In the prefinal paragraph of their reply to our commentary (Kempen & Harbusch, 2003), Bornkessel, Schlesewsky, and Friederici (2003) assert that the “frequency ratios reported by K&H […] differ from publication to publication”, and that this “renders their argumentation highly questionable at the very least”. They base this claim on a footnote in Kempen and Harbusch (in press) where we write that “permutations starting with direct objects tend to be more frequent than those with initial indirect objects”.

However, this criticism is unjustified. The sentence cited by BSF refers to the NEGRA clauses that are (a) ditransitive and (b) main or subordinate, i.e. to a domain of clauses that differs from the domain addressed in our commentary. Hence, the quote cannot be used to discredit our frequency reports.

We published our commentary on the understanding that with BSF’s reply the discussion in the pages of Cognition would be closed. Therefore, we appreciate this opportunity to clear up at least this one issue.