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Petitions to the British Parliament: Linguistic Features Related to Toulmin's Argument Model

Abstract: The right to petition the British Parliament is a part of the British democratic traditions. British subjects have constantly signed petitions and then sent them to the Parliament in hope of getting a favourable response. According to the Factsheets of the British Parliament, “[t]he first known petitions to the Lords and to both Houses of Parliament date from the reign of Richard II, but seem to have become widespread from the reign of Henry IV onwards.” (Factsheet P7, p. 5). The present study analyses a sample corpus made up of petitions presented in the House of Commons of the British Parliament and aim at identifying argumentative and linguistic features which may be typical for this kind of petitions. To do this, a general survey of the meaning of the English noun ‘petition’ and the derived verb ‘to petition’ will be carried out first. The argumentative and semantic features identified for them as they emerge from their dictionary definitions will be checked on the corpus of petitions. The results of the analysis are expected to prove their presence in the petitions presented in the British Parliament while differences may also show up. In order to do this, a theoretical framework for the argumentative and for the linguistic approach will be chosen. As will be mentioned further on, this will be Toulmin’s (2003) model of argument (made up of Data, Claim, Warrant, Backing, Qualifiers and Rebuttal). As for the linguistic perspective, the Speech Act theory developed by Searle (1969) and Austin (1975), together with the description of English verbs used in various speech acts, outlined by Kreidler (1998), will be used to identify the speech acts and predicates present in the petitions.

Keywords: petition, British Parliament, House of Commons, argumentation, Toulmin, linguistics.

1. The noun “petition” and the verb “to petition”. Etymology and definitions

The English noun ‘petition’ originates in the Latin noun *petitio*, -*nis* which is derived from the verb *peto*, *petere*, a verb which, as is the case with many Latin words, is polysemous. The Oxford Latin Dictionary (2012) mentions six meanings of the noun *petitio* and no less than 32 meanings of the verb *peto*. All these meanings are summed up in Appendix 1. A look at these meanings reveals the fact that, as for many Latin words, the meaning evolved from concrete to abstract. Thus, the meanings of the Latin verb *peto* range from physical notions such as ‘moving’, ‘attacking’, ‘striking’, ‘chasing’, via meanings such as ‘procurring’, ‘fetching’ or ‘striving to bring about’, up to ‘being a candidate’, ‘courting’, ‘suing’, ‘applying for’ and, particularly relevant to the present study, ‘laying claim to’, ‘applying for’, ‘demanding’ and ‘requiring’. Similarly, the meaning of the noun *petitio* ranges from ‘attack’ or ‘thrust’, to ‘suit’, ‘request’, ‘candidature’, ‘claim’, ‘request’ and, not surprisingly, ‘petition’.

According to the electronic edition of the Merriam Webster Dictionary, the Latin word *petitio* reached Modern English via Anglo-French and Middle English. Out of the meanings mentioned above, the Modern English noun *petition* has preserved those related to ‘request’, ‘claim’ or ‘demand’. Modern English has both the noun and the verb ‘petition’, and both have several meanings. The Oxford English Dictionary, the most comprehensive dictionary of the English language, a dictionary that includes the diachronic evolution of the English words and illustrate this with examples from past and present, mentions several meanings of the noun “petition” and for the verb “to petition”, which are summed up in Appendix 2.

One of the several meanings of the noun “petition” and of the verb “to petition”, which is derived from the noun, is the meaning related to the political context of modern Britain: a petition sent to the political authorities. It is this meaning only, i.e. the meaning (3a) of the noun and the meaning (1a) of the verb, that will be the subject of the present study.

Several definitions of the noun and the verb ‘petition’ given by Modern English dictionaries are listed in Appendix 3. This list includes only the meanings related to the petitions sent to the British Parliament. A look at these definitions reveals the existence of common semantic features that may lead to a general description of the meaning of the noun

‘petition’. Thus, one may remark that all the definitions mentioned in Appendix 3 have six parts that can be summed up in Table 1:

Table 1. The common features of the definitions of the English noun ‘petition’

No.	Semantic feature
1	document
2	(typically) signed
3	by a large number of / a lot of / many people
4	demanding / asking / appealing
5	from authority / Government / official group
6	an action / a thing / a cause / to do or to change

These common features suggest the fact that a petition is a written document that shares features typical for utterances: to demand / ask / appeal someone which is not a direct interlocutor but an authority of some kind. This fact suggests, in its turn, that petition is a written document that in fact embodies a sum of voices. It may be regarded as a kind of a written instance of a public rally: instead of shouting and chanting slogans, people sum up their wish in the form of a document and expect the addressed authority to fulfil their request. This makes petition a form of interaction and suggests that, out of the areas of Linguistics, Pragmatics — defined, in a nutshell, as “the study of meaning in interaction” (Thomas 1995, 22) — offers a suitable approach in investigating the action of petitioning as containing a speech act or as a sum of speech acts.

Also relevant to the present investigation are the definitions of the word ‘petition’ given by dictionaries of collocations and of synonyms. This type of dictionaries cast light upon the co-text in which the word ‘petition’ is used in English and on its semantic family, respectively.

Thus, the *Oxford Collocations Dictionary for students of English* mentions the most frequent verbs that act as post-modifier for the noun ‘petition’: ‘ask sth’, ‘ask for sth’, ‘call for sth’, ‘demand sth’, ‘request sth’, ‘seek sth’, ‘urge sth’; ‘oppose sth’; ‘support sth’ (2009, 599). This suggests that a petition normally includes a speech act of requesting, either in opposing or supporting something.

Concerning the meaning relationships, the *Oxford Learner's Thesaurus* describes the meaning of the noun 'petition' as closely related to the meaning of the noun 'request', 'demand' and 'claim' (2008, 648) and the meaning of the verb 'petition' as closely related to the verbs 'ask', 'request' and 'claim' (2008, 35). The *Penguin Dictionary of Synonyms and Antonyms* also relates the meaning of the noun 'petition' to the noun 'request' and of the verb 'petition' to verbs such as 'ask', 'request', 'entreat', 'solicit'. (1986, 309).

The collocations and the synonyms of the noun and of the verb 'petition' mentioned by these dictionaries suggest that, in addition to the presence of a speech act of requesting, a petition includes a claim, a term which is also present in Toulmin's model of argument.

2. Petitions to the British Parliament. Tradition, structure and standards

According to the Factsheets of the British Parliament, a petition is "a formal written request from one or more people to the Sovereign, the Government or to Parliament" (Factsheet P7). The present paper will confine itself to petitions sent to the House of Commons of the British Parliament. The House of Commons is the lower chamber of the British Parliament (the higher one being the House of Lords) and has decisional power. The present paper will analyse the public petitions sent to the House of Commons but not those petitions sent to block the passage of a private bill.

After having seen the dictionary definitions for 'petition' as a noun and as a verb, the specific meaning of 'petition' nowadays is described as follows:

- (1) A petition is a formal written request from one or more people to the Sovereign, the Government or to Parliament. The right of the subject to petition the Monarch for redress of personal grievances has probably been exercised since Saxon times. It was recognised in Magna Carta and more explicitly in an Act of 1406. The Bill of Rights of 1688 restated that right in unambiguous terms, "... it is the right of the subjects to petition the King, and all commitments and prosecutions for such petitioning are illegal".

(UK Parliament Factsheets, Factsheet P7, p. 1)

Concerning the content of a petition, its wording must be “respectful, decorous and temperate”. Each petition must contain a “prayer”, that is a request to the Parliament. A petition ends with the phrase “And the petitioners remain, etc.” (sic). Two of the petitions analysed in the present study — “Spinneyfields Specialist Care Centre Closure” and “North Northamptonshire Unitary Council’s Care Provider Services Strategy” — are introduced by the archaic form ‘Sheweth’, meaning ‘Shows’, and are concluded by the traditional form “And your petitioners, as duty bound, will ever pray, &c.”.

Petitions have been traditionally sent in paper form. However, since the emergence of Internet it has been possible to write and submit them in electronic form via the website of the British Parliament. According to the standards for submitting a petition, which are also published on the website of the British Parliament, petitions “must call for a specific action from the UK Government or the House of Commons” and “must be about something that the Government or the House of Commons is directly responsible for”.

Petitions are introduced to the Parliament by a Member of Parliament. This is called ‘the presentation of a petition by an MP’ and is done nowadays at the end of the day’s business. The fact that an MP presents a petition does not imply that he or she is sharing the petitioners’ point of view. The MP who presents the petition begins by summing up the petition and then reads out its complete text.

3. Previous research

Whereas parliamentary debates have constantly been a popular research topic, not the same may be stated on the petitions presented in the British Parliament. This is somehow surprising given the fact that petitions have a long tradition in the British Parliament, dating back in the days of the English Parliament, or even before if one takes into account the petitions submitted to King Richard II. A large number of studies conducted have been done in the field of History, as is the case with Archer (1988), Ioannidou (2006), Heaton (2006), Kishlansky (1977), Knights (1993), Read Foster (1974), Reeve (1986), Taft (1978), Thrush (2016), Zaret (1996), some in the field of Law, such as McKinley (2016), of philosophy, such as Margalit & Ullmann-Margalit (1984) and of politics — Corbett (2010). However, petitions have not been approached so far from an argumentative or a linguistic perspective, which seems to be an under-researched area.

Concerning the areas of Argumentation and Linguistic which will be found to be relevant to the present study, a great amount of research has been done. The stages of an argument were described by the Amsterdam school of Argumentation, as was done by Eemeren & Grootendorst (2004). Besides, out of the various argumentative theories which have been developed so far, Toulmin's (2003) argument layout seems highly relevant for the structure of a petition, as a petition may be regarded as a part of an argument rather than a complete one. Concerning the linguistic analysis, Kreidler's (1998) outline of speech acts — using the foundations laid by Searle (1969) and Austin (1975) — as well as of the semantics of predicates in English is a complex description that may offer the tools to identify linguistic features which may be related to the argumentative structure.

As a petition may be regarded as a part of an argumentative process, Toulmin's (2003) key notions 'Backing' and 'Warrant' may occur in the petition. If so, they should be identified and, in their turn, be subject to a further investigation, namely a linguistic one.

4. Material and method

The methodology used in the present study consists of a corpus-linguistic approach to a collection of petitions presented in the British Parliament, followed by an analysis of each petition, performed from an argumentative and a linguistic perspective, in order to find out if there are linguistic features which may describe the argumentative features of a petition.

A petition presented to the Parliament may be regarded as a stage of an argument, in that it is a response to a presupposed proposal or action, and arguing for either for counteracting it or for doing some different action. From the text of the petition, one may infer the presupposed fact or proposal that triggered the raise of the petition. However, at the stage when the petition is presented to the Parliament, we do not know what effect it will have, particularly whether it will be successful or not. According to the rules of the British Parliament, The British Government will respond to the petitions which get at least 10,000 signatures and if a petition gets 100,000 signatures, "it will be considered for debate in Parliament" (<https://petition.parliament.uk/>). This means that the outcome of a petition may range from nothing up to a parliamentary debate and a decision taken by the British Government — one should

keep in mind that the members of the Government of the United Kingdom are also Members of Parliament.

These remarks suggests that Toulmin's model of argument seems more suitable in analysing the argumentative features of a petition than, for instance, the Pragma-Dialectic theory developed by the Amsterdam school of Argumentation (Eemeren & Grootendorst 2004). The latter is more effective in analysing a difference of opinion, covering several stages, from the stage of confrontation up to the concluding stage (2004, 59).

These remarks, together with the remarks on the collocations and synonyms of the noun and verb 'petition' made in the first section of the present study, suggest the following working hypotheses, which will be checked on the petitions analysed in the present study. First, if the dictionary definitions of the term 'petition' refer to Data and Claim, which are also parts of Toulmin's argument model, we should check to what extent the other components of this model, such as Warrant, Backing, Qualifiers and Rebuttal, are also present. Second, if the collocations and synonyms relate a petition to the noun 'request', it would be interesting to see if all petitions include the speech act of requesting and if there are other speech acts expressed.

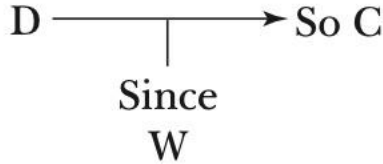
As mentioned in section 1, the analysis of the petitions will be both argumentative and linguistic. The argumentative analysis will use the model described by Stephen Toulmin (2003) to identify the main parts of the argumentative structure of each petition. The linguistic analysis will be performed in two steps. First, the petitions will be gathered in a corpus, which will be analysed using Corpus Linguistic tools such as text processing and statistical observations. Then, the speech acts and predicate types occurring in the Data and the Claim will be identified and then analysed starting from Kreidler's (1998) description of English predicates. These two approaches will offer two perspectives that should enable the identification of relations between the argumentative and the linguistic features of the petitions and this should, in its turn, suggest which information may be added to Toulmin's argument model to describe the features of a petition.

4.1. The argument model

Toulmin's (2003) argument model describes an argument as consisting of three main compulsory components: Data, Claim, Warrant. According to this model, an argument starts from given Data (D) and uses

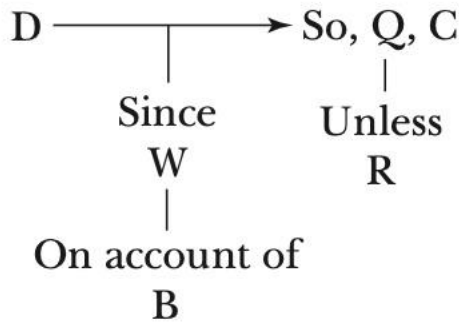
a general principle called Warrant (W) to express a claim (C), as displayed in Figure 1.

Figure 1. The compulsory parts of Toulmin's model of argument — its compulsory components



A more elaborate form adds three optional elements: Backing (of the Warrant), Qualifiers and Rebuttal. This description of the model also starts from the Data (D) and Warrant (W) but adds the Backing (B) of the Warrant, i.e. data on which the Warrant is based, as well as Qualifiers (Q) which may nuance the Claim, and the Rebuttal (R), which represents the exceptions that make the Claim invalid. This form is illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2. The complete form of Toulmin's model of argument



The difference between Warrant and Backing is that the former is a hypothetical statement whereas the latter has the form of a categorical statements of fact (2003, 97-98), while the difference between Data and Backing is that, although both are stated “as straightforward matters-of-fact”, the former is compulsory (as there is no argument without Data) and the latter need not be made explicit (2003, 98) and in many cases the Warrant is enough to bridge between the Data and the Claim.

The Data, the Warrant and the Claim are obligatory, in that there cannot be an argument without all the three. As Toulmin points out, these parts, together with the Backing of the Warrant, try to be an improved form of Aristotle's syllogism (2003, 100ff). The Backing, Qualifiers and Rebuttal may be omitted — the Backing need not be expressed if it is considered to be self-evident, whereas the Qualifiers and Rebuttal may be dropped in that the Claim may be stated without the nuance expressed by the Qualifiers and without any exception that would be expressed by the Rebuttal.

4.2. Speech acts

Speech acts are studied within the realm of linguistic Pragmatics, the branch of linguistics which, as mentioned in section 1, can be defined in a nutshell as “the study of meaning in interaction” (Thomas 1995, 22). As mentioned, Kreidler (1998) outlines the Speech Act theory developed by Searle (1969) and Austin (1975). He mentions seven kinds of speech acts respectively represented by the following types of utterances: assertive, performative, verdictive, expressive, directive, commissive and phatic. (1998, 183ff).

From their definitions one may ascribe the action of petitioning as being a type of performative speech act, as its presentation in the appropriate frame (the Parliament) has the value of an action, as the Parliament or the Government are supposed to take note of the petition and, if the number of petitioners reaches a certain amount, they will get an answer to their petition or even get a parliamentary debate on it.

Moreover, petitioning is also a speech act of the directive type, as long as it requests someone to do something. The goal of the request may be expressed either as a positive action — to do something or to change something — or a negative one — to refrain from doing something. This is in accordance with Kreidler's definition of the speech act of requesting: “A request is an expression of what the speaker wants the addressee to do or refrain from doing. A request does not assume the speaker's control over the person addressed” (1998, 190), as well as with the general meaning of a request described as follows: “Speaker, not in authority, expresses wish that Addressee <not> act as Speaker wants Addressee <not> to act.” (1998, 190) The angular parentheses mean that the included text may either occur simultaneously or be omitted simultaneously. Last but not least, petitioning is confirmed as a speech act of requesting by the very examples of verbs given by Kreidler in

illustrating this speech act, as ‘to petition’ is one of them, together with ‘to request’, ‘to appeal to’ and ‘to ask’, ‘to beg’, ‘to beseech’, ‘to entreat’, ‘to implore’ and ‘to plead with’. He also points out that ‘to petition’ is “formal” and “very likely in writing”. (1998, 191)

A closer look at these two speech acts finds them to be embedded: the petitioners present their request. In other words, the directive speech act represented by urging the Government is included in the performative act of requesting it from the Parliament. A characteristic of a performative speech act formulated in English is that its predicate must be in the present simple (and not present continuous) as well as the fact that the adverb ‘hereby’ can be added without changing the meaning of the performative speech act, two features pointed out by Verschueren (1980, 7). The analysis of the petitions in the corpus is therefore expected to confirm the presence of these two features.

4.3. Types of predicates

Kreidler (1998) makes an outline of predicates in English, described from a semantic point of view. This is done starting from a classification of the semantic roles, as follows:

(2) actor

The role of an argument that performs some action without affecting any other entity.

Sylvia left.

affected

The role of an argument that undergoes a change due to some event or is affected by some other entity.

A window broke.

Tom broke *a window*.

Betty likes opera.

Opera delights *Betty*.

affecting

The role of an argument that, without any action, affects another entity.

Betty likes *opera*.

Opera delights *Betty*.

agent

The role of an argument that by its action affects some other entity.

Tom broke *a window*.

associate

The role of an argument that tells the status or identity of another argument, the theme.

Roger is *a student*.

effect

The role of an argument that comes into existence through the action of the predicate.

Tillie baked *a pie*.

place

The role of an argument that names the location in which the action of the predicate occurs.

The fireman climbed *a ladder*.

theme

The role of an argument that is the topic of a predicate that does not express action — a stative predicate.

Audrey is a computer expert.

(Kreidler 1998, 70)

The semantic role of ‘affected’ is called ‘patient’ by other linguists.

Using the criterion of the semantic roles, Kreidler identifies three classes of predicates (1998, 68-77):

(a) With no argument, as in the utterance “It is snowing”;

(b) with one argument, as in:

“Larry laughed” (actor – action),

“The volcano erupted” (affected – event),

“The bottle is empty” (theme – description),

“John is a carpenter” (theme – identity);

(c) with two arguments, as in:

“Bert hit Harry” (agent – action – affected),

“Picasso created a masterpiece” (agent – action – effect),

“Jenny crossed the street” (actor – action – place),

“The decision surprised us” (affecting – affect – affected),

“Oliver was angry with Jenny” (affected – affect – affecting),

“Sheila is like her mother.” (theme – link – associate)

Concerning the predicate of petitioning, if its features described in the dictionary definitions mentioned in section 1 are matched to the semantic features mentioned in this section — the petitioners request the British Parliament to fulfil their request — it may be described as a whole as a three-argument predicate:

Argument 1: the petitioners
Semantic role: agent

Argument 2: the British Parliament
Semantic role: affected

Argument 3: the request
semantic role: effect

The argumentative and linguistic features which have been mentioned in this section will be used to annotate the petitions in the corpus.

4.4. The corpus designed for the present study

As mentioned above, the present study uses Corpus Linguistics, which is a methodology used in various areas of linguistics rather than a branch of linguistics (Meyer 2002, XI). In order to perform the analysis, I have designed a corpus made up of the transcriptions of the debates going on in the British Parliament from the sessions 2021-2022 and 2022-2023, ranging from May 2021 to June 2023, i.e. to the moment when the present study was written. The source of the petition texts was the Hansard official transcription of the debates held in the British Parliament.

Out of this corpus I have made up a smaller corpus, made up of a number of 100 petitions presented in the House of Commons during these two sessions. These petitions range from “Proposed Heath Common”, presented on 15 September 2021, to “Syresham Truck Stop”, presented on 26 April 2023. The amount of 100 petitions was regarded as large enough to lead to relevant conclusions for the present study. Besides, it means that any number of petitions found to share a certain feature is also their percentage in the corpus. As one of the petitions (“Electrification of the Hull to Selby railway line”) was presented twice — on 20 October 2021 by Emma Hardy (Kingston upon Hull West and Hessle) (Lab) and on 26 October 2021 by Dame Diana Johnson (Kingston upon Hull North)

(Lab) — only one of its presentations (10 October 2021) was included in the corpus.

The detailed list of the petitions in the corpus is displayed in Appendix4, where the date and title of each petition are also mentioned. The petitions are numbered, in chronological order, from P 1 to P 100. All petitions are also stored on my personal website and their content may be viewed by accessing the Internet address <https://mihai.se/cercetare/petitii/texte/>.

The title of each petition may also be regarded as the topic of the petition. However, to express the topic of the petition as a full clause the title becomes the subject of the clause. For instance, the title of the petition presented on 22 June 2022 is “Post box in Hayfield”. After having read the text of the petition one may rephrase its topic as “The Royal Mail should install a new post box in Hayfield”.

5. Analysis

This section will present the results of the investigation on the corpus and will highlight the speech acts and the predicate types used in the argumentative parts of the petitions.

As mentioned above, a petition sent to the British Parliament may be regarded as a part of an argument. This view is suggested by several facts. First, the structure of a petition, as prompted by the instructions given to the petitioners on the website of the British Parliament, suggest that Then, the fact that a petition is a response to an action or an intention which has already been done (and thus belongs to the past) and requests a future action. The text of the petition mentions the past action or intention, seen as the starting point of the petition, whereas the outcome of the petition — either successful or not — is, of course, not known at the moment when the petition is written, nor when it is presented in front of the Parliament.

Concerning the place of the petition in the succession of the stages of an argumentation identified by Eemeren & Grootendorst (2004, 59), it appears as a part of the reply given to the first stage of the argument. However, unlike the stages in this dispute-solving model, a petition sent to the British Parliament occurs in isolation. The first stage consists of facts mentioned in the first part of the petition, whereas the outcome of the final stage remains unknown at the moment when the petition is presented to the Parliament. The second part of the petition expresses the outcome desired by the petitioners, but, as mentioned, there is no certainty that their request will be fulfilled.

All these remarks suggest that the dispute-solving model is less effective in analysing a petition. A petition would rather be better described by analysing its argumentative structure and linguistic features such as speech acts and predicates.

Regarding the structure of a petition, a general look at the petition in the corpus reveals that all petitions are made up of four main parts. Two of them are less relevant to the present study, as they simply introduce and conclude the petition: the introductory phrase — such as “The petition of residents of Arundel and South Downs” in P 1 — and the concluding one — “And the petitioners remain, etc.” in the same P 1. The other two parts are respectively made of facts that are the background and reason for raising the petition, and of the request made by the petitioners. These two parts, illustrated by the two paragraphs in (3) roughly suggest the parts played in Toulmin’s argument model by the Data and the Claim respectively.

- (3) Declares that the proposed site of Heath Common by Clarion Housing Group is inappropriate for the development of residential housing; further that this site was not designated in the democratically mandated Storrington and Sullington and Washington joint-neighbourhood plan; further that original permissions granted for the land were indicative only of tree-felling.

The petitioners therefore request the House of Commons to urge the Government to offer support to residents against the proposed development at Heath Common, Storrington, by Clarion Housing Group and formally acknowledge its inappropriateness for a residential development.

(P 1)

This resemblance is confirmed by the presence of the conjunction ‘therefore’, which occurs in 98 out of the 100 petitions gathered in the corpus, a conjunction that acts as a logical connector between premises and conclusion.

The first step of the investigation on the petition corpus is to identify the parts of the argument represented by each petition, in terms of Toulmin’s argument model. Each part will then be approached to from a linguistic perspective, describing features such as the speech acts and the predicates occurring in the parts which occur in most petitions.

6. Results and discussion

As mentioned in section 5.1, the two main parts of a petition presented in the British Parliament can be roughly described, in order, as ‘the Data part’ and ‘the Claim part’, linked by the connector ‘therefore’. Nevertheless, a detailed analysis of the 100 petitions in the corpus revealed that the other parts of Toulmin’s argument model are also present in a number of petitions. This section will make a more detailed description of them and of linguistic features that may be relevant in describing them.

6.1. The Data

The Data is present in all the 100 petitions in the corpus, with the mention that in one case (P 87) it is entirely replaced by the Warrant and Claim. This singular case will be presented in section 6.3.1 below. The other petitions have a Data part made up of one or more clauses which occur in succession, in many cases linked by the adverb ‘further’.

6.1.1. Speech acts occurring in the Data

Table # below displays the speech act expressed by the predicates used to introduce the Data. One may notice that all of them are assertive. For the assertive type of speech act it is noteworthy what they focus on, and this is accordingly marked in Table 2 using the criteria mentioned by Kreidler (1998, 183ff).

Table 2. The predicates in the Data and the speech acts expressed by them

Predicate	Speech act	Focus	Number of petitions
declare	direct assertive	information	92
note	direct assertive	information	46
sheweth	direct assertive	information	1
believe	direct assertive	truth value	1
concerned	direct assertive	commitment, involvement	1

The predicate most frequently used in the Data part of the petitions are ‘declare’ and ‘note’. They occur in 98 out of the 100

petitions in the corpus. Both express assertive speech acts in a direct way and focus on the information introduced by them (Kreidler 1998, 184). The difference in meaning between the two can be described using the definitions given for each of them by Modern English dictionaries. Thus, the meaning of the verb ‘declare’ is ‘to state something in a rather formal or official way. The verb ‘note’ has two meanings that are relevant to petitions: (1) to notice something or point it out; (2) to record something in writing. This suggests that ‘declare’ highlights the formal and official character of the petition while ‘note’ point out the facts and at the same time highlights the fact that the petition is a written document. (One may also notice that the number of occurrences for ‘note’ is exactly the half of that for ‘declare’, but this does not suggest any mathematical rule for them.) Besides these two predicates, the verb form ‘sheweth’, a more archaic form of the verb form ‘shows’, occurs in P 84. The speech act expressed by it is also direct assertive and focused on information.

The data displayed in Table 3 also reveal that there are only 2 petitions out of the total 100 in which the petitioners do not use either of ‘declare’ or ‘note’. In P 81 the predicate ‘believe’ is used whereas in P 88 the predicate is the verbal adjective ‘concerned’, in the form ‘are concerned’. Both predicates are also direct assertive, but it is the focus that distinguishes them from the most frequent two. The predicate ‘believe’ stresses the truth value of the Data while ‘concerned’ stresses the commitment and involvement of the petitioners in the facts expressed in the Data.

Table 3. The distribution of the predicates ‘declare’ and ‘note’ in the Data

Predicate	Number of petitions
‘declare’ (without ‘note’)	52
‘note’ (without ‘declare’)	5
‘declare’ & ‘note’	41

One may notice that the predicate ‘note’ is in most cases accompanying the predicate ‘declare’. It seldom occurs alone, while ‘declare’ does it in most cases.

6.1.2. Predicates occurring in the Data

The results of the investigation of the predicates occurring in the Data is displayed in Table 4.

Table 4. Types of predicates occurring in the Data part of the petitions

Type of predicate	Number of petitions where it occurs in the Data part
agent – action – affected	82
agent – action – effect	26
stative	56
affecting – affect – affected	9
affected – affect – affecting	13
theme – description	60
theme – identity	8
theme – link – associate	6
affected – event	7
actor – action – place	3
actor – action	2

The results displayed in the table reveal that the most frequent predicates occurring in the Data belong to the types ‘agent – action – affected’, ‘theme – description’ and stative.

6.2. The Claim

This section will analyse the speech act and predicates that occur in the Claim part of the petitions. The analysis on the corpus reveals that the Claim occurs in all 100 petitions gathered in the corpus, and this is hardly surprising as long as the goal of a petition is to raise a claim, in hope of getting it fulfilled.

6.2.1. Speech acts in the Claim

As mentioned in section 1, among the most frequently occurring verbs that are post-modifiers for the noun ‘petition’ in contemporary English are ‘request’, ‘demand’ and ‘urge’.

Table 5 below displays the speech act expressed by the predicates used to introduce the Claim. As and marks their type and what they focus on, according to the criteria mentioned by Kreidler (1998, 183ff).

Table 5. The predicates in the Claim and the speech acts expressed by them

Predicate	Speech act	Number of petitions
request	directive	80
urge	directive	99
demand	directive	1
pray	directive	2

As Kreidler points out, “A request is an expression of what the speaker wants the addressee to do or refrain from doing. A request does not assume the speaker’s control over the person addressed.” (1998, 190-191). The *Oxford Learner’s Thesaurus* mentions the fact that a request is made “formally and politely” (2008, 647). The *Oxford Advanced Learner’s English Dictionary* defines ‘demand’ as adding the meaning ‘strongly’ to the meaning of the verb ‘ask’ (2010, 388) and ‘urge’ as adding the meaning ‘firmly’ to the meaning of the verb ‘recommend’ (2010, 1643). The meaning of the verb ‘pray’ in its informal context is described as adding the modifier ‘very much’ to the verb ‘to hope’ (2010, 1149). Webster’s *Encyclopaedic Unabridged Dictionary* defines the informal meaning of the verb ‘pray’ using the very term ‘petition’: “to make earnest petition” (1994, 1129). These remarks suggest that the Claim expresses the speech act of requesting from someone who is not under the control of the speaker, but this is done in a polite but earnest and firm way and in the hope of getting positive response.

6.2.2. Predicates in the Claim

The types of predicates in the Claim and their occurrence are mentioned in Table 6.

Table 6. Types of predicates occurring in the Claim part of the petitions

Type of predicate	Number of petitions where it occurs in the Claim part
agent – action – affected	85
agent – action – effect	32
stative	13
affecting – affect – affected	4

affected – affect – affecting	1
theme – description	4
theme – identity	1
theme – link – associate	2
affected – event	1
actor – action – place	1
actor – action	0

One may remark that, just like in the Data, the most frequent type of predicate occurring in the Claim is ‘agent – action – affected’. However, the second most frequent is the ‘agent – action – effect’ type (and no longer ‘theme – description’).

A comparison between the results in Tables 5 and 6 suggests that while both the Data and the Claim describe actions, the Data is predominantly used to describe whereas the Claim is mostly used to express a change. This is in accordance with the distribution of the speech acts found in the two parts: assertive in the Data and requesting in the Claim.

6.3. The Warrant

The investigation on the corpus found that the Warrant is present in 39 cases only, whereas the other 61 petitions make no mention to it. However, the absence of any mention about the Warrant does not mean that the Warrant does not exist. The existence of the Warrant is prompted by the presence of the conjunction ‘therefore’ which, as mentioned in section 5.1, is used to introduce the Claim in 98 out of the 100 petitions. These two types of Warrant may be labelled as ‘expressed’ and ‘implied’ Warrant, respectively. They are illustrated by example (4), where the Warrant is expressed by a sentence, and (5 a) and (5 b), where it is implied by the content of the petition:

- (4) “the Government has committed to a carbon neutral economy by 2050”
(P 3)
- (5 a) “Chiltern Railways should upgrade their fleet to improve air quality”
[→ Warrant: “Air quality should be improved.”]

(5 b) “this usage (i.e. of diesel trains) greatly increases the noise and fumes in the area”

[→ Warrant: “Noise and fumes are harmful.”]

(P 6)

In Table 7 the presence of expressed and implied Warrant in the 100 petitions of the corpus is summarised.

Table 7. The occurrences of expressed and implied Warrant in the petitions

Warrant	Number of petitions
expressed	17
implied	83

One may notice that in most cases the Warrant is implied. This suggests that the implication is the result of the common knowledge of the petitioners and the Members of Parliament and that in such cases the Warrant is omitted in order to give more room and more focus to the Data and the Claim.

6.3.1. Expressed Warrant

Although they occur in about one fifth of the petitions in the corpus, the instances of expressed Warrant are quite diverse. Thus, the analysis on the corpus has identified several cases when the expressed Warrant is included in other parts of the argument. Petitions P 69 and P 96, for instance, have their Warrant embedded in the Data, as shown in examples (6) and (7), where the Warrant is marked in italics:

(6) Declares that the international day for the elimination of violence against women and girls takes place on the 25th of November, further declares that 16 days of activism will follow, ending on 10th December, Human Rights Day – indicating that violence against women is the most pervasive breach of human rights worldwide; (notes *the United Nations objectives to call for global action to increase awareness, galvanise advocacy efforts and share knowledge and innovations to end violence against women and girls once and for all*); (...)

(P 69)

(7) Declares that *children’s centres have a vital role in the community*

and that the provision of children and family hub services should continue to be provided in Deal and Walmer and further that Blossom Children's Centre should be retained in recognition of its post-natal and breastfeeding support as well as its sensory room.

(P 96)

In one case (P 87) the Warrant, together with its Backing, replace the Data altogether, as rendered in example (8), which entirely renders the Data part of the petition. The Warrant is marked in *italic* and the Backing in **bold italic** and they are respectively prefixed with [W] and [B], [W] also followed by its numbering:

- (8) Notes that [W1] *telegraph poles being erected by designated communications network operators for the expansion of Fibre to the Premises (FTTP) broadband do not need planning permission [B] under the **Electronic Communications Code (Conditions and Restrictions) 2003 and The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015***; further that [W2] *the only requirement on the operator is 28 days' notice to the Local Planning Authority (LPA)*; further that [W3] *there is no requirement to consider alternatives such as under-street cabling*; further that [W4] *the LPA can only make suggestions on siting which the telecoms company is under no obligation to follow*; further that [W5] *there is no requirement to inform residents of the installation and so no opportunity for them to inform the process*; and further that [W6] *the first knowledge residents will have of a telegraph pole being installed is when it appears in their street or outside their residence.*

(P 87)

Such a somehow unexpected situation may be accounted for by Toulmin's remark that the distinction between Data and Warrant is by no means a sharp one and that there are cases when the same utterance may function as Data in one context and as Warrant in another one (2003, 91-92).

6.3.2. Implied Warrant

The commonly occurring situation when the Warrant is not expressed but implied from the context of the petition also show some peculiarities. Similar to the case of expressed Warrant, the implicit Warrant may also occur embedded in other parts of the argument. In P 80, for instance, the

implied Warrant is embedded in the Claim, as shown in example (9), where the Warrant is marked in italics:

- (9) The petitioners therefore request that the House of Commons urge the Government to encourage Bradford Council to U-turn immediately on their plans to close the Keighley Household Waste and Recycling Centre and keep the site and *much needed service* located on Royd Ings Avenue in Keighley open.

(P 80)

In example (9), the phrase ‘much needed service’ implicitly suggest a Warrant expressing a preposition such as ‘the inhabitants of Bradford really need the Waste and Recycling Centre’.

6.4. The Backing

In Toulmin’s terms, the Backing supports the validity Warrant. The Backing is similar to the Data in that it consists of of matters-of-fact while it is similar to the Warrant in that, unlike the Data, it need not be stated in an explicit form (2003, 98). This is confirmed by the investigation on the corpus, which has found the presence of the Backing in an expressed form in 14 petitions out of the total 100. Similar to the Warrant, the Backing can be embedded in the Data, as it happens in P 8. This is displayed in example (10), where the Warrant is marked in italic and the Backing in bold italic, with their parts numbered.

- (10) Declares that [W 1] *planning permission for Pine Trees was granted by the local authority (now Buckinghamshire Council) on the condition that the developer, Taylor Wimpey, paid a commuted sum to support the upkeep of the open spaces and play areas known as Bobcat Park, allowing for the local authority to adopt the park*; notes that the local authority failed to include any mention of said commuted sum in the Section 106 planning conditions for the development; notes that the developer sold, and continued to sell, homes at Pine Trees on the basis that Bobcat Park would be adopted by the local authority and that residents would not need to pay anything towards upkeep of the park; notes that in connection with a separate planning condition, [B 1] ***the developer has paid to the local authority more than £2 million for the creation of a bus link scheme which has since been abandoned, leaving funds available to support adoption of the park***; and notes that [W 2] *in the absence of a commuted sum, the local authority has indicated its opposition*

*to adopting the park, leaving the costs of maintenance to be borne by the residents at the development, conflicting directly with [B 2] **what they had been told.***

(P 8)

6.5. The Qualifiers

The Qualifiers nuance the Claim and their expressed presence in the argument is also optional. The corpus displays only one case when the Qualifiers are present. This happens in P 12, where the request made in Claim is restricted to the case when the local councillors propose changes to the governing structure. This is marked in italics in example (11).

- (11) The petitioners therefore request that the House of Commons urge the Government to make it a requirement for a range of options to be put to local residents in the form of a referendum *in the event that local councillors propose any changes to local governing structures.*

(P 12)

In the Claim of this petition the Qualifiers are used to prevent something from happening, in this case to change the local governing structures without the consent of the local residents.

6.6. The Rebuttal

Similar to the Backing and Qualifiers, the explicit presence of the Rebuttal is optional. And similarly to the Qualifiers, it has been identified in just one case out of the 100 petitions in the corpus. It is namely petition P 47 that contains the only presence of a Rebuttal, as shown in example (12) where the whole Claim is rendered.

- (12) The petitioners therefore request that the House of Commons urge the Government to require all water companies to provide each residential mobile home on a protected site with water meters and ensure that they fit meters for free on request (excepting Scotland).

(P 47)

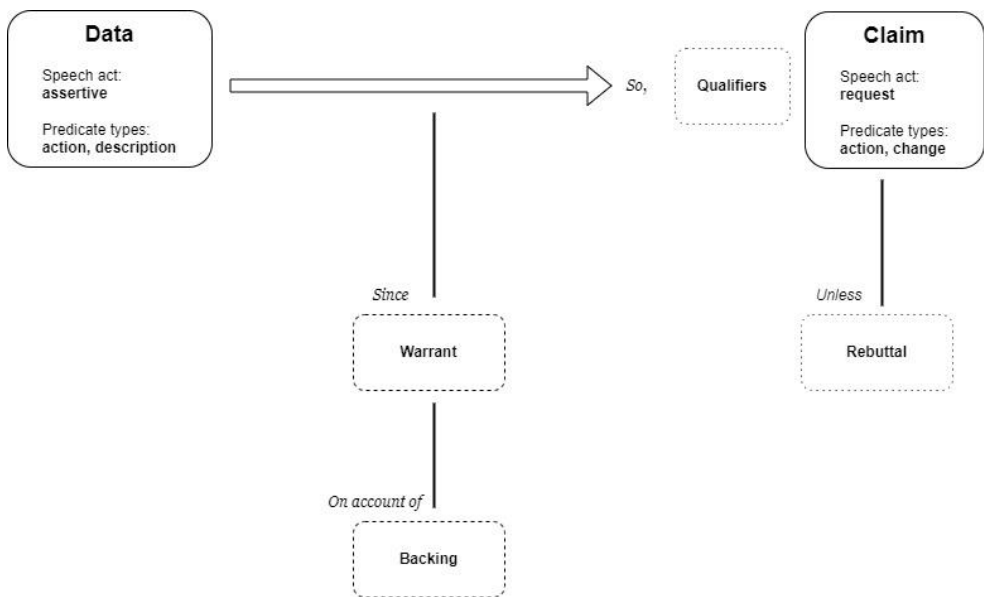
One may remark that in this case the Rebuttal occurs as a parenthetical remark at the end of the Claim and is in an elliptic form which makes it ambiguous, in that the preposition ‘excepting’ may refer to the verb ‘fit’, to the noun ‘meters’, to the adverb ‘free’ (i.e. of charge)

or to the prepositional phrase ‘on request’. It is the common knowledge that suggests that it should probably refer to the adverb ‘free’.

6.7. The petitions described in terms of Toulmin’s argument model

The results mentioned in this chapter may be added to Toulmin’s argument model displayed in Figure 2 in order to get a description of the structure and content of the petitions sent to the British Parliament. To sum up, the Data and Claim are always expressed, but the other parts of the model may be embedded in their content. The Data contains assertive speech acts whereas the Claim contains requesting speech acts and their predicates, in most cases, respectively express action and description and action and change. The Warrant and Backing are seldom expressed and the Qualifiers and Rebuttal are expressed in only one case each. Together with these features, Toulmin’s model for the petitions sent to the British Parliament may be represented as in Figure 3.

Figure 3. The petitions to the British Parliament described using Toulmin’s argument model



The style of the lines describes to which extent the components are required and expressed. Thus, the continuous line for the Data and Claim means that they are required and expressed. The interrupted line for the Warrant and Backing mean that they are required but not always expressed, as they may be implied by the context. The dotted line for the Qualifiers and Rebuttal means that they are not required but can be omitted.

7. Conclusions

The analysis on the corpus made up of 100 petitions sent to the British Parliament confirms the hypothesis that Toulmin's argument model is suitable to describe them. The two main parts of each petition respectively correspond to the Data and Claim described in Toulmin's model.

The Data occurs in form of an assertive speech act. In all but two cases the focus is on the information, whereas in one petition the petitioners highlight the truth value of the Data and their commitment and involvement, respectively. The Claim expresses a speech act of politely requesting from someone who is not under the speaker's control. However, the speaker strongly hopes that the request will be agreed to. The speech acts expressed in the Data and the Claim — assertive and requesting, respectively — go hand in hand with the predicate types found to occur most frequently in these two parts — expressing action and description in the Data and action and change in the Claim.

The corpus investigation also confirms the fact that the explicit presence of the Warrant, Backing, Qualifiers and Rebuttal is optional. Whereas the Warrant and the Backing occur in a number of petitions, the Qualifiers and the Rebuttal have a singular presence each.

This study of the petitions in the British Parliament brought together the argumentative and the linguistic perspectives and suggests that there may be further features worth investigating this way on this type of petitions and on parliamentary discourse in general.

Appendix 1

A summary of the definitions of the Latin noun *petitio* and of the Latin verb *peto*, *petere* according to the *Oxford Latin Dictionary*.

petitiō, ~ōnis f. [petō + tiō]

- 1 An attack, thrust
 - 2 An attempt to secure (an objective) pursuit (of)
 - 3 A petition, request
 - 4 (leg.) A demand for something in a court of law, suit, claim
 - 5 The action or process of canvassing for an office, candidature
 - 6 The action of seeking (a woman) in marriage, suit
- (2012 : 1508)

petō, ~ere, ~īuī or ~ī (~ī), ~ītum

- 1 a To direct one's course to (a person, place, etc.), make for, resort to, or sim.
- 1 b to reach out for
- 1 c (of inanimate things) to go in the direction of
- 1 d to move towards in falling
- 1 e (transf.) to go over to, join (a party)
- 1 f to betake oneself to, resort to (a course of action)

- 2 a to make for with hostile intent, go for, attack
- 2 b (transf.) to attack or menace with actions, words, etc.
- 2 c to make an attempt on the life of
- 2 d (of adverse omens) to be directed at

- 3 To aim at or strike (with a weapon, missile, etc.)

- 4 a To go after, chase, pursue
- 4 b (fig.) to aim at equalling, emulate (exploits)

- 5 To go in quest of, hunt out, search for

- 6 a To seek and bring (commodities, etc., from a place), fetch, procure

6 b to resort (to a place, person), for (commodities, etc.)
 6 c to procure (immaterial things from non-physical sources), derive, etc.
 6 d to fetch (a sigh or groan)

7 a To seek or obtain (something desirable), aim at, strive after
 7 b to strive to bring about (a result)
 7 c to seek (to), attempt (to)

8 To try to obtain by asking, request, solicit (from)

9 a To be a candidate for, seek (a magistracy)
 9 b be a candidate for office, stand for election

10 a To seek (a person) as a helper, friend or sim.
 10 b to pay amorous attention, to court
 10 c to seek the hand of (a woman) in marriage

11 a To sue for (property, etc.) at law, lay claim to
 11 b to apply for
 11 c to seek to exact (punishment or retribution)

12 To demand (a person, etc., for a given treatment or status)

13 (of things) To call for, require

(2012, 1508)

Appendix 2

A summary of the definitions of the English noun *petition* and the English verb *to petition* according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*.

petition (noun)

- 1a The action of formally asking, begging, supplicating, or humbly requesting; esp. in phr. *to make petition*, to ask, supplicate, or formally beg.
- 1b petition of the principle: begging of the question; = *petitio principii*.
- 2a A supplication or prayer; an entreaty; esp. a solemn and humble

prayer to the Deity, or to a sovereign or superior; also, one of the clauses of a prayer, e.g. of the Lord's prayer.

- 2b transf. The matter of the petition; the thing asked or entreated: as in *to have* or *receive one's petition*, *to grant a petition*.
- 3a A formally drawn up request or supplication; esp. a written supplication from an individual or body of inferiors to a superior, or to a person or body in authority (as a sovereign or legislature), soliciting some favour, privilege, right, or mercy, or the redress of some wrong or grievance.
- 3b spec. The form in which the Houses of Parliament formerly presented a measure for the king's granting: now represented by the passing of a bill for the royal assent. Obs. exc. Hist.
- 3c Petition and Advice (Eng. Hist.): the Remonstrance presented by Parliament to Cromwell on 4 Apr. 1657.
- 3d Petition of Right: the parliamentary declaration of the rights and liberties of the people, set forth in the form of a petition to King Charles I, which was finally assented to by the king in 1628. Although not a formal statute or ordinance, 'it has ever been accepted as having the full force of law'. (See also 4a.)
- 4a (Law) petition of right: an ancient Common Law remedy against the Crown for obtaining possession or restitution of real or personal property: in Law Fr. *pétition de droit*, L. *petitio justitiæ*. (Encycl. Laws Eng.)
- 4b (Law) A formal application in writing made to a court (a) for judicial action concerning the matter of a suit then pending before it (formerly called a cause petition); (b) for something which lies in the jurisdiction of the court without an action, as a writ of habeas corpus, an order in bankruptcy, etc.; (c) in some forms of procedure initiating a suit or its equivalent
- 5 (Mathematics) A postulate; an axiom.

to petition (verb)

- 1a (transitive) To address or present a petition to; to make a humble request or supplication to; spec. to address a formal written petition to (a sovereign, a legislative body, person in authority, or court).

- 1b To solicit, ask, beg for (a thing)
- 2 (absolute or intransitive) To address or present a petition, to make petition, to make a humble request or entreaty, to ask humbly (for something).

(Oxford English Dictionary, 1971, 2147)

Appendix 3

Definitions of the noun ‘petition’ given by Modern English dictionaries and relevant to the study of petitions sent to the British Parliament.

Concise Oxford English Dictionary

petition

n.

1 a formal written request, typically signed by many people, appealing to authority in respect of a cause. > an appeal or request.

Oxford Advanced Learner’s English Dictionary

petition

noun

1 (~against/for sth) a written document signed by a large number of people that asks somebody in a position of authority to do or change something

Cambridge Advanced Learner’s English Dictionary

petition

noun [C]

1 a document signed by a large number of people demanding or asking for some action from the government or another authority

Collins Cobuild Advanced Dictionary

petition

1 N-COUNT A petition is a document signed by a lot of people which asks a government or other official group to do a particular thing.

Macmillan Advanced Dictionary for Learners of English

petition¹

noun [COUNT]

a document that is signed by many people that asks someone in authority to do something

Appendix 4

The petitions analysed in the present study

Name	Date	Title
P 1	2021-09-15	Proposed Heath Common
P 2	2021-09-15	Rugby Community Ambulance
P 3	2021-10-20	Electrification of the Hull to Selby railway line
P 4	2021-10-25	High Income Child Benefit Charge
P 5	2021-10-28	Inquiry into policing at Orgreave Coking Plant
P 6	2021-11-08	Chiltern Railways
P 7	2021-11-09	Ocado Zoom
P 8	2021-11-23	Pine Trees Development
P 9	2021-12-01	Off-road Vehicles in the Gwyddon Forestry
P 10	2021-12-01	Walsall Arboretum
P 11	2021-12-07	Bennetts End Road
P 12	2021-12-08	South Warwickshire Mega-Council
P 13	2021-12-08	Death by dangerous driving
P 14	2021-12-14	Aston Fence School Speed Limit Extension
P 15	2022-01-17	Breast cancer screening in Fleetwood
P 16	2022-01-25	Legal Protection of Cats
P 17	2022-01-25	Community Energy Projects
P 18	2022-01-31	Stalking advocates
P 19	2022-02-01	Proposed spur between Aylesbury and Milton Keynes
P 20	2022-02-01	The Acorn Project
P 21	2022-02-09	Industrial Waste
P 22	2022-02-28	National Insurance payments

P 23	2022-03-01	Great British Railways headquarters
P 24	2022-03-01	Sodium valproate
P 25	2022-03-10	Barnet Police Station
P 26	2022-03-15	Glossop and Ashton
P 27	2022-03-15	Great British Railways headquarters
P 28	2022-03-16	Periodontal Disease and Diabetes
P 29	2022-03-21	Bannerman High School Anti-racism Charter
P 30	2022-03-21	National Insurance Increase
P 31	2022-03-22	VAT and fuel duty on petrol and diesel
P 32	2022-03-28	Abuse of short-term letting
P 33	2022-03-29	Halton Hospital
P 34	2022-03-29	Proposed Lidsing Garden Village Development
P 35	2022-04-26	Road safety
P 36	2022-04-27	Derwent Walk
P 37	2022-04-27	Step-free Access for Chinley Station
P 38	2022-05-18	Doncaster bid for Great British Railways headquarters
P 39	2022-05-18	Carnforth bid for Great British Railways headquarters
P 40	2022-05-19	Waverley Junior Academy
P 41	2022-05-24	Corporate Travel Management
P 42	2022-06-09	Barclays Muswell Hill Branch
P 43	2022-06-21	Universal Credit Deductions
P 44	2022-06-22	Post box in Hayfield
P 45	2022-06-28	Pryzm in Watford
P 46	2022-07-05	Eligibility Period for the Cost of Living Payment
P 47	2022-07-12	Water meters for park homes
P 48	2022-07-13	Schools Bill
P 49	2022-07-18	Doncaster Sheffield airport

P 50	2022-07-19	Quarry in Preesall
P 51	2022-07-19	DWP dedicated telephone line for advice services
P 52	2022-07-20	Conviction of Yasin Malik
P 53	2022-07-20	Liberty Pressing Solutions
P 54	2022-09-07	Windfall Tax
P 55	2022-09-07	Right of Refusal of Development on Green Belt Land
P 56	2022-09-07	Communal Heating Systems
P 57	2022-09-23	National Brewery Centre in Burton upon Trent
P 58	2022-10-12	DWP services at Phoenix House in Barrow
P 59	2022-10-12	Cost of Living
P 60	2022-10-17	Access to pensions for women born in the 1950s
P 61	2022-10-17	Method of uprating social security payments
P 62	2022-10-26	Ramsgate Town Council and Manston Airport (Ramsgate)
P 63	2022-11-01	NHS Dental Care in Halifax
P 64	2022-11-02	Pitch Fees for Park Homes
P 65	2022-11-08	Early General Election
P 66	2022-11-09	Planned closure of Sedbergh's Royal Mail delivery office
P 67	2022-11-15	Planned closure of Lloyds Banking Group's Immingham Branch
P 68	2022-11-21	Planned closure of the Ambleside and Hawkshead doctors surgeries
P 69	2022-11-28	International day for the elimination of violence against women
P 70	2022-11-29	Rural bus routes in South Northamptonshire
P 71	2022-12-05	Bus services in Rotherham
P 72	2022-12-06	Access to NHS Dental Care in Blackpool
P 73	2022-12-07	Park Homes Energy Support

P 74	2022-12-13	End Serco using hotels in Stoke-on-Trent to house migrants
P 75	2022-12-13	Save the Twenty-One bus route
P 76	2023-01-10	No. 52 Barrhead circular route
P 77	2023-01-17	Pre-payment meter energy customers and self-disconnection
P 78	2023-01-18	Pre-payment meter energy customers and forcible transfer
P 79	2023-01-18	Abolition of benefit cap
P 80	2023-01-23	Keighley Household Waste and Recycling Centre
P 81	2023-01-25	North Northamptonshire Unitary Council's Care Provider Services Strategy
P 82	2023-01-25	Pre-payment Meter Energy Customers and Higher Costs
P 83	2023-01-31	Planned closure of Wood Green Post Office
P 84	2023-02-07	Spinneyfields Specialist Care Centre Closure
P 85	2023-02-08	Dangerous driving
P 86	2023-03-08	Ultra Low Emission Zone
P 87	2023-03-08	Planning permission for telecommunication telegraph pole installation
P 88	2023-03-13	London and Quadrant Housing Trust
P 89	2023-03-14	Cost of living
P 90	2023-03-14	Tax wealth
P 91	2023-03-14	Cost of living support for leukaemia patients
P 92	2023-03-15	Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency and road tax
P 93	2023-03-21	Dangerous driving
P 94	2023-03-27	Policing and drug and alcohol treatment in Hull
P 95	2023-03-28	Anglian Water
P 96	2023-03-29	Children's centres
P 97	2023-04-18	Local post office closure

P 98	2023-04-19	Teaching real life skills
P 99	2023-04-20	Special school in Biddulph
P 100	2023-04-26	Syresham Truck Stop

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