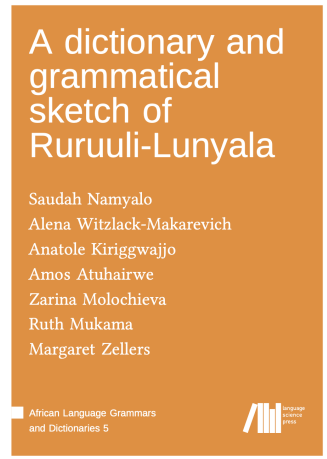
Gold Proofreaders

Jeroen van de Weijer	174/100
Jean Nitzke	133/99
Amir Ghorbanpour	123/99
Andreas Hölzl	89/99
Elliott Pearl	86/98
Lachlan Mackenzie	78/98
Tom Bossuyt	73/98
Brett Reynolds	66/97
Mary Ann Walter	59/97
Ludger Paschen	53/97
Katja Politt	53/97
Yvonne Treis	49/96
Christian Döhler	34/96
Ikmi Nur Oktavianti	33/96
Matthew Korte	31/95

A typical community member

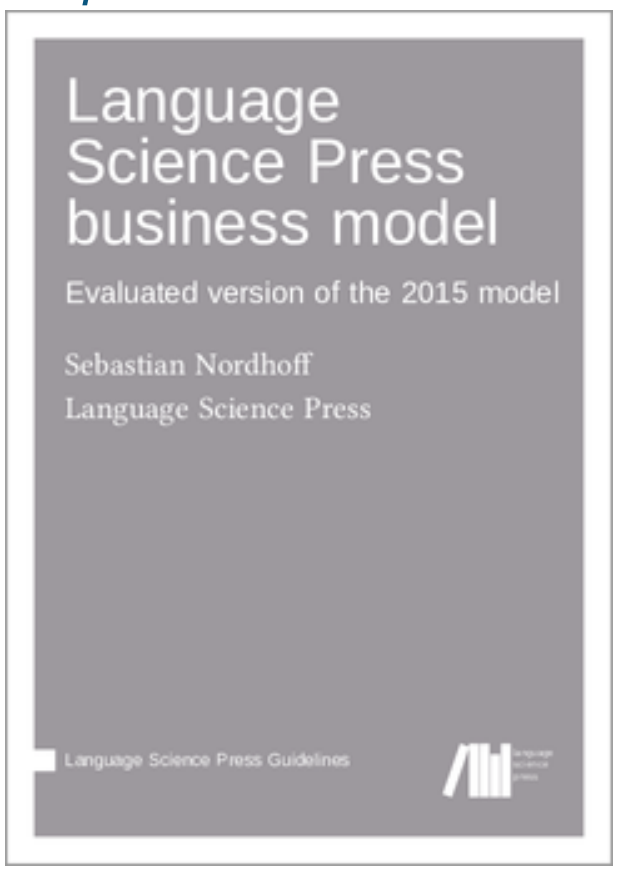
- Edited one volume (2018, over 43,000 downloads)
- Published one monograph (2021, over 8,900 downloads)
- Authored three articles in edited volumes
- Reviewed one monograph and a few articles
- Proofread chapters in 18 volumes
- About to start a new series: Open Dictionaries Collection
- Since 2023: member of the Advisory Board





Business model

Replicable strategies for book publications supplemented with empirical data



langsci-press.org/opendata

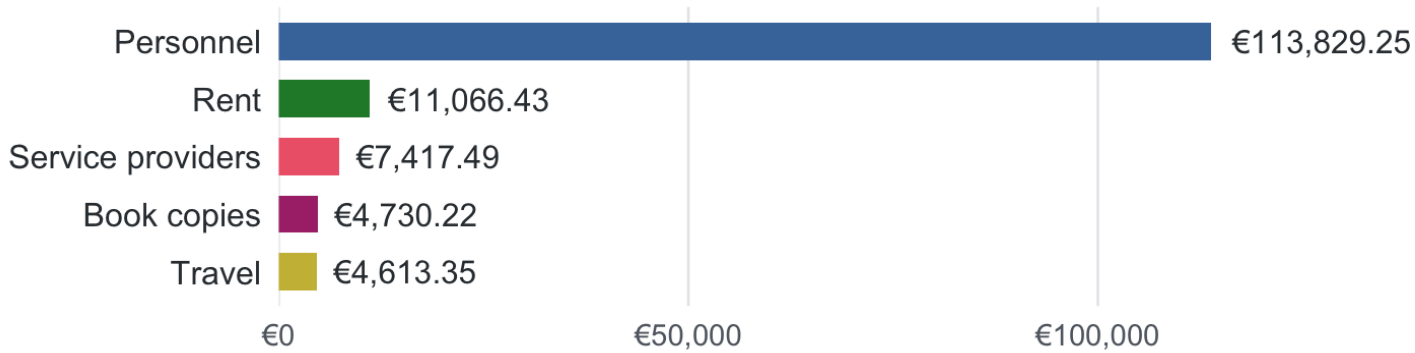
Business model

- Publishing does not come for free
  - Obvious costs: ink and paper, computer storage,
  - Not-so-obvious costs: the time needed to set up a book for print-on-demand or the creation of user manuals and screencasts
- These costs have to be counterbalanced by revenue
- Traditionally, publishers recoup their costs via the margin of their book sales
- In an open access paradigm with a smaller print run, this is less straightforward

Finances 2025

- Expenditures of 143,870.24 € (+2,417.81 €)
- A revenue of 153,223.04 € (+ 7,522.91 €)
- What's the break down?

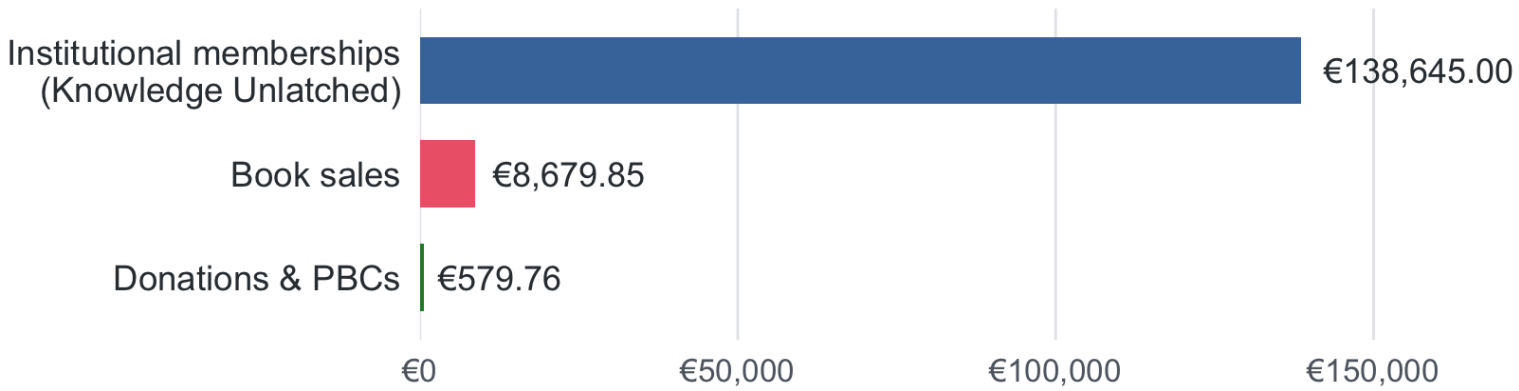
Expenses 2025



What does a book cost?

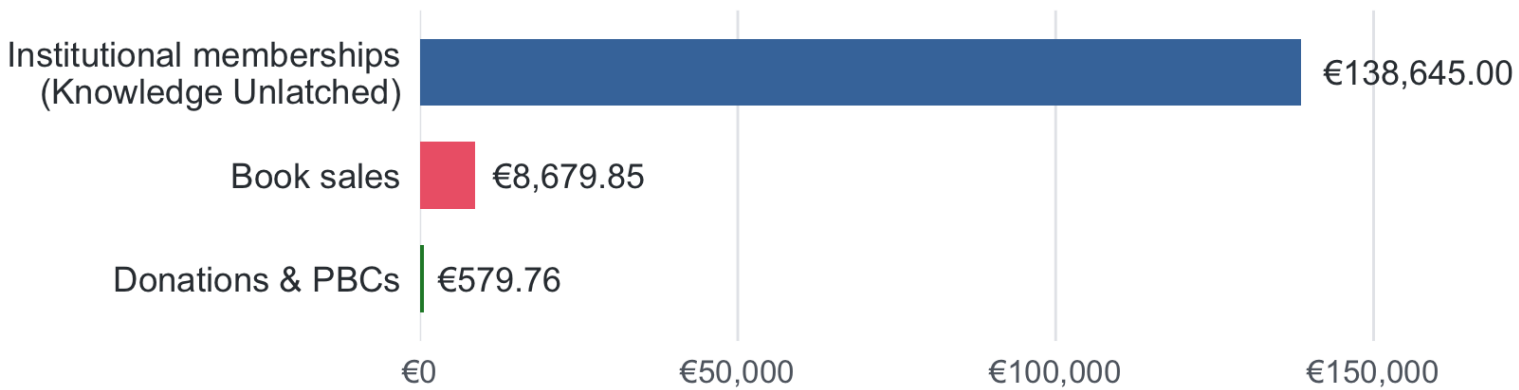
- Costs for producing a fully open access book (CC-BY): around 4,000 EUR (3,700 in 2025)
- this is the global sum we need per book: the cost is met by all participating institutions and individuals together
- compare this to the quotes of 10,000 EUR (de Gruyter) or 18,500 EUR (Brill)
- possible only thanks to all the free support we receive from the community!

Revenue 2025



Institutional memberships

- 2023-2026: funding from 112 institutions
  - Adam Mickiewicz University Poznan
  - Central Library of Zürich
  - Institute for Croatian Language and Linguistics
  - Johns Hopkins University
  - State and University Library Bremen
  - ...
- Facilitated via Knowledge Unlatched



Knowledge Unlatched

- Knowledge Unlatched (KU) is an OA service provider
- Established in 2012 as a British not-for-profit Community Interest Company (CIC)
- In 2016 the legal structure changed to Knowledge Unlatched GmbH, registered as a for-profit in Berlin, Germany
- In 2021, acquired by Wiley
- In 2025, the journal publisher Annual Reviews signed an agreement with Wiley to acquire Knowledge Unlatched (KU), returning it to nonprofit management
- Currently 15% commission

Knowledge Unlatched

- Libraries contribute: Libraries worldwide pledge funds to support selected books or collections.
- Publication costs are shared: Contributions from multiple institutions help cover the costs of making books openly accessible.
- Publishers provide OA editions: Supported titles are made available online under appropriate OA licenses.
- Readers benefit: Researchers, students, and the public can access and download books without subscription or purchase barriers.
- Scope: Humanities and Social Sciences

Institutional memberships

- For the period 2027-2029, 40 institutions have already pledged support
- More institutions are needed to join the pledge
- Many thanks in advance!