

NORTH AND SOUTH PERSPECTIVES: A METAPHORICAL APPROACH TO THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE ENERGY SECTOR*

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The present paper looks at the close relation which exists today between the role of women and the energy sector. The metaphorical rendering of this relation, as seen in advertising discourse, will be analyzed from the perspective of Cognitive Linguistics. In this analysis, North and South differences will be also considered. For the purpose of clarity, two advertisements taken from *The Economist* and *Newsweek*, two leading magazines in the business sector, will be used in the analysis as examples of the South and North perspectives. This study of the advertising discourse will be mostly based on Forceville's theory of pictorial metaphor, mainly centered on the non-verbal component, and the work by Kövecses claiming that the choice of the source domain in metaphors is usually conditioned by cultural connotations.

Key words: *Cognitive Linguistics, metaphor, pictorial metaphor, gender, energy, advertising.*

El presente trabajo se centra en la relación existente entre el papel de la mujer y el sector energético hoy en día. La interpretación metafórica de esta relación, tal y como se muestra en el discurso publicitario, será analizada desde la perspectiva de la Lingüística Cognitiva. Las diferencias existentes entre las perspectivas Sur y Norte también serán tenidas en cuenta. Con esta finalidad, dos anuncios sacados de reputadas revistas en el ámbito de la economía como *The*

Economist y *Newsweek* se tomarán como ejemplos de estas dos perspectivas en el análisis. El estudio del discurso publicitario se basará fundamentalmente en las teorías de Forceville sobre metáfora visual, centrada fundamentalmente en el componente no verbal de la metáfora, así como en el trabajo de Kövecses en defensa de que la elección del término fuente de las metáforas está generalmente condicionada por connotaciones culturales.

Palabras clave: *Lingüística cognitiva, metáfora, metáfora visual, género, energía, publicidad.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Discourse relating women and energy is no doubt the result of a long tradition of gender oriented discourse studies. Sensitivity on women and gender-related issues has paved the way for the creation of a number of national and international forums on related issues (Wamukonya, 2002). This has derived in five main international conferences that have taken place since 1975: World Conference of the International Women's Year (Mexico City, 1975), World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women (Copenhague, 1980), World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievement of the UN Decade for Women (Nairobi, 1985), Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995) and the five-year review of the Fourth World Conference on Women in 2000.

In this context, it is not hard to imagine the reasons why virtually all major development organizations seek to incorporate gender issues into their programs: (i) efficiency grounds and (ii) search for social equity. Facts reveal that most of the progress in this sense has been achieved by the energy sector even if many of the projects are still nowadays designed beyond their possible effect on the role of women. Not in vain, in the last few years, energy issues have started to show a clear female oriented dimension in which women are considered to be not only the main end users of energy but also human beings well qualified to be potentially integrated into energy

administration programs. Needless to say, the importance of widening women's access to electricity as well as the need to set up micro-credits to guarantee this access in some parts of the world is currently at issue. The idea of latitude also conditions the role of women in their relation with energy and is therefore to be considered as well. Despite Clancy and Roehr's statement in defense of concepts like "North" and "South", which avoid the negative connotations conveyed by the terms "developing" and "developed" countries (2003: 16), the truth is that differences arise and become obvious as soon as energy is approached from a Northern or a Southern perspective.¹

In the light of these preliminary considerations, the present study aims at analyzing the role of women in the field of energy as much as the North/South latitude implications to be considered when establishing this relation. With this purpose in mind, the metaphorical representation of these relations in the context of magazine advertising will be approached from a cognitive perspective. Two advertisements taken from the magazines *The Economist* and *Newsweek* (Chevron and Shell, respectively) will work as examples of advertising discourse in the field of the energy industry. The selection of these two advertisements has been motivated by the fact that they are specifically South and North oriented and represent the need for a close collaboration. Also, they prove that there needs to be room for improvement in the South as well as in the North, and they both emphasize the important role to be played by women in the future of this sector worldwide.

We have already mentioned already that the study of metaphor in magazine advertising will be approached from the perspective of Cognitive Linguistics and the new theory of Conceptual Metaphor, which clearly signaled a switch in the study of metaphor, from a rhetorical device to a conceptual phenomenon (Lakoff, 1980). This theory has been applied to different fields such as economics (White, 2004; Cortés de los Ríos, 2010) or advertising. Metaphors are an excellent persuasive strategy for the advertiser to bring about a certain type of behaviour on the part of consumers. Advertisers choose the metaphors with the intention of exploiting mappings -between the source and target domains- which enhance the ideas which are generally taken for granted in our collective understanding, such as

the cultural values of the community in which the advertisements are launched (Mc Millan and Cheney, 1996; Kövecses, 2005, 2010) (Zaltman and Coulter 1995; Kövecses 2005 and 2010). Nevertheless, even though the implementation of this new theory of metaphor has produced much insightful knowledge, there are still some limitations which, at least in the field of advertising, have been mainly noticed by authors like Forceville (1994, 1996, 2006), who states that “if metaphor characterizes thinking, [and] is thus not an exclusive attribute of language, it should be capable of assuming non-verbal and multi-medial manifestations as well as the purely verbal ones that have hitherto been the central concern of metaphor studies” (2006: 379). In this sense, scholars like Kennedy (1982) or Hausman (1989) and Forceville (1994, 1996) have envisioned other possible, non-verbal manifestations of metaphor which will be also considered in the present study.

The study has been organized as follows: this first introductory section frames the topic and precedes the theoretical framework which, at the same time, has been divided into two subsections: (i) the role of women in the energy industry and (ii) a brief portrayal of the artistic metaphor, more specifically pictorial metaphor, as coined by Forceville (1994). In the third section, two advertisements have been analyzed so as to give place to a discussion (fourth section), from which some final conclusions have been drawn in section five.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The aim of this paper has been already said to be two-fold: (i) the South/North perspective and its relation with the role of women in the energy industry as well as (ii) the metaphorical representation of this relation in advertising discourse. The two following subsections are thus devoted to providing some background information about these two topics.

2.1. Women in the energy sector

Research about the topic of gender and energy focuses on the role of women in the sector, both in developing and developed

countries.² Since it is a prime ingredient in production, subsistence and leisure activities, energy should be available worldwide to men and women alike. Men and women should have equal opportunities not only in terms of access to energy but also to its administration. Even today, women tend to be the ones who influence their households' direct and indirect energy consumption and educate children for future energy use in many developing as well as developed countries. That is the reason why two different advertisements, South and North oriented, have been chosen for the analysis.

Focusing on the universe of African rural communities, which is portrayed in the first advertisement to be analyzed in the present study (Chevron), it can be stated that cooking energy accounts for roughly 90% of all household energy consumption in many countries in Africa (i.e. Nepal, Burkina Faso, Kenya or Zambia). Most of the time, this means that women in poor communities spend more time walking long distances to try to get fuel, than working on income generation. This picture leads to the feminization of poverty in relation with energy since women and their children are the ones in charge of fuel provisioning. But at the same time, it places them in a central position in terms of energy administration and consumption (Cecelski, 1995; Parikh, 1995).³ Energy tends to be seen as more gender-neutral in the North. However, scholars like Clancy and Roehr (2003) claim that this is not always the case in the North if we take into consideration the fact that the number of women who live below the poverty line in the North is much higher than that of men living under the same conditions. Both advertisements are thus intended to face the conventional identification of energy with a masculine power by giving women a more prominent position and relating their daily effort of self-improvement with the need for achievements in the sector, South and North.

2.2. Metaphor in advertising

Before moving on to the cognitive analysis of the South and North advertisements dealing with the topic of women in the energy industry, there are important devices used for conceptualization that need to be explained in some detail: metaphor, metonymy and image schemas. This will be done in the light of the works on Cognitive

Linguistics by Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 1999); Johnson (1987); Lakoff, (1987, 1993); Kövecses (2002, 2005, 2010); and more specifically, in view of the research carried out by scholars like Forceville (1994; 1996; 2006) and Cortés de los Ríos (2010).

Metaphor has been traditionally studied from its verbal perspective. However, some scholars have also looked at the pictorial, non-verbal manifestations of this device. The first studies on pictorial metaphor were mainly focused on artistic representations. This is the case of scholars like Kennedy (1982), Hausman (1989) and Forceville (1994, 1996). Working with a number of pictures, Kennedy (1982) tried to formulate his own theory of metaphor by applying Richard's (1971) concepts of tenor (primary subject) and vehicle (secondary subject), his main contributions being the following: (i) to consider metaphor as a mechanism that allows one to differentiate what is relevant from what is not; (ii) to set the criteria to identify tenor and vehicle. Taking Black's "interaction view" as a starting point (1979), Hausman highlighted the following features of pictorial metaphors: (i) the tension resulting from the application of metaphor; (ii) the presence of meaning units; and (iii) the interrelation of meaning units in an integration or family resemblance that functions like a community (1989: 59).

Building on the previous work by the scholars mentioned above, Forceville (1994, 1996) moved forward and was the first to introduce a comprehensive theory of pictorial metaphor, which has offered a very useful model for analysis. In this theory, he suggested that, just like the verbal metaphor, the pictorial one is comprised of two terms: (i) a "literal primary subject" and (ii) a "figurative secondary subject" (1994: 3). Each metaphor, following Lakoff and Johnson (1980), involves a projection of one or more features of the secondary domain ("source domain") onto the domain of the primary subject ("target domain"). According to the author, some of the questions that can be addressed when trying to identify a metaphor are: (i) What are the two terms of the metaphor? and (ii) What is the projection of properties from the B-term ("figurative") to the A-term ("literal")? (Forceville, 1994: 2). Some years later, Forceville (2006) developed his theory and established two well distinguished types of metaphor: monomodal and multimodal metaphors. Monomodal are those

metaphors “whose target and source are exclusively or predominantly rendered in one mode” (2006: 383) while multimodal are those other metaphors “whose target and source are each represented exclusively or predominantly in different modes” (2006: 384).

Besides metaphors, the two other cognitive devices previously mentioned which are frequently used in advertising are metonymies and image schemas. Unlike metaphors, metonymies take place within one single domain, that is to say; there is a “stand-for” relationship in metonymies where one entity is taken to stand for another, the typical schema being X for Y, where X represents the source meaning and Y symbolizes the target meaning of the metonymic operation. Both metaphor and metonymy, which may interact in a number of ways (Taylor, 1995; Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez 1999a, 1999b; Geeraerts, 2003), are exploited to maximize the creation of cognitive effects on the minds of consumers. As for image schemas, they can be defined as very basic and skeletal images commonly used in cognitive operations that work as the source domains in many metaphors (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980; Lakoff and Johnson, 1987; Gibbs, 1994). Also, they motivate the way we think, reason, and talk when the positive or negative values attached to images get mapped onto the pictures which are part of that meaning. In Gibbs’ words: “they can be defined as preverbal concepts which are grounded in early perceptual-body experiences, which underlie the embodiment of our mind” (1994: 416). These schemas, it will be seen in the analysis of the two advertisements which has been undertaken in section 3 of the present study, can include the image of verticality, of a path leading to a destination, of a container (with an inside and an outside), etc.

The hypotheses guiding this paper in terms of the conceptual devices necessary for the interpretation of the role of women in the energy sector and its representation in advertising discourse are thus the following: (i) metaphor plays a basic role when it comes to making the product/service both memorable and desirable to the consumer by conveying those positive values to be highlighted by the advertiser; and (ii) metaphor is particularly relevant in the analysis of advertisements because, apart from its cognitive nature, it is a vehicle for transmitting cultural connotations of the community where it is used (Kövecses, 2005, 2010).

3. ANALYSIS OF ADVERTISEMENTS

3.1 Chevron

This advertisement, selected from *The Economist* (March 3, 2012), is divided into two well differentiated parts: the left-hand side shows the figure -face and neck- of a coloured woman who seems to have an African origin. The right-hand side, meanwhile, includes the verbal message conveyed by the advertiser, that is to say; by the world-leading oil company (Chevron). At first sight, the potential reader of the magazine is thus exposed to the comparison of the coloured woman with the oil company (Chevron) which takes place in a multimodal scenario where the pictorial and the verbal components are consciously interrelated.



Following Sperber and Wilson in their consideration that cognition is designed to choose relevant phenomena and process them in the most effective way (1986: 151-155), further analysis is needed in order to appreciate the relevance of this identification established between the woman and the oil company. And it is worth noticing in this sense that the woman's skin colour evokes her Southern, probably

African origin. This could be explained by the new role that women from the developing countries are currently playing in the energy sector. Not in vain, the existence of many programs devoted to involving women in the energy industry is actually a fact in African countries like South Africa, Zimbabwe or Kenya.⁴ Keeping this in mind, it is not hard to realize that the picture of the black lady, by means of metonymy, stands for all the women from countries in the South who have taken, or might take, an active role in the energy sector thanks to these programs.

Moving onto the verbal side of the advertisement, which includes the headline and the body of the message, the first thing which catches the reader's attention is a new left/right layout division. On the right, the headline takes the form of a contract under the terms "Big oil should support small business", followed by the agreement - "we agree"- and the signature of the President of S&S Supplies and Solutions (Chevron) and the Chief Procurement Officer (Chevron). The rest of the verbal message or body appears at the bottom of the advertisement, to the left, and reads: "Every day, Chevron relies on small businesses around the world. Electricians. Mechanics. Manufacturers. We spent billions on local goods and services last year. And helped thousands of entrepreneurs get ahead with microloans. We're helping small businesses thrive. Because we need them. Just as much as they need us. Learn more at Chevron.com/weagree". This is preceded by the logo of the company with its leitmotif "Human energy".

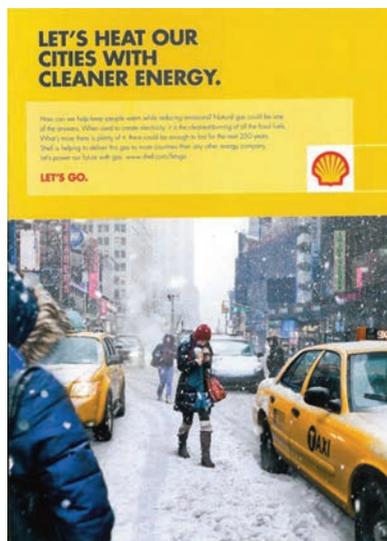
Since the body is framed in the image of the black lady, this is somehow making it clear for the reader that most of the entrepreneurs being reached by the microloan system operated by Chevron are assumed to be women, black African women standing for women from the South. Thanks to this multimodal message, advertisers reach their goal while consumers learn about Chevron's commitment with poor women from the South. The human quality of this energy is stressed in the leitmotif of the company "Human energy", which personifies the energy produced by the company through the use of the attributive adjective "human". At the same time, the paradigm of humanity is also activated by the proximity of the human face.

To put this idea in terms of the conceptual, cognitive devices taking place in the consumers' minds when being exposed to the advertisement, it is to be noticed that the ultimate aim of the advertiser, a world-leading company (Chevron), is the promotion of its energy production. "Big oil", hence, by means of a metonymy in which the product (oil) stands for the producer (Chevron), refers to the metaphor's literal A-term or PS. Meanwhile, the feminine side of energy can be taken as the metaphor's figurative B-term, the SS. This means that, according to the information provided by the verbal and the pictorial messages in the advertisement, this metaphor could be phrased as follows: OIL IS A WOMAN. That is to say, the metaphor under analysis is multimodal since the source or A-term (OIL) is rendered in a verbal mode while the target or B-term (WOMAN) is rendered in a pictorial mode. By emphasizing this completely different, female side of energy, the metaphor under analysis seems to be giving a new dimension to the energy industry.

At the end of the body of the message, readers are encouraged to visit the website chevron.com/weagree, where they can access the different advertisements created for this same campaign known as "We agree. Do you?" The discourse which underlies the different advertisements is intended to show a more human face of the company, as it seems to commit itself to providing partner communities with some benefits (Oil companies should support the communities they are a part of), always revealing an empathic position (The world needs more than oil).

3.2 Shell

Like the advertisement just analyzed, this second one, taken from *Newsweek* (December-February, 2012), taps issues concerning the energy industry. The perspective, though, is completely different. Here the reader is moved to the other side of the earth, to the northern hemisphere. It is so cold in this new scenario that nothing is felt more necessary than the heating provided by an energy company like Shell (a global group of energy and petrochemical companies present in more than eighty countries).



This second advertisement is also divided into two halves: verbal and pictorial. The upper part reveals the verbal message with the headline and the body. The headline reads: “Let’s heat our cities with cleaner energy.” Meanwhile, the body of the message goes as follows: “How can we help keep people warm while reducing emissions? Natural gas could be one of the answers. When used to create electricity, it is the cleanest-burning of all the fossil fuels. What’s more, there is plenty of it there could be enough to last for the next 250 years. Shell is helping to deliver this gas to more countries than any other energy company. Let’s power our future with gas. www.shell.com/letsgo Let’s go.” The reader’s attention is soon caught by the repetition of the same syntactic structure -let’s heat our cities / let’s go- linking the beginning and end of the verbal message. This repetition dynamizes the discourse at the same time as it turns consumers into participants in the cold scenario depicted. Also, the idea of promoting an eco-friendly product -natural gas used to create electricity would help to reduce emissions- is equally appealing to consumers because it touches on a very important cultural value.

The pictorial side of the message shows a stereotyped winter image of an American city, possibly the city of New York, as can be

deduced from the colour of the taxis. The cold weather makes it hard for a lady who occupies the centre of the image to keep moving forward. From her attitude, leaning a bit forward as though trying to protect herself from the cold, it is clear that she is completely determined to go ahead with her daily life even if that implies fighting extreme conditions. The fact that most of the pedestrians portrayed in the advertisement are females makes it also clear that the advertiser is basically relying on the female gender to transmit the message. The male gender, though still present -there is a man crossing the road- clearly occupies a more peripheral position to contribute to the discourse on women and energy which, it has been previously mentioned in the present study, has taken the ground in the last decade, with women consequently starting to occupy more priority positions in the sector.

The picture in the advertisement can therefore be said to constitute the best representation of its verbal message. The movement forward of the lady can be easily identified with the linguistic indicator “let’s go” and, hence, with the positive attitude of the company to keep progressing too. Being exposed to the coherent message of the pictorial and verbal sides of the advertisement, the intended idea of dynamism can perfectly be perceived.

When it comes to the cognitive devices supporting the message, it must first be said that the company Shell promotes energy supply by showing its intention to move forward in a search for innovation and that, in this sense, the use of its leitmotif “let’s go”, which refers to the literal A-term or PS of the metaphor, plays a key role. At the same time, the portrayal of a number of people, most of them females, who are moving forward with decision despite the difficult weather conditions, can be taken as the metaphor’s figurative B-term, the SS. This mental process results in a metaphor which can be phrased as: **THE DETERMINATION OF THE COMPANY TO KEEP PROGRESSING IS THE DETERMINATION OF MANY CITIZENS, MOSTLY WOMEN, TO KEEP MOVING FORWARD DESPITE DIFFICULT CONDITIONS.** The advertisers are activating a multimodal metaphor in which the source or A-term (**THE DETERMINATION OF THE COMPANY TO KEEP PROGRESSING**) and the target or B-term (**THE**

DETERMINATION OF THE PEOPLE TO MOVE FORWARD) are rendered in different modes: verbal and pictorial, respectively. Two schemas are implied in this process: the path schema, one of the most recurrent sensory-motor activities, which signals a progression along a number of stages which has to be covered as one moves forward; and the “part for whole” schema, given that the depiction of the scene is meant to trigger the whole sequence in which people and cars will be making their way forward. As for property transfer from B (SS) to A (PS), firm determination and resolution are to be also highlighted.

4. CONCLUSIONS

It has been made clear already that women are still underrepresented in the energy sector, South and North speaking. Trying to fight this reality, the sector seems to be paving the way for the empowerment of women in the Southern hemisphere by founding institutions such as WOESA or ENERGIA, which work in countries like Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. In the northern hemisphere, despite the existence of a more egalitarian society, we still find large disparities in energy consumption (Clancy and Roehr, 2003: 20), which means that further involvement of women in this sector is a goal to be equally pursued. Keeping this in mind, the two advertisements chosen for analysis have been taken from two reputed publications in the business sector, *The Economist* (Chevron, for the South perspective analysis) and *Newsweek* (Shell, for the Northern approach). Energy is felt to be a gender-issue down in the South more than it is in the North, this being the reason why the study has moved from the South (advertisement 1) to the North (advertisement 2).

The approach to cognitive devices like metaphors, metonymies and image schemas has been necessary for the analysis of the advertising discourse. The strong cultural grounding of metaphors becomes clear when focusing on the mapping exploited between the source and the target domains in each of the advertisements. Thus the secondary subject (SS) chosen in both adverts alludes to very specific cultural issues in our society according to Kövecses' idea that “cognition is inherently cultural” (2005: 200). In the first

advertisement, the fact of projecting human qualities over non-human entities such as oil can be seen as a common mental process. In this case, though, the projection is taken a bit further when these qualities are stated to be not only human, but also feminine, the intention being that of reversing the typical masculine image of oil in light of the new direction taken by society. In the case of the second advertisement, the ideas of strong determination and firm decision are highly valued in our contemporary society, where being up and active does actually count.

The cultural grounding in metaphors usually comes supported by the creativity component. It is needless to say at this point that the very idea of making connections between two different domains is already an exercise of creativity on the side of the advertiser, who tries to make the message more cognitively relevant by attempting to catch readers' attention. In the first case, the secondary subject has been chosen with the clear intention of portraying the debut of the new female face of energy in society. A completely different process is activated in the second advertisement: while triggering the dynamism of young and strong companies like Shell, women are the ones pictured moving forward, possibly suggesting the idea that they make the decisions concerning energy consumption. Despite the two perspectives, though, getting better living conditions for women thanks to the energies advertised -either human or ecofriendly- becomes a common message.⁵

The analysis carried out previously in this paper proves that all the metaphors in the two advertisements under study interact with the two other cognitive devices already mentioned: metonymies and image schemas. In the case of metonymies, it can be stated that the stand-for relation "part for whole" in the first advertisement is quite revealing: the face of the black woman is used to refer not only to the woman as such but to all women in the countries in the South. This is also the case in the second advert, where the same metonymy is activated: a static scene which leads to a whole sequence of make-believe in which people and cars seem to be actually moving. As for the image schemas which have been activated in these two examples, it is to be pointed out that the schema of space, either as "verticality" or as "movement over a path", has been used in both cases to reinforce

the positive value already conveyed by the metaphors at issue. Advertisement one shows a woman who seems to be up and ready to face challenges while the central woman in advertisement two is crossing a road leading her somewhere. Not in vain, a coherent, integrated use of cognitive devices such as metaphors, metonymies and image schemas has been proved to be crucial in advertising discourse. The role of multimodality has been equally seen.

NOTES

¹ In Brandt's Report, North refers to the industrialized countries which belonged to the OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) (Brandt, 1980). Nowadays, the term would also cover the Eastern European countries, Australia and New Zealand. The South, meanwhile, includes all the remaining countries which are not part of the North.

² There are institutions of international or regional scope which work in this direction. In the first case, we come across the WIGSA (Women, Technology, Society) Internet site, whose main function is to promote innovation, science and technology strategies that enable women, especially those living in developing countries, to actively participate in technology and innovation for development; in the second case, with a more or less regional emphasis, we can mention ENERGIA-Africa, which is present in 13 African countries, and is the key for gender and energy issues in the region, being aimed at creating equal opportunity and access to energy resources for the poor; and WOESA (Women in Oil and Energy South Africa), whose aim is to facilitate and promote business opportunities and enhance the participation of South African women in the oil and energy sector by offering them practical training and funding.

³ Even if the present analysis is focused on Africa for methodological purposes, this is also the case in many areas in Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean (UNDP, 1995, 1997).

⁴ Particularly, we find WOESA (Women in Oil and Energy South Africa), which was established in 2002 and tries to foster an environment conducive to the empowerment of women in this sector.

⁵ The last report from unwomen.org (<http://www.un.org/gsp/report>) is the result of the work done by a 22-member Panel, which was established by the Organization General Secretary in August 2010 to formulate a new blueprint for sustainable development. The Panel's final report "Resilient People, Resilient Planet: A Future Worth Choosing" comments on the need for women to be empowered in all sectors in society and to have a greater role in the economy, which is considered to be critical for sustainable development.

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APPENDIX

Sources of advertisement illustrations:

Figure 1

Advertiser: Chevron
The Economist. March 3, 2012

Figure 2

Advertiser: Shell
Newsweek. December-February, 2012