

## THREE-DIMENSIONAL METAPHORICAL OBJECTS IN STREET ADVERTISING

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**Abstract:** This paper aims at unravelling the role of metaphor in three street marketing campaign advertisements. Each advertisement is the product of a creative process involving metaphorical mappings from an urban object (shelter, bench, ramp) onto a target domain (a billboard). The study draws on two approaches from the fields of cognitive linguistics (Forceville 2009) and industrial design (Cila 2013) in order to provide a qualitative analysis of metaphor and modality in the so-called *three-dimensional metaphorical objects* involved in each advertisement. A new version of the interaction mode (Cila 2013: 18) is proposed as an analytical mode for those three-dimensional metaphorical entities whose real-word materialisation establishes new sets of sensory-motor interactional pathways with human beings. Results show how metaphors combine to yield the desired interactive effects through different patterns of modality. The paper concludes that this combination is a key campaign asset and calls for further work on the deliberate use of metaphor in creative processes.

**Keywords:** *Street marketing, three-dimensional metaphorical objects, metaphor, modality, interaction mode.*

### 1. Introduction

The notion of metaphor can be described to vary from its traditional conception as a figure of speech or rhetorical device in general – non-specialised – fields to that of a persuasive linguistic mechanism and a powerful cognitive tool in the fields of cognitive linguistics and cognitive psychology (Lakoff and Johnson 1980; Lakoff 1987; Lakoff 2014; Gibbs 2008). Since the early 80's, especially in the field of cognitive linguistics, metaphors have been regarded not only as a matter of *language*, but also as a matter of *thought*. This has yielded a variety of perspectives concerning the very nature of metaphor, its role in linguistic and mental processes (Casasanto 2013), how linguistic and mental metaphor may influence both language use and conceptualization (Thibodeau and Boroditsky 2013; Steen *et al.* 2014), and how the communicative side of metaphor may be exploited to reach particular effects on target audiences (Cila 2013; Burgers *et al.* 2015).

Conceiving of metaphor primarily as a matter of thought licenses the claim that linguistic metaphors are just one of the many possible manifestations of the associations (conceptual metaphors) in our mind. This has recently given rise to the study of the possible modalities or modes (e.g. images, sounds, gestures) through which conceptual metaphors can be realised in a series of contexts and with a variety of purposes (Cf. Forceville and Urios-Aparisi 2009 for a review). A point in case is the area of marketing, where the use of metaphor as a creative tool has recently become an asset (*ibid.*; Cila 2013; Burgers *et al.* 2015). One of the most recent and interesting types of metaphors in advertising are those involving three-dimensional (henceforth 3D) metaphorical objects in street marketing

campaigns, that is, unconventionally creative objects displayed – often unexpectedly out of context – on public places with the intention of catching the passers-by’s attention and interest. Apart from playing with the expectations of potential customers, these 3D metaphorical objects often present catchy interactive formats, which make them a powerful advertising tool. The present paper aims at unravelling the nature and role of metaphor in 3D metaphorical objects used in three ads from the award-winning advertising campaign *People for Smarter Cities (P4SC)* launched in 2013 by IBM and the Ogilvy & Mather agency.

## *1.1. On the nature of metaphor: some theoretical considerations*

### *1.1.1. Metaphor in cognitive linguistics*

Within the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) framework, a metaphor is a kind of a conceptual mapping involving a single or a set of correspondences between two different domains of experience: source and target. Essentially, the metaphorical mapping consists in the projection of certain elements from the source domain onto the target domain. Supporters of the Lakovian tradition hold that conceptual metaphors are mechanisms of thought that usually allow us to reach understanding of abstract ideas or concepts through the use of more concrete ones. For example, the famous LOVE IS A JOURNEY metaphor renders part of the structure of the (source) domain of JOURNEYS readily available for a potential series of conceptual correspondences onto the (target) domain of LOVE (lovers-travellers, relationship-vehicle, problems-obstacles, etc.). Thus, this cognitive association implies that, under certain contexts, we may understand complex events in life in terms of simpler experiences like trips or journeys and hence produce metaphorical expressions (linguistic realisations of the conceptual metaphor) like *we’ve been a long way together, we’re at a crossroads, our relationship has hit a dead-end street* (Lakoff and Johnson 1980; Lakoff 1993).

Lately, some CMT tenets – especially those supporting the “strong” view that all conceptual metaphors are both a matter of thought and language – have been challenged by several psychologists and linguists (Casasanto 2010; Gibbs 2011; Evans 2013; Steen 2014b). In general terms, the new views call for a cautious distinction between metaphor at mental and linguistic levels. Psychologists like Casasanto (2010) or Gibbs (2011), for example, suggest that while some conceptual metaphors do work at a mental level (and subsidiarily may be linguistically realised as a consequence), a different range of metaphors seem to work exclusively at a linguistic and/or discourse level (but not at the mental one). According to this line of reasoning, studies based on linguistic data are a good source for uncovering conceptual metaphors potentially working at a mental level; however, these studies should limit their claims to linguistic metaphor, as claims about the mental status and implications of such metaphorical associations can only be safely derived from psychologically-driven experiments. Recently, a growing number of scholars (both linguists and psychologists) are integrating both kinds of data in their analyses, and more perspectives on CMT have also been proposed (Thibodeau and Boroditsky 2011, 2013; Rojo *et al.* 2014; Steen *et al.* 2014). Gerard Steen and his team (Steen 2011, 2014a,b), for example, have also suggested that conceptual metaphors are “not just a matter of language and thought, but also a matter of communication” (Steen 2011: 27). The scholar highlights the importance of conscious reflection and deliberateness in metaphor production and interpretation, and suggests that metaphors (as understood within the CMT framework) also demand a *social approach* in which communicative context, culture, gender, and language usage development – amongst other contextual frames – play a vital role. Thus, incorporating the social and communicative dimension to the CMT framework becomes particularly relevant especially when it comes to the creation of metaphorical associations with explicit applied purposes, as for example in the

conscious elaboration of advertisement (henceforth ad) metaphors in order to successfully reach a particular audience and yield the desired effects in the right target group.

### 1.1.2. *Metaphor and modality: cognitive linguistics and industrial design perspectives*

While verbal language remains the initial and traditional focus of analysis within CMT, metaphors can also happen through other *modes* or modalities, as for example in pictures, gestures and even objects. In this concern, the study of multimodality in metaphor (see below) has also been perceived as a means – additional to the purely psychological approaches – to legitimate the existence of mental associations, or at least, to shed some light on the primacy of thought over language in a wide array of cases. This is so inasmuch as the same conceptual metaphor – working initially, and perhaps exclusively, at a mental level – can be elaborated or realised simultaneously – and often deliberately – across different modes (e.g. pictures and written signs, gestures and oral signs, sound/music, verbal signs, gestures and pictures, etc.). In this section we introduce two different conceptions of the notion modality in metaphors that stem out of two different fields but bear a direct relationship with the topic addressed in this paper: Charles J. Forceville’s cognitive linguistics approach and Nazli Cila’s industrial design perspective.

Charles J. Forceville is one of the leading scholars in pictorial and multimodal metaphor within the cognitive linguistics framework. The scholar has long noticed and analysed the existence of several manifestations of metaphors other than those expressed through language (Cf. Forceville and Urios-Aparisi 2009 for a review), and uses the term *mode* to refer to any of these manifestations.

Accurately identifying the range the modes involved in metaphorical realisations, determining their exact nature, and establishing clear delimitations is not a task as easy as it might seem, as the very notion of mode, the scholar suggests, “is a complex of various factors” (Forceville 2009: 22). He proposes, for example, that a mode might be conceived of as a sign system that is understandable to us because of a perception process that involves one of the five human senses. Under this position, one might expect some sort of one-by-one correspondence between each mode and one of the five senses yielding the following set of possible modes: “(1) the pictorial or visual mode; (2) the aural or sonic mode; (3) the olfactory mode; (4) the gustatory mode, and (5) the tactile mode” (*ibid.*). However, this classification seems to be too crude [*sic*] for the author since it allows for the inclusion of more than one manifestation in a single mode (e.g. spoken language, music, and non-verbal sound as part of the sonic mode) and these manifestations may also be regarded as other possible modes themselves (*ibid.*); a wide range of further issues should also be taken into account under his view, for example, the idea of what can count as music and what can be regarded as just sound in different cultures or periods along history (*ibid.*). Accordingly, it seems a fairly difficult task to provide “a satisfactory definition of “mode”, or compile an exhaustive list of modes” (*ibid.*: 23). Notwithstanding this, he proposes that there exist different modes, and that these “include, at least, the following: (1) pictorial signs; (2) written signs; (3) spoken signs; (4) gestures; (5) sounds; (6) music; (7) smells; (8) tastes; (9) touch” (*ibid.*).

As far as (multi)modality is concerned, the author establishes a general classification of metaphors as monomodal or multimodal depending on whether both domains are represented in the same mode or in different ones. Thus, while in a monomodal metaphor both target and source domains are rendered “exclusively or predominantly” in *one single mode*, in multimodal metaphors target and source domains are represented “exclusively or predominantly” through *different modes* (*ibid.*: 23-24).

Let us move on now towards the field of product design. Nazli Cila is an industrial designer part of whose work focuses on product metaphors. Some of these product metaphors can be considered 3D metaphorical objects (Forceville 2014) and are closely related to the sample taken into account in the present research. As Cila (2013: 11) points out, designers that create these entities “shape the target in such a way that it evokes the experience of the source without violating the identity of the target”. In order to do so, firstly they purposefully create a relevant or desirable association between target and source in their minds, and after this they shape it into a physical form by mapping the salient, desirable, or selected properties from the source onto the target. In connection with this, Cila establishes a classification of eight different categories of *properties* that can be mapped from the source onto the target in product metaphors, namely “form, interaction, material/texture, movement, sound, taste/smell, name, or graphics” (*ibid.*: 18); then she categorises these properties as eight different instantiations of *modes*.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, the author considers that transferring more than one of those properties (from source to target) in a 3D metaphorical object is possible, which in turn “leads to multimodal metaphors” (*ibid.*: 19). The following extract illustrates how properties like “material” or “name” may work as multimodal metaphorical modes:

... product metaphors can be *multimodal*, whereas verbal metaphors are generally monomodal. Verbal metaphors are signaled in spoken or written language, yet a designer has control over different parts of a product to convey a metaphorical message. As mentioned in the previous section, they can design in eight instantiations of “mode” (note that these modes do not necessarily match up with the five senses one-to-one, such as the mapping of material can both be seen and felt, or the mapping of a name can be seen or heard. (*ibid.*: 21).

At this point the reader may have noted that Forceville and Cila approach the concept of *mode* and *multimodality* from slightly different perspectives which can be summarised – in very general terms – as follows. On the one hand, Forceville uses the term mode to refer to one of the possible manifestations of a conceptual metaphor. Each of these manifestations often comes related (but not restricted) to our five senses, but it may also involve finer nuances like a particular sign system that we can access through our sensuous perception; in this vein we can have visual and tactile manifestations, but also pictorial or spoken signs within the category of modes. On the other hand, under Cila’s approach, a mode is equated with a property that is mapped from the source onto the target, i.e., form, material, graphics, sound, among others; when more than one property is mapped as part of the metaphor in hand, this leads to a multimodal metaphorical element.

Both approaches are considered here as equally valid instances and models for analysis – their divergences are most probably due to the requirements of the fields to which each belong –, and, as we shall see in short, both of them provide a meaningful contribution to the piece of research presented here. Nonetheless, given that this paper departs from a linguistic background, Forceville’s perspective will be adopted when considering the notions of mode and multi/monomodality.

## 1.2. 3D metaphorical objects

As this paper examines three different 3D metaphorical objects, a note must be added concerning their nature and conception under the aforementioned approaches. These objects are labelled *product metaphors* by Cila (2013) and *integrated metaphors* by Forceville (2008: 183, 2014). By “3D metaphorical objects” we refer here to real and interactive objects that are the outcome of a creative process incorporating mappings between a source element and a

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Cila (2013: 18-23) for a description of these characteristics and their association with the notion of mode.

target element. This process usually takes the target domain as the departure point and projects selected structure from the source domain onto it. In most cases the 3D metaphorical object keeps the identity of the target-domain entity, for it usually keeps most of its originally defining features; however, this is not so in all cases, especially when a substantial amount of mappings from the source domain have become involved as part of the creative process.

### *1.3 Objectives*

The main aim of this paper is to provide a qualitative analysis of the particular metaphorical elements involved in a selection of ads appearing in the advertising campaign *People for Smarter Cities (P4SC)*. In terms of specifics, the analysis focuses both on the mappings occurring between each source and target and the modes involved in each metaphorical element, hence allowing us to determine the modality of the metaphors – i.e. monomodal or multimodal – and how the combination of elements and/or modes involved in each metaphor allow for creative outcomes that help catch the public's attention.

## **2. IBM, Ogilvy & Mather and the *People for Smarter Cities (P4SC)* campaign**

IBM (International Business Machines Corporation) is a global information-handling company that offers a variety of computing and consulting services in technology-related areas. Ogilvy & Mather is currently one of the largest marketing and advertising agencies in the world. In collaboration with Ogilvy & Mather Paris, IBM launched in 2013 the advertising campaign *People for Smarter Cities (P4SC)* with the aim of inspiring both regular citizens and city leaders to share their intelligent ideas in the interest of creating smarter cities and consequently, a better life in those cities all over the world (Trotman 2013). This successfully creative campaign also allowed Ogilvy & Mather Paris to win several prestigious awards such as the Grand Prix award at the Cannes Lions festival in 2013 for the particular ad that turns into a bench, or the D&AD Gold Pencil as the most awarded advertising agency in 2014 (Ball 2014; Dandad 2014).

The *People for Smarter Cities (P4SC)* campaign displayed, in cities like London and Paris, three different kinds of outdoor advertising billboards that also showed formal features of a rain shelter, a bench, and a ramp for stairs respectively. As each of these billboards can be regarded as a 3D metaphorical object itself, the three ads were selected as the object of analysis in this study. In the present paper, the pictures of the ads were extracted from The Telegraph (Trotman 2013), and are the following:



Figure 1. P4SC: A billboard that is also a rain shelter.



Figure 2. P4SC: A billboard that is also a bench.



Figure 3. P4SC: A billboard that is also a ramp.

### 3. Analysis of the ads

The analysis of each ad is structured here in three subsections dealing with, respectively: (i) the general appearance of the ad, including relevant physical features of the 3D entity like colour or shape; (ii) the identification of the main metaphorical associations involved in the ad; (iii) an analysis of the metaphorical elements identified in it, including a discussion on source and target domain identification, key mappings among them, and the possible combination of modes used to represent source and the target domains.

#### 3.1 A billboard that is also a rain shelter

##### 3.1.1 Description of the physical appearance of the ad

The first ad is a billboard designed in the shape of a rain shelter (Figure 1). The ad includes the slogan *Smart Ideas for Smarter Cities* as well as *Join the conversation at people4smartercities.com*. The logo of IBM appears below the passage. The colours used in this entity are blue for the background, white and yellow for the slogan, and white to paint thick strokes that create a better capture of a shelter.

##### 3.1.2 Identification of the main metaphorical associations involved

Two main metaphors can be identified here, each working at a different level: object structure and verbal information. The most outstanding association with implications on the physical appearance of the 3D object is the metaphor A BILLBOARD IS A RAIN SHELTER. Moreover, the verbal information provided on the billboard (more concretely, *Join the conversation at people4smartercities.com*) establishes a potential link between the actual physical space (rain shelter) and a virtual space (people4smartercities.com) via the metaphor A VIRTUAL PLACE IS A PHYSICAL PLACE.

##### 3.1.3 Analysis of the metaphorical elements identified

Another difference in strategies is based on the extent of keeping or compromising the identity of the product while creating a mapping. The kind of mapping that focuses on the product and maintains its identity is a *target-driven mapping*; whereas the other mapping in which the product

identity is compromised to emphasize the source is a *source-driven mapping*. In the former, the outcome resembles the typical form of the alleged target than it resembles the source, and vice versa in the latter (Cila 2013: 20)

Not only the kind of mappings, but also the number of features that get mapped from source to target domains in product metaphor creation may play a role in the perceived identity of the product. Thus, depending on the amount of mappings, a 3D metaphorical object may be more easily categorised as an instance of the alleged source domain or target domain, which has obvious implications for product advertising. In the case of Figure 1, the 3D metaphorical object keeps most of the features of a billboard (it hangs on a wall, has a fair surface, conveys a message and the logo of a brand is fully identifiable), but receives one main feature from a rain shelter. The metaphor underlying its physical appearance has therefore been formulated as A BILLBOARD IS A RAIN SHELTER. Under Cila's approach, this might be a case of a target-driven mapping. In terms of specifics, the mapping itself brings forth implicit formal and functional features. Thus, by just adding a curve (a small formal modification but a great creative turn), the physical shape of the billboard turns into a shelter that serves the purposes of a cover for rainy spells.

With regards to the modes of each domain, it could be claimed that both source (shelter) and target (billboard) are rendered through visual and tactile modes, since both – billboard and shelter – can be observed and can be touched. However, this classification would disregard two important factors in this and the rest of the ads analysed in this paper, namely, the *functional properties* and the *interactional patterns* that emerge in the brand-new 3D metaphorical entity. We suggest that both factors may also work as two deliberate components of the metaphorical creative process and should accordingly be taken into account in terms of modality because they are also manifestations (subtler ones, not only at a perceptual level but also at cognitive and interactive ones) of a metaphorical association.

Because the *functional properties* that human beings attach to objects bear a strong connection with the potential physical and motor *interactional pathways* that they may undertake<sup>2</sup>, we propose that both should be included in the same mode, which we shall refer to in this paper as the *interaction mode*<sup>3</sup> in short. Furthermore, when interacting with real-world entities, all the pathways (modes) from which we get information out of the scene we are in merge into a single (“multimodal”, under the human senses perspective of modality) real-life experience. The interaction mode, in this regard, may be conceived of as a “macromode” encompassing features from many of them as well as functionally relevant perceptions that may guide interaction itself. According to this view, in the metaphor A BILLBOARD IS A RAIN SHELTER, both source and target domains are rendered through the same interaction mode. Following Forceville's views on metaphor modality, therefore, this metaphor should be classified as monomodal.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The perceived function of an object by an individual may, for example, influence its cognitive categorisation and therefore also potentially any subsequent verbal and interactional patterns associated with it (Labov 1973; Coventry and Garrod 2004; Navarro 2006). Moreover, the functional properties of an object are often associated with the *intended purpose* for which the object was designed (Feist and Gentner 2012: 308); given that the purpose with which we may use – or design – an object may pre-establish a particular set of interactional patterns, we argue that function and interaction are tightly connected.

<sup>3</sup> The label is a small homage to Cila's interaction mode (2013: 18). However, although similar in content, the mode proposed here differs from Cila's in that it does not make reference to a particular property that is mapped, but to a wider range of functional and interactional patterns.

<sup>4</sup> As suggested in section 1.1.2., this paper embraces the distinction between monomodal and multimodal metaphors proposed by Forceville (2009).



Let us now deal with the second metaphor involved in the ad. It makes reference to verbally-transmitted information and is triggered through the slogan *Join the conversation at people4smartercities.com*. This witty slogan is grounded on a parallelism between physical and virtual environments that departs from the physical scenario and takes both part of its structure and the readers themselves to a similar virtual one. We argue that this parallelism may be afforded by the activation of the metaphor A VIRTUAL PLACE IS A PHYSICAL PLACE (Porto-Requejo 2007; Navarro and Silvestre-López 2009; Bort-Mir in press), which allows establishing a series of metaphorically-grounded inferences from physical to virtual environments. The source domain is identified with the physical context of the ad, whose emphasised structure includes the billboard, the rain shelter (especially on a rainy day), the smart/witty idea (a billboard that is also a shelter), the people under the shelter, and the conversation they might have. The target domain, in turn, relates to the space provided by IBM on the net (*people4smartercities.com*) where individuals are encouraged to share and expand on their smart ideas to create better cities.

Thus, the intended parallel assumption of the ad, as afforded by this metaphor, basically suggests that, on the one hand, the very physical environment provided by IBM may not only be perceived as a handy facility for rainy spells, but also as a good *conversation starter* for the people under the shelter. That is to say, strangers who have just *joined* a random group under the shelter might find the billboard and its message a convenient conversation topic while waiting for the heavy London rain to stop. On the other hand, the very smart idea (billboard/shelter) may also spur people to develop their creative thinking under the appropriate environment, that is to say, the virtual space also conveniently provided for them by IBM.

Finally, as far as metaphor modality is concerned, we argue that the selection of the source domain structure that is mapped onto the target domain is prompted (or at least reinforced) by the physical context of the ad (as described in the previous paragraphs). This might support the claim (under a loose conception of multimodality) that the source domain is rendered through different modes simultaneously, hence affording the possibility of classifying the metaphor as multimodal. However, strictly speaking, we consider that contextual information acts more as a reinforcer than as a mode itself in this case; thus, we propose that the particular realization of the metaphor A VIRTUAL PLACE IS A PHYSICAL PLACE in this ad is mainly rendered through the written mode and should therefore be classified as monomodal.

### 3.2 A billboard that is also a bench

#### 3.2.1 Description of the physical appearance of the ad

The second ad, as portrayed in Figure 2, shows a billboard designed in the shape of a bench. The ad includes the common slogan *Smart Ideas for Smarter Cities* together with a particular elaboration that makes reference to the billboard/bench context: *Sitting on a smart idea for your city? Share it at people4smartercities.com*. The IBM logo also appears below the text. The general colour scheme used for the billboard/bench (white and red slogan and logo over a yellow background) helps emphasise the 3D metaphorical nature of the object. In this concern, the red stripes drawn horizontally at the bottom of the billboard over the yellow background are a necessary condition – together with the bottom edge bent in the shape of a seat – for passers-by to achieve the capture of a real bench.

### 3.2.2 Identification of the main metaphorical associations involved

There are two main metaphorical associations involved in this ad. The first one, which has to do with the physical structure of the 3D object, can be formulated through the metaphor A BILLBOARD IS A BENCH. The second metaphorical element is related to the second part of the slogan, where the notion of *participation* becomes emphasised and cognitively afforded by the metaphor TO PARTICIPATE IS TO SIT ON.

### 3.2.3 Analysis of the metaphorical elements identified

The metaphor A BILLBOARD IS A BENCH allows merging physical qualities of both entities into a new hybrid object in a coherent, structured fashion. This 3D metaphorical object keeps most of the features of the target domain (a billboard), in that it hangs on a wall, has a fair surface, conveys a message, and the logo of the brand is easily identifiable. Thus, the 3D metaphorical entity keeps the identity of the billboard while receiving a selection features from the original structure of the source domain (bench) mainly via two *target-driven mappings* (Cila 2013) that modify the lower edge of the billboard (the rest of its surface remains as that of a regular billboard). Thus, while one of these mappings projects the *shape and function* of the bench onto the billboard by adding a curve to its lower edge – hence creating the seat area –, the back of the bench gets mapped onto the billboard through the horizontally-painted red strips which resemble the wood slats of a conventional bench.

As far as modality is concerned, both source and target domains can be regarded as being represented through the *interaction mode* introduced in the analysis of the previous ad. Therefore, according to the theory of modality adopted in this paper, we claim that this metaphor is an instance of monomodal metaphor involving primarily the interaction mode.

Having dealt with the physical structure of the metaphorical object allows us to dive into subtler nuances, in this case those concealed in the ad slogan: *Sitting on a smart idea for your city? Share it at people4smartercities.com*. The verb “to sit on” has two meanings that are directly related to the physical and abstract domains involved in the context of the ad slogan, which are triggered – we argue – thanks to the presence of the *linguistic metaphor* (Steen *et al.* 2010) TO PARTICIPATE IS TO SIT ON.<sup>5</sup> Thus, while the basic (literal) meaning of the verb makes reference to physically sitting on an object like a chair or a bench, one of its metaphorically-grounded extensions brings forth the context of participation in boards, meetings or committees. Two examples of the abstract meaning are provided here, both extracted from the *Linguee* dictionary:

Both these entities sit on the Administrative Board with voting rights in proportion to their contributions. (*Linguee* n.d.)

The members of the FOGAR who sit on the Steering Committee do not do so in their own name, but as representatives of associations of Regions. (*Linguee* n.d.)

When someone takes part in this kind of events, it is often with the purpose of sharing comments, suggestions, and ideas. Thus, the use of “sit on” in the context of the ad establishes a link between its most literal and one of its abstract meanings so that *sitting on* a bench automatically correlates with participating and *sharing ideas* on a different context. In

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<sup>5</sup> Steen and his collaborators provide a methodology for determining cases of metaphors working at *linguistic level*. The method is grounded on a principled set of steps which guide the evaluation and contrast of basic and contextual meanings associated with a particular lexical unit in a given discourse context. Cf. Steen *et al.* (2010) for a review of the notion of *linguistic metaphor* addressed here – as opposed, for example to that of metaphor in thought – and the metaphor identification procedures in different discourse contexts.

this vein, while the first two words of the slogan – “sitting on” – are related to the source domain of the metaphorical association (physically sitting on the bench), other elements of the slogan like “smart idea” and “share it at people4smartercities.com” bring forth the abstract and conceptual meaning of the target, that is, encouraging people to participate in the project of IBM by sharing smart ideas in the link provided in the slogan. Finally, as for the modality status of this metaphor – as it could be expected in any linguistic metaphor – given that both source and target are realised through written language, the metaphor is monomodal.

A final consideration must be added here concerning another central part of the slogan (and the advertising campaign as a whole). The element “smart idea” in the middle of the slogan is conveniently set as an additional strategic bridge between both physical and abstract domains. Thus, *Sitting on a smart idea for your city?* automatically leads to the categorisation of the bench/billboard ad as a smart idea itself: the bench is at this point the natural referent for “sitting on” – and is in fact triggered both through linguistic context (“sitting on”) and physical context (the billboard/bench itself) cues. However, “a smart idea” appears instead in the syntactic slot where we would have paradigmatically expected “a bench”. This whole lot of (broken) expectations and on-line created associations becomes readily available for processing the second part of the slogan (*Share it at people4smartercities.com*), where “smart idea” appears as the natural antecedent and conceptual referent (only ideas can be shared at the virtual space provided by IBM), hence paving the way for the inferential process needed to correctly interpret the intended message.

We propose that the whole inferential process is guided by A PART FOR PART metonymy<sup>6</sup> within the CREATIVE PROCESS Idealised Cognitive Model<sup>7</sup> thanks to which the IDEA of a potentially existing PRODUCT is conceived of as a step that must necessarily happen before its materialisation (the creation of the object/product) in the real world.

### 3.3 A billboard that is also a ramp

#### 3.3.1 Description of the physical appearance of the ad

The billboard in the third ad (Figure 3) is designed in the shape of a ramp over a flight of stairs. The ad includes the basic slogan *Smart Ideas for Smarter Cities* and the elaboration *Move your ideas forward at people4smartercities.com*. As in the rest of the ads, the logo of IBM appears under the slogan. The colour scheme is simple (light green for the background and bright green and white for the messages) but, within the context of the ad, it has been most conveniently chosen to convey the message of “moving forward”, as if giving the green light to ideas.

#### 3.3.2 Identification of the main metaphorical associations involved

Two main metaphors can be distinguished in this ad. The first one, a BILLBOARD IS A RAMP determines the physical appearance of the 3D object. The second one, IDEAS ARE OBJECTS, is prompted through the slogan *Move your ideas forward at people4smartercities.com*.

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<sup>6</sup> Thus, for example, in the case of “*sitting on a smart idea for your city*”, this PART FOR PART metonymy, can be further elaborated into a lower-level IDEA FOR PRODUCT metonymy working within the same CREATIVE PROCESS Idealised Cognitive Model.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Lakoff (1987) for an in-depth introduction to the notion of Idealised Cognitive Models, and especially Kövecses (2000, 2010: 107-119, 171-192) for an illustrative review on the ways metonymy is used in language to provide access to particular *cognitive domains* and *highlight* part of their conceptual structure.

### 3.3.3 Analysis of the metaphorical elements identified

While target and source domain identification was crystal-clear in the physical appearance of the 3D metaphorical objects so far analysed in this paper, the set of mappings in the ad portrayed in Figure 3 – especially those concerning the physical composition and the size of the ramp and the billboard – make it difficult to determine, on a first appraisal, which is the source domain and which is the target domain and therefore the directionality of the mapped structure. The set of features that compose the billboard component, for example, is not as central (as compared to a prototypical billboard) as those in the rest of the ads: the surface conveying the message is not a perfect rectangle, it is not fully displayed as naturally hanging on a wall and, moreover, part of this surface (actually half of it) partially covers a flight of stairs and takes the shape of a ramp. The ramp component is not the best example of ramps either: while ramps are usually found by flights of stairs (especially in airports or stations where people carry their luggage), the one displayed here is not built in the flight of stairs itself; it can clearly be perceived as an add-on whose colour and structure do not match the setting. The composition is clearly set, therefore, to catch the attention of passers-by and have them wonder why such an object would be displayed there.

The metaphor proposed to motivate its physical appearance is A BILLBOARD IS A RAMP, where the billboard component works as target domain. This choice is motivated due to the overall saliency of the billboard over the ramp component in different terms. For example, the answer to the passers-by question addressed above (i.e. why that object should be found in that setting) can actually be found on the written signs (slogan and logo) provided on the horizontally-displayed surface (the message allows passers-by to automatically categorise the entity as a billboard); moreover, while the immediately perceived functions of the 3D metaphorical object are both helping people push their suitcases forward while promoting an idea – its overall and ultimate purpose is clearly to advertise a brand. Thus, by adding an extension of the billboard over the stairs, *functional* and *formal* mappings occur between the source (ramp) and the target (billboard), and consequently, the shape, and the function of a ramp are incorporated into the billboard structure; in other words, the shape and function of the useful ramp are metaphorically mapped onto the shape and function of the billboard, hence enhancing its interactional affordances. We argue that both domains are rendered in this 3D metaphorical object through the interaction mode and this should accordingly be regarded as a monomodal metaphor.

In addition to this, the slogan *Move your ideas forward at people4smartercities.com* triggers the conceptual metaphor IDEAS ARE OBJECTS which, we claim, establishes an association between source and target domains working at two contextual levels: linguistic and physical.

The first level arises directly and exclusively from the linguistic information provided in the slogan. This monomodal linguistic metaphor establishes a basic ontological association through which ideas receive physical properties of objects and can therefore be discursively described as if physically pushed or *moved forward*. Once the initial link has been verbally established, particular correlations for ideas and objects can be found within the physical context of the ad. This link reinforces the association between the objects that can be moved forward in the physical world through the ramp and the ideas that can become true with the help of IBM. In both cases, the facilities provided by IBM help people move their objects and push their ideas forward. When the metaphorical focus is placed on the relationship between the slogan and the entity billboard/ramp, target and source domains are found to belong to two different modes. That is, while the realm of ideas (target domain) is triggered uniquely and exclusively through the slogan, the source domain is also rendered through the 3D object's functional and interactive affordances. Thus, given that the target domain is rendered

through verbal signs (the word *idea* appears exclusively in written signs) and the source domain is rendered and reinforced both through written signs (*move forward* in the slogan) and the interaction mode, the metaphor can therefore be classified as multimodal.

#### 4. Conclusion

In this paper we have provided a qualitative analysis of the metaphors involved in three different ads that constitute the advertising campaign of IBM *People for Smarter Cities (P4SC)*. The analysis has focussed primarily on the kind of mappings that shape the structure of 3D metaphorical objects, but also on the interaction of such metaphors and those verbally conveyed on their slogans.

As part of this analysis, we have proposed the notion of *interaction mode* in order to account for cases of 3D metaphorical objects whose metaphorical manifestations are tightly related to functional and interactional properties of the objects. Because function and interaction are complex parameters (they involve not only physically-rendered manifestations but also cognitive components like intention or purpose), their particular materialization in this kind of metaphorical creations cannot be reduced exclusively to any single one of the nine fine-grained modes proposed by Forceville (2009: 23). In this concern, the interaction mode should be regarded as a means to account for a particular set of metaphorical manifestations that might otherwise be difficult to parameterise. In other words, it should not be conceived of as a substitute, but as *complement* for the extant list of modes that have so far been identified and acknowledged by the scientific community. Moreover – just like, say, the visual mode (pictorial signs) is the default manifestation channel of pictorial metaphors – the interaction mode has been introduced in this paper as the default mode to deal with particular cases of creative metaphorical manifestations in 3D metaphorical objects. The ads analysed here are prototypical instances of such cases. This whole series of factors have led to the classification of THE BILLBOARD IS A SHELTER, THE BILLBOARD IS A BENCH, and THE BILLBOARD IS A RAMP as monomodal metaphors. This does not mean, however, that all cases of 3D metaphorical objects must necessarily be monomodal; one should instead expect a continuum in which the interaction mode combines as well with other modes like written or pictorial signs. Further research is in fact required in order to refine the nature of the mode proposed here, as well as to ascertain whether it has a real potential to stand and be recognised as a proper mode or it fails to live up to the theoretical and analytical requirements of sounder analyses based on a wider sample.

*People for Smarter Cities (P4SC)* was considered as an astonishingly creative and successful advertising campaign (Trotman 2013; Ball 2014; Dandad 2014) carried out by the Ogilvy & Mather Paris agency and IBM, who are committed to innovate in order to create a new type of advertising more focused on the consumer (International Business Machines n.d.). In fact, according to FLHeadlines (2013), one of the aims of the campaign was to give advertising a new function by creating ads with an additional purpose. With this in mind, the ads were designed to be significantly more interactive, inspiring and useful for customers, which was achieved mainly by creating unexpected associations between the realm of advertising (through traditional billboards) and the realm of urban furniture (i.e. other series of urban elements which citizens may use for their own convenience).

As derived from our analysis, this whole set of associations can be described as an implicit set of metaphorical mappings. Not only that, we claim that these metaphors are a key component of the interactive advertising bait and the extraordinary success of the campaign. On the one hand, the invariance principle (Lakoff 1993), for example, works as a fine

regulator of feasible associations, hence driving the whole creative process to a coherent outcome (although the structure of the target domain is sometimes challenged – as in the case of the billboard/ramp ad –, it is never violated so that the 3D metaphorical object is, in all cases, always perceived as an ad). On the other hand, conventional metaphors have been reported to have positive persuasive effects in printed ad appreciation, perceived vividness and perceived creativity (Cf. Burgers *et al.* 2015), and novel metaphors like the ones providing for the physical structure of the 3D objects are a powerful attention catcher, especially because of their witty associations. Processing and understanding the particular combination of linguistic and non-linguistic metaphors in each ad, for example, allows us to consciously conceptualise each 3D metaphorical object as an instantiation of a *smart* idea – or, in other words, as the product of an ingenious creative process –, which might eventually inspire our creative spirits.

Metaphor may thus be envisaged as a persuasive creative and communicative tool in this context, and its conscious and deliberate use by designers – or any other professional involved in a creative process – should be conceived of as valuable skill in their field (Cf. Cila 2013 for a review and illustration of the use of metaphors as part of the product design process). A matter that still remains unspecified – and that should be the object of study of future research – is whether, or to which degree, designers were aware that they were using metaphors as a creative tool and, most importantly, whether designers in general are *usually* aware of this. We hypothesise, in this regard, that being consciously aware of the use of metaphors as a creative tool when involved in a creative process (like product design) may actually have some positive (and measurable) effects on the creative process itself and the quality of its results. As this falls, nevertheless, out of the aims and scope of this paper, the hypothesis is yet to be tested in further studies involving a sound, ad hoc, experimental design.

Finally, the (conscious) use of metaphor as a creative tool raises the question whether developing some kind of metaphorical literacy would be necessary or at least convenient in the field of advertising (and in any other field where the mastery of creative tools is a valuable skill). More particularly, in the light of the previous paragraphs, we suggest that fostering *deliberate metaphor literacy* (or, at least, trying to engage the person in the deliberate use of metaphors as part of their creative process) among professionals involved in creative endeavours might prove an asset for them and their companies.<sup>8</sup> Developing and fostering metaphorical literacy should be addressed as part of a new line of research which, we suggest, might be framed as a particular applied derivation of deliberate metaphor theory (Steen 2014a).

## 5. Acknowledgements

Research for this paper has been funded through the project P1.1A2014-2. We would like to thank the anonymous reviewers for their suggestions to improve the manuscript. We would also like to show our gratitude to the institutional support provided by the Department of English Studies (Universitat Jaume I) and IULMA (Institut Interuniversitari de Llengües

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<sup>8</sup> The three “3D object/product” metaphors presented here might be considered as instances of deliberate metaphors in that they have been intentionally devised to create a shift of perspective in the receivers – that is, attention is drawn from the target domain (billboard) towards the source domain (shelter, bench, ramp) in the interpretive process of each ad. As argued earlier, this change of perspective may also play an important role in catching the attention of receivers and increasing the attractiveness of the campaign.

Modernes Aplicades de la Comunitat Valenciana). We are especially thankful to Andrew Trotman for granting his permission to use his article (Trotman 2013) as a source of information and the images in it reproduced.

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