

Reading Electric Vehicle Advertising Through Social Semiotics: Analysis of Visual Grammar Meta functions in Wuling Air EV Drive for a Green Life

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ABSTRACT

Electric vehicle advertising increasingly functions not only as product promotion but also as a cultural discourse that constructs meanings of sustainability, technology, and modern lifestyles. This study aims to examine how the Wuling Air EV “Drive for a Green Life” advertisement constructs visual meaning through social semiotics. A qualitative descriptive-interpretive approach with a critical-interpretive paradigm was employed. The data consisted of eight purposively selected frames from the 61-second advertisement, representing character introduction, product reveal, urban mobility, family use, environmental imagery, and lifestyle scenes. Analysis was conducted in two stages: Barthes’ denotative and connotative interpretation, followed by Kress and van Leeuwen’s three visual grammar meta functions of representation, interaction, and composition. The findings show that the advertisement positions the Wuling Air EV as more than a transportation product. Through visual elements such as gaze, camera angle, color, salience, spatial arrangement, modern urban settings, family imagery, and clean environmental backgrounds, the vehicle is associated with future mobility, technological sophistication, convenience, environmental responsibility, and aspirational urban living. However, these meanings are selectively constructed through idealized representations that exclude congestion, uneven charging infrastructure, and socioeconomic realities. The study concludes that visual choices strategically shape public perceptions of electric mobility and sustainability in Indonesian consumer culture.

INTRODUCTION

Advertising does not merely convey product information. It functions as a cultural text, an instrument that operates well beyond its role as a marketing medium. When an electric vehicle advertisement chooses to open with a man shown under dramatic lighting rather than with the vehicle's technical features, a pertinent question arises: why was that particular visual choice made, and what meaning lies behind it?

The social semiotic approach centres precisely on such questions. Eriyanto (2019, p. 68) explains that social semiotics does not stop at identifying signs; it critically interrogates the choices made by image producers like choices concerning camera angle, colour, composition, who is represented, and who is not, as well as the interests underlying those choices. This distinguishes social semiotics from conventional semiotic approaches, which tend to limit themselves to defining the denotative and connotative meanings of a given sign (Aiello, 2020; Blanchard, 2019; Danesi, 2020; Hodge, 2016; Petrilli & Ponzio, 2023).

Wuling Air EV provides a compelling object of analysis from this perspective. Launched at GIIAS 2022 and having become one of the best-selling electric vehicles in Indonesia, this product invests its visual communication with rich and meaningful complexity. One advertisement that merits particular attention is the video titled Drive for a Green Life uploaded to YouTube, which presents a range of visual elements with strong analytical potential through the lens of social semiotics (Chaib, 2024; Januarta & Ariyaningsih, 2024; Nurdiansyah, 2025; Rossolatos, 2018; Wiggins, 2019).

This study employs the framework of three visual grammar meta functions developed by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) and adapted by Eriyanto (2019) in *Metode Komunikasi Visual: Dasar-Dasar dan Aplikasi Semiotika Sosial untuk Membedah Teks Gambar*: representation, interaction, and composition. Eight frames were purposively selected from the video for in-depth analysis, aimed at understanding how these visual elements operate together to shape the way viewers make meaning of the Wuling Air EV product (Dong, 2025; Li & Ullah, 2025; Yumeng & Yuan, 2024).

The semiotic approach employed in this study draws upon Barthes's thinking, which emphasises that sign analysis proceeds from the visual form toward the meaning it produces. The analytical process involves identifying the signifier present in the visual text, understanding the signified it references, and interpreting the denotative and connotative meanings arising from their relationship. This argument is important, but according to Eriyanto (2019, pp. 65-66), it is insufficient to answer the deeper question: why was this particular sign or semiotic resource chosen, and not another?

In addressing Eriyanto's question, Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) position choice as the most important unit of analysis. Why is the camera positioned from above? Why does the figure not face the camera? Why do cool colours dominate? These questions are not trivial; they serve as entry points for understanding the ideology embedded beneath the visual surface.

Research conducted in digital and Indonesian contexts further reinforces this argument while revealing different analytical orientations. Zewitra, Bakhti, and Nugraha (2023) analysed 20 EV campaign and promotional texts and identified four dominant representations: electric vehicles as environmentally friendly, technologically advanced, economical, and continually developing innovations. Their findings demonstrate how linguistic choices participate in establishing a favourable public image of electric mobility. Sayd, Nazarudin, and Seubelan (2025) subsequently examined electric-car advertising on YouTube and found that advertisements employed hard-sell and soft-sell strategies alongside hyperbole, metonymy, rhetorical questions, and personification to inform, persuade, construct product images, and stimulate consumer imagination. Carlos (2025), using Barthes' semiotic framework to analyse BYD YouTube advertising, found that EVs were represented denotatively as modern and technologically advanced transportation and connotatively as symbols of efficiency, environmental awareness, social harmony, and contemporary lifestyles. Most recently, Ferrari, Ilham, and Ulum (2026) examined Wuling and Hyundai advertisements through Barthes' denotation, connotation, and myth, demonstrating how green colours, futuristic designs, and slogans construct EVs simultaneously as environmentally responsible technologies and urban lifestyle products.

Although these studies provide important foundations, taken together they leave a more specific analytical gap. Earlier studies predominantly examine green automobile discourse

across brands or national cultures, while recent EV studies tend to emphasise linguistic strategies, broad audiovisual symbolism, cross-cultural comparison, or Barthesian levels of denotation, connotation, and myth. Ling and Xie (2024) apply the three visual meta functions directly to EV green advertising, but their object is a BYD advertisement and their analytical concern primarily addresses the multimodal construction of ecological discourse. Ferrari et al. (2026), conversely, include Wuling's green-mobility communication but employ Barthes rather than conducting a systematic frame-by-frame investigation of representational, interactive, and compositional choices. The present study addresses this gap by concentrating on a single Wuling Air EV advertisement and combining the interpretation of denotative and connotative meanings with the three visual-grammar meta functions. Eight frames covering the character introduction, product reveal, urban mobility, family use, environmental sequence, and lifestyle sequence are purposively analysed, enabling the advertisement's ideological trajectory to be examined as an integrated visual narrative rather than as disconnected promotional images.

Such an investigation is urgent because the rapid normalisation of EVs makes environmental communication increasingly influential in defining what society perceives as sustainable mobility. As EV markets expand, advertising can naturalise associations between electric vehicles and clean cities, personal freedom, technological progress, environmental responsibility, or higher social status even when these associations are created through highly selective visual representations. The manuscript itself recognises that idealised imagery may exclude everyday realities such as urban congestion, unequal charging infrastructure, and the socioeconomic circumstances of prospective users. The novelty of the present research therefore lies not simply in applying semiotics to another automobile advertisement, but in integrating Barthes' two levels of signification with Kress and van Leeuwen's representational, interactive, and compositional meta functions to investigate both what is visually presented and how that presentation positions the viewer. By focusing intensively on the Indonesian Wuling Air EV campaign, the study also adds contextual specificity to an international literature still dominated by broader EV campaigns, Chinese brands, linguistic discourse, and cross-cultural comparison. This approach provides a critical means of distinguishing environmental meaning as a communicative construction from environmental performance as a technical characteristic.

Accordingly, this study aims to examine how the Wuling Air EV Drive for a Green Life advertisement constructs meanings of electric mobility through its visual semiotic resources. More specifically, the research seeks to identify the denotative and connotative meanings represented in the selected frames; analyse how the representational meta function constructs participants, actions, identities, and concepts; investigate how gaze, social distance, and camera angle establish interactive relationships with viewers; and explain how information value, salience, colour, positioning, and framing organise the advertisement compositionally. Through these objectives, the study seeks to reveal how apparently ordinary visual choices collectively construct narratives of future mobility, environmental responsibility, technological modernity, family convenience, and aspirational urban life. Theoretically, the study contributes to social semiotics, multimodal communication, and environmental advertising research by demonstrating the complementary analytical potential of Barthesian signification and visual grammar. Empirically, it extends research on EV communication within the Indonesian context, while practically it can assist advertising practitioners, communication researchers, consumers, and other stakeholders in evaluating how sustainability claims and lifestyles are visually

constructed. Ultimately, the research promotes a more critical understanding of how commercial images participate in shaping public perceptions of electric vehicles and the broader cultural meaning of green mobility.

METHOD

Research Approach

This study employed a qualitative method with a descriptive-interpretive approach. A qualitative approach was chosen because the research focus is on understanding and interpreting the system of visual meaning embedded in a commercial advertisement, rather than measuring the frequency or distribution of variables (Creswell, 2014). This approach is consistent with the nature of social semiotic analysis, which requires an in-depth interpretive examination of visual texts within their cultural and ideological contexts (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). The paradigm adopted is critical-interpretive, which treats visual texts as arenas of meaning construction that are never ideologically neutral.

Research Object

The object of analysis in this study is the Wuling Air EV advertisement video titled *Drive for a Green Life*, officially uploaded to the Wuling Motors Indonesia YouTube channel (<https://youtu.be/ZMsLeqXMJkc>) in 2022. The video has a duration of 61 seconds and was produced as part of the Wuling Air EV product launch campaign, which was first introduced to the Indonesian market at the Gaikindo Indonesia International Auto Show (GIIAS) 2022. This advertisement was selected as the research object based on three considerations: first, it represents one of the most prominent electric vehicle advertising campaigns in Indonesia during 2022–2024; second, it contains a rich density of visual semiotic resources across its short duration; and third, its public availability on YouTube ensures the replicability and transparency of the analysis.

Data Collection

Data were collected through a systematic visual documentation process. The video was downloaded in full resolution and subjected to repeated close viewings prior to frame selection. Frame extraction was carried out using video processing software, which allowed the researcher to pause, inspect, and capture still images at any point in the video. The initial stage of data collection involved viewing the full video no fewer than ten times to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the overall narrative structure, recurring visual patterns, and the relationship between successive shots.

Following this preliminary stage, a corpus of candidate frames was assembled by capturing still images at intervals throughout the video. From this corpus, eight frames were selected as the primary data of this study. The selection process employed purposive sampling, a technique in which samples are chosen based on specific analytical criteria rather than random probability (Sekaran, 2013). The two criteria applied were: (1) variation in image type, ensuring that the corpus represents the full range of visual contexts in the advertisement, including frames featuring human figures, the product alone, the urban environment, and the product in use; and (2) analytical richness, meaning that each selected frame contains sufficient density of visual semiotic resources to support analysis across all three meta functions of representation, interaction, and composition.

The eight frames selected span the advertisement from timecode 00:03 to 00:54, covering the opening character introduction (Frame 1), the product reveal sequence (Frames 2–3), the urban mobility sequence (Frames 4–5), the family use sequence (Frame 6), the environmental sequence (Frame 7), and the closing lifestyle sequence (Frame 8). This selection ensures that the analysis captures the full ideological arc of the advertisement rather than isolated moments.

Analysis Procedure

The analysis of each frame was conducted in two sequential stages. The first stage involved the interpretation of denotative and connotative meaning, following Barthes's (2010) two-order signification theory. At the denotative level, the researcher produced a systematic description of all visual elements literally present in the frame: the objects, figures, colours, texts, spatial arrangements, and lighting conditions that are objectively observable. At the connotative level, the researcher interpreted the cultural associations, ideological implications, and social values that arise from the interaction between the denotative signs and the broader cultural codes operative in Indonesian and contemporary consumer society.

The second stage applied the three-meta function framework of visual grammar developed by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) and adapted by Eriyanto (2019) in *Metode Komunikasi Visual*. For each frame, three dimensions were analysed sequentially. First, the representational meta function was examined by identifying whether the frame constitutes a narrative or conceptual representation. Narrative representations were identified by the presence of vectors, directional lines of action formed by movement, gaze, or gesture, along with the identification of the actor and goal of the depicted process. Conceptual representations were identified by the absence of vectors and the presence of symbolic, classificatory, or relational configurations. Second, the interactive meta function was analysed by determining the gaze position (demand or offer), the social distance implied by the camera framing (intimate, personal, social, or public), and the power relation implied by the vertical camera angle (eye level, high angle, or low angle). Third, the compositional meta function was examined by analysing the information value of element placement (given-new on the horizontal axis, ideal-real on the vertical axis), the relative salience of elements as indicated by size, colour contrast, and positioning, and the framing of elements through visual separators or connectors.

The results of each stage of analysis were recorded in a structured analytical table, following the template proposed by Eriyanto (2019), with columns for each meta function. The use of a tabular format was chosen not only for presentational clarity but also to ensure that the analytical process was systematic and consistently applied across all eight frames, thereby reducing the risk of selective or inconsistent interpretation.

Validity and Trustworthiness

The validity of the analysis was ensured through two measures. First, theoretical triangulation was employed by corroborating interpretations with multiple theoretical sources, including Eriyanto (2019), Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), and Barthes (2010), to verify that the analytical categories were applied in a manner consistent with established frameworks. Second, the analytical process maintained an explicit audit trail in which every interpretive claim was grounded in specific, named visual elements observable in the frame, ensuring that

the analysis remains accountable to the empirical data rather than relying on unsupported assertion.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The following section presents the analysis of eight frames selected from the Wuling Air EV advertisement. Each frame is first examined through the interpretation of denotative and connotative meaning, followed by an analysis of the three visual grammar meta functions: representation, interaction, and composition.

Frame 1 | Timecode 00:03



Figure 1. Male figure under dramatic lighting (00:03)

Denotative and Connotative Meaning

The denotative meaning of this frame presents a middle-aged man wearing a grey blazer with a white t-shirt underneath, standing with his head bowed inside a nearly pitch-dark room. Two horizontal neon lights positioned from the upper-rear emit white light, while no other objects are visible in the frame aside from the figure and the light sources. Connotatively, opening an advertisement without displaying the product is an unconventional choice in automotive advertising. Rather than leading with the vehicle, the advertisement introduces the user first, establishing the image of who will use the Wuling Air EV before the car is shown. A suited man under dramatic lighting conveys a sense of serious thought, while the bowed-head pose suggests that the decision to switch to an electric vehicle is the result of reflection and deliberation rather than impulse. In doing so, the advertisement constructs the image of a Wuling Air EV consumer as someone who is not easily swayed by promotions, but rather an individual with awareness and rational consideration in making choices.

Table 1. Social Semiotic Analysis of Frame 1

Meta function	Description
Representation	Conceptual Representation can be seen from the absence of vectors and actions. Within the framework of Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) as explained by Eriyanto (2019, p. 73), this falls under an existential process, where the image represents the existence and psychological condition of the participant rather than their activity. The bowed-head pose reinforces the representation of deep reflection or contemplation.
Interaction	The figure does not face the camera (offer position). The viewer is positioned as an outside observer witnessing what feels like a deeply private moment, rather than as someone being directly addressed. The medium close-up shot places the viewer at a personal distance, close enough to feel the mood. The camera angle is level with the eye line, with no relational dominance.
Composition	The figure is placed in the centre of the frame with a dark background that directs all attention toward the face and posture. Two horizontal light lines behind the figure form a dramatic visual impression. The contrast between the dark background, the cool lighting, and the warmth of the skin tone creates a tense yet aesthetically compelling atmosphere.

Frame 2 | Timecode 00:08



Figure 2. Front view of Air EV with text 'For Future Mobility' (00:08)

Denotative and Connotative Meaning

The denotative meaning in this frame shows the front view of a white Wuling Air EV under focused lighting. The car is positioned between two walls of contrasting colours, red on the inner side and grey on the outer side. The Wuling logo is clearly visible at the centre of the front body, while the licence plate reads 'Air ev'. In the lower-left area of the frame, text reading FOR FUTURE MOBILITY with Wuling Remote Control App is displayed. Connotatively, the white colour of the vehicle conveys an impression of modern technology and prestige, while the red inner wall creates a colour contrast that immediately draws visual focus to the product. The phrase 'For Future Mobility' does not merely function as a promotional slogan but serves as a vision statement that positions Air EV as a symbol of the direction of technological progress. This elevates the product beyond a mode of transportation into a declaration of one's alignment with the future.

Table 2. Social Semiotic Analysis of Frame 2

Meta function	Description
Representation	Conceptual Symbolic Representation is evident in how the white car is displayed head-on without movement or action. Within Eriyanto's (2019, p. 73) framework, this is a conceptual representation where the image does not depict activity but rather the identity and symbolic value of an entity. The text FOR FUTURE MOBILITY in the lower-left area functions not as a technical specification but as a symbolic attribute that elevates the vehicle's meaning from a mere product into a vision statement.
Interaction	The primary object in this frame is the vehicle, not a human, so there is no direct gaze toward the camera. However, the full front display of the car creates an effect resembling a demand position, wherein the vehicle faces the viewer directly and invites evaluation and consideration. The text in the lower-left area reinforces this interactive function as a direct claim addressed to the audience.
Composition	The composition places the vehicle at the centre as the most visually prominent element. The grey outer wall and red inner wall create a sharp contrast against the white body of the car, naturally drawing the eye from the sides toward the centre. Eriyanto (2019, p. 77) notes that the placement of elements within the frame is a compositional function that constructs meaning. Here, the red on the inside provides a sense of energy, while the white car at the centre becomes the focal endpoint.

Frame 3 | Timecode 00:15

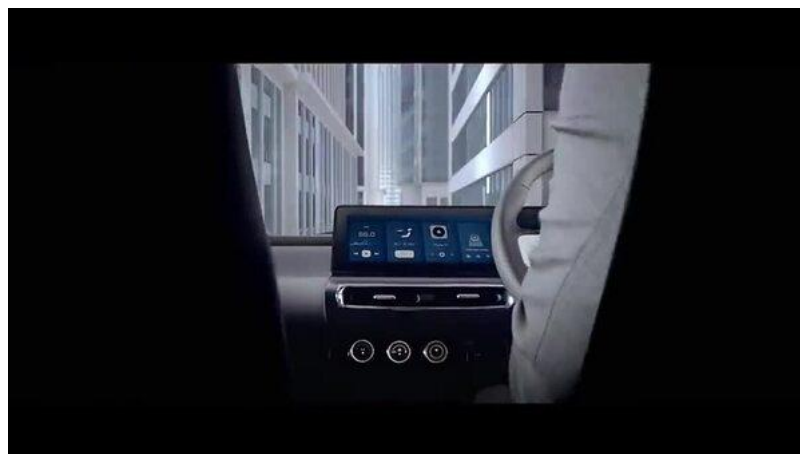


Figure 3. Cabin interior with digital display and city skyline (00:15)

Denotative and Connotative Meaning

The denotative meaning in this frame shows the interior of the Air EV cabin captured from the rear passenger position. At the centre of the dashboard is a digital touchscreen with a dark-blue multimedia interface, while the steering wheel is located on the right side. Through the windshield, a row of modern high-rise buildings with contemporary architectural design is visible. The cabin interior is dominated by white and silver tones. Connotatively, the digital display represents the sophistication of technology, intelligence, and the connectivity that characterises a modern lifestyle. The presence of the city in the background reinforces the modern feel and echoes the 'For Future Mobility' claim from the previous frame. The minimalist cabin interior builds an impression of comfort, as if the cabin serves as a calm,

ordered space amid the complexity of the city outside. The advertisement thus implicitly constructs the idea that a vehicle relevant to the present era must be one of high technology and minimalist design.

Table 3. Social Semiotic Analysis of Frame 3

Meta function	Description
Representation	Conceptual Relational Representation can be identified from the absence of actions or vectors involving the touchscreen. What is represented is the relationship between two entities: the cabin technology and the city beyond the windshield. Both are present within the same frame with comparable focus, visually suggesting that both are equally significant (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006, as cited in Eriyanto, 2019, p. 73).
Interaction	The camera angle from the rear passenger position creates an immersive effect, placing the viewer inside the cabin rather than observing it from outside. There is no direct gaze toward the camera, positioning the viewer not as a recipient of a message but as someone actively experiencing the cabin space itself.
Composition	The digital display is placed at the centre of the composition with spatial depth providing contextual layering. The blue tone of the screen contrasts with the white and grey tones of the cabin, making it the most visually prominent element. The city buildings in the background are slightly softer in focus but remain legible, sustaining their relevance without overpowering the display.

Frame 4 | Timecode 00:22

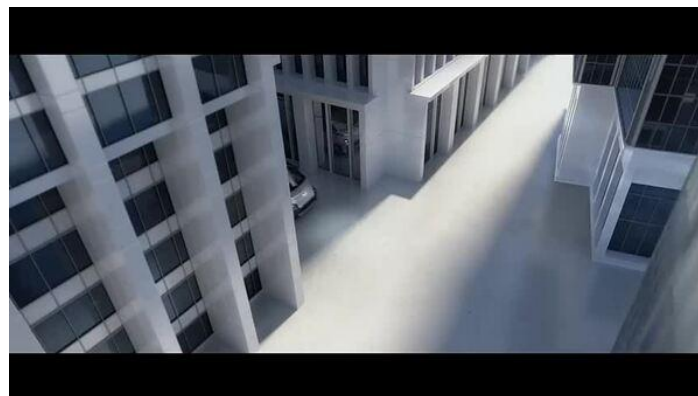


Figure 4. Air EV among city skyscrapers (00:22)

Denotative and Connotative Meaning

The denotative meaning in this frame presents an aerial shot showing a white Wuling Air EV moving through a wide, clean street flanked by two white high-rise buildings. A diagonal shadow falls from the upper-right, while no other vehicles are visible along the road. Connotatively, the small size of the car amid towering buildings highlights its agility and nimbleness as a vehicle suited to dense urban environments. The building shadows introduce a sense of dynamism and warmth, making the scene feel alive. Most notably, the absence of traffic is striking, as large Indonesian cities such as Jakarta, Surabaya, or Bandung rarely present such conditions. The clean, quiet cityscape can therefore be read as a construction of an ideal city, or urban utopia, in which Air EV operates without obstacle.

Table 4. Social Semiotic Analysis of Frame 4

Meta function	Description
Representation	This frame constitutes a Narrative Representation because it explicitly presents a material process: the car in motion. The vector is the direction of the vehicle's movement toward the depth of the frame. The actor is the car, while the goal of the journey is implied but not visible. Eriyanto (2019, p. 72) explains that in narrative representation, the actor need not be large in the visual field to carry dominant meaning. Here, the car's small scale amid large buildings reinforces its impression of agility and ease of movement.
Interaction	The high-angle shot positions the viewer symbolically above the observed object. Eriyanto (2019, p. 76) notes that a top-down camera angle traditionally conveys a sense of observer dominance over the subject. In this frame, however, that effect is inverted: rather than diminishing the vehicle, the elevated perspective emphasises how freely Air EV moves through an urban environment far larger than itself.
Composition	The two buildings on either side form a vertical frame that naturally channels the viewer's gaze toward the car in the centre. The clean, unoccupied road, free of other vehicles, makes the car the sole moving and meaningful element within the frame. Eriyanto (2019, p. 77) emphasises that the compositional function organises elements into a unified meaningful whole. Here, the deliberate absence of other elements is itself the strongest compositional choice.

Frame 5 | Timecode 00:30



Figure 5. Man walking alone in a modern business district (00:30)

Denotative and Connotative Meaning

The denotative meaning in this frame shows a formally dressed man walking alone on a street surrounded by tall glass-facade buildings. The sky is a clear, cloudless blue. The environment appears immaculate and well-ordered, devoid of the bustle typically associated with urban settings. The visual quality is too polished to represent reality, suggesting the scene is likely produced through CGI. Connotatively, this frame can be understood as a continuation of the characterisation begun in the first frame. Whereas the first frame established the figure's psychological depth through contemplation, this scene presents his social and spatial dimensions: the same figure now moves through a modern city with confident strides. Walking

alone without distraction in an expansive urban space conveys dominance over that space. The CGI quality of the environment further reinforces its aspirational nature, as if the advertisement is signalling that this is not a depiction of today's reality but rather a projection of the ideal future that is to be realised.

Table 5. Social Semiotic Analysis of Frame 5

Meta function	Description
Representation	Narrative Representation with material process: the vector is formed by the figure's footsteps moving from left to right across the frame. The actor is the man, and the destination lies beyond the frame's edge. Eriyanto (2019, p. 72) explains that in narrative representation, the actor's position within the space contributes to the meaning of the process. Here, the vast urban space dominated by a single figure reinforces a sense of ownership and authority over the city.
Interaction	A long-shot with the figure not facing the camera places the viewer in an offer position. At this distance, facial expression is unreadable; what is legible is posture and context. The viewer is not invited to empathise with the figure's emotions but rather to identify the figure as representative of a particular social class or lifestyle. This public distance renders the figure more as a symbol than an individual.
Composition	The figure is placed in the lower-right of the frame, a position not dominant in scale but made visually significant by being the sole living element. Tall buildings dominate nearly the entire frame, yet a strip of clear blue sky remains visible above them. Eriyanto (2019, p. 77) notes that the placement of participants is part of the compositional function that constructs meaning. Here, the hierarchy between the human figure and the towering infrastructure reinforces the aspirational tension at the heart of the frame.

Frame 6 | Timecode 00:38



Figure 6. Mother and daughter inside the cabin (00:38)

Denotative and Connotative Meaning

The denotative meaning in this frame shows the interior of the Wuling Air EV cabin. An adult woman dressed in white is shown driving with both hands on the steering wheel, smiling and looking forward. In the rear seat, a young girl also faces forward with a calm, slightly smiling expression. Through the right-side window, a clear blue sky is visible, while

the cabin interior is dominated by a combination of white and black tones. Connotatively, the presence of two figures, a woman as driver and a child in the back seat, creates a rich representation of the theme of family mobility. The woman driving with a relaxed smile and composed posture projects the image of an independent mother capable of managing her own mobility without assistance. The dominance of white in the cabin's interior reinforces an impression of cleanliness and comfort, while the blue sky glimpsed through the window amplifies a sense of freedom and unobstructed travel. By including the child, the advertisement also subtly introduces an ecological message, associating the choice of a cleaner vehicle with care for the future of the next generation.

Table 6. Social Semiotic Analysis of Frame 6

Meta function	Description
Representation	Narrative Representation with material process: the vector is formed by the woman's hands on the steering wheel and the forward gaze of both figures, indicating that they are heading toward a destination. This is the only frame to feature two human participants simultaneously, shifting the representational structure from the individual to the relational. The question is not only who is doing something but who is doing it together with whom (Eriyanto, 2019, p. 72).
Interaction	Neither figure faces the camera, maintaining the offer position consistent with most other frames in the advertisement. The viewer observes from outside what feels like an intimate, authentic moment. The medium shot reveals enough facial detail to register the calm and gentle smile of both figures, without feeling intrusive.
Composition	The left side of the frame is dominated by the mother figure, while the child on the right provides visual balance. The blue sky visible through the side window opens the composition and prevents the frame from feeling enclosed. Eriyanto (2019, p. 77) explains that the compositional function organises elements into a unified meaningful whole. Here, the consistent use of white across both figures' clothing and the cabin interior serves as a visual binder that unites all elements into a single clean, calm, and comfortable atmosphere.

Frame 7 | Timecode 00:46



Figure 7. Air EV driving alone on an elevated road against a blue-turquoise backdrop (00:46)

Denotative and Connotative Meaning

The denotative meaning in this frame shows a white Wuling Air EV in motion on an elevated road. The surrounding environment is filled with blue and white tones, both above in what resembles sky and below in what resembles water, with the boundary between them deliberately blurred so that neither can be clearly distinguished. The road surface is clean and smooth, and no other vehicles are visible. Connotatively, the empty road constructs an impression of free and unobstructed driving. The merging of sea and sky into a single expanse of blue presents an image of an unspoiled natural environment, functioning simultaneously as an indirect symbol of the relationship between a zero-emission vehicle and a clean, pollution-free world. This frame serves as the most explicit representation of Air EV as an environmentally responsible vehicle. However, as Eriyanto (2019, pp. 68-69) reminds us, what is not shown is as significant as what is. The absence of traffic and pollution represents an idealised driving experience that does not reflect everyday conditions.

Table 7. Social Semiotic Analysis of Frame 7

Meta function	Description
Representation	Narrative Representation: the vector is formed by the direction of the car moving from right to left. The absence of human participants makes the car the central protagonist, and the absence of other vehicles constructs an ideal image representing unobstructed, free driving. The merging of sea and sky into unified blue tones also symbolises the implicit relationship between a zero-emission vehicle and a clean, pollution-free environment.
Interaction	There are no human participants in this frame, and therefore no gaze is present. The car as an object is offered to the viewer in an offer position from a medium long-shot. The side-angle framing creates an impression as if the viewer is witnessing the journey from a distance, or even accompanying the vehicle from the other side of the road rather than merely observing it.
Composition	The elevated road cuts diagonally across the frame, generating a dynamic line that directs the eye immediately toward the car. Eriyanto (2019, p. 77) emphasises that the compositional function organises elements into a unified meaningful whole. Blue and turquoise tones dominate nearly three-quarters of the frame. The white car becomes the sole element with strong contrast against the blue, maximising its salience despite its relatively small size within the composition.

Frame 8 | Timecode 00:54



Figure 8. Woman with charger at home with text 'For an Easy Living' (00:54)

Denotative and Connotative Meaning

The denotative meaning in this frame shows a young woman dressed entirely in white, standing in a relaxed pose beside a white Wuling Air EV that is being charged inside an industrial-modern styled interior. A charging cable connects the wall unit to the side of the vehicle, while on the left wall there is a black charging device bearing the Wuling logo. In the background, an open staircase and the interior of a premium home are visible. On the left side of the frame, text reading FOR AN EASY LIVING is displayed. Connotatively, the act of charging at home represents a form of ease that is both personal and convenient, free from the queuing or uncertainty that might be associated with public charging facilities. The young woman's white outfit and relaxed posture suggest that charging the Air EV is not a complicated procedure but a natural part of daily routine. The tagline 'Easy Living' shifts the focus beyond the product, constructing a lifestyle narrative of modernity, practicality, and comfort. However, on closer inspection, the depicted home does not represent a typical dwelling. The spacious garage, elegant interior, and exclusive, high-value wall box charger indicate that the 'Easy Living' in question is tied to a particular socioeconomic class, potentially limiting the brand's imagined consumer to those with access to such facilities.

Table 8. Social Semiotic Analysis of Frame 8

Meta function	Description
Representation	Combined Representation, both narrative and conceptual-symbolic: an implicit vector is formed by the woman's body directed toward the car, suggesting a process that has just concluded or is still underway. Overall, however, the frame functions more as an illustration of the tagline 'Easy Living', constituting a conceptual-symbolic representation that expresses the value of comfortable living through the configuration of participant and object (Eriyanto, 2019, p. 73).
Interaction	The woman does not face the camera, maintaining the offer position. Her open, relaxed posture carries no sense of difficulty or effort. The viewer is positioned as an observer witnessing how naturally and effortlessly the act of charging takes place. The medium long-shot reveals the full body, the vehicle, and the spatial context simultaneously, making all three equally important in constructing the frame's message.
Composition	The woman on the left and the car on the right create a division of the frame that places the human and the product in an equal relational positioning. The text FOR AN EASY LIVING in the upper-left functions as a verbal attribute complementing the visual representation. Eriyanto (2019, p. 77) notes that the placement of participants and elements is part of the compositional function that constructs meaning. The premium home backdrop with its open staircase and exposed-concrete aesthetic establishes a very specific socioeconomic context, while the overall warm-neutral colour palette of grey, white, brown, and blue creates an impression of a modern future lifestyle.

Viewed across all eight frames collectively, the advertisement deploys a coordinated set of visual strategies. From the representational meta function, the advertisement alternates between narrative and conceptual representations in accordance with the message each frame is intended to convey: narrative representation with clear vectors in frames depicting movement and activity, and conceptual representation in frames presenting identity and symbolic values. From the interactive meta function, virtually all frames consistently employ the offer position, with no participant directly facing the camera. The viewer is always positioned as an observer who identifies with the situation depicted rather than as a party being directly addressed.

Camera angles vary strategically, from high-angle shots to convey the car's nimbleness in the city, immersive interior angles to induce a sense of being inside the cabin, and long-shots to construct the figure as a recognisable social type. From the compositional meta function, three recurring patterns emerge across the advertisement: high-contrast colour choices to maximise the salience of product elements, the consistent dominance of blue and white tones that connote cleanliness and modernity, and the deliberate exclusion of elements that could disrupt the aspirational image, including congestion, crowds, and infrastructure limitations.

Overall, the advertisement does not merely promote an electric vehicle: it constructs and distributes a particular value system to society like defining who constitutes the ideal consumer, what the perfect city looks like, how the human-technology relationship should be configured, and what it means to choose an electric vehicle in terms of social identity and environmental ethics. At the same time, this representation is a profoundly selective construction. The realities of urban congestion, uneven charging infrastructure, and the socioeconomic circumstances of the majority of prospective users are absent from every frame. Eriyanto's (2019) social semiotic approach proves effective in excavating these layers of visual choice, because it does not stop at asking what is shown, but continues to press toward the more fundamental question of why those particular visual choices were made and what interests they serve.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the Wuling Air EV Drive for a Green Life advertisement constructs electric mobility not merely as a transportation solution but as a symbolic representation of technological modernity, environmental responsibility, urban convenience, and an aspirational lifestyle. Through the combined use of denotative–connotative interpretation and the three visual grammar meta functions representation, interaction, and composition the eight selected frames demonstrate how meaning is systematically produced through participants, actions, gaze, camera distance and angle, colour, salience, positioning, and framing. Conceptual and narrative representations progressively connect the Air EV with reflective consumer choice, advanced technology, agile urban mobility, family comfort, environmental consciousness, and convenient home charging. For example, the technologically oriented cabin visually associates the vehicle with connectivity and a modern lifestyle, while the blue-dominated environmental sequence constructs an association between zero-emission mobility and a clean, pollution-free environment. At the same time, the advertisement presents an idealised version of electric mobility through clean urban environments, uncongested roads, and carefully designed lifestyle settings. Thus, the findings demonstrate that the advertisement operates as a cultural and ideological text in which visual choices strategically position the Wuling Air EV as part of a desirable vision of future mobility rather than simply presenting its functional characteristics. Future research is recommended to expand the scope beyond a single advertisement and eight purposively selected frames by comparing advertisements from different electric-vehicle brands, campaign periods, and cultural contexts. Comparative studies involving Wuling, BYD, Hyundai, or other EV manufacturers could determine whether representations of sustainability, technological advancement, family mobility, and aspirational lifestyles constitute common patterns in EV advertising or brand-specific communication strategies. Future studies should also incorporate other semiotic modes, including spoken

language, music, sound effects, typography, motion, and editing, because the present research concentrates primarily on visual meaning. Audience-reception studies could further examine whether viewers interpret the representational, interactive, and compositional meanings in ways consistent with the meanings identified through social semiotic analysis. In addition, mixed-method or experimental approaches may investigate how particular visual strategies influence perceptions of environmental responsibility, brand image, purchase intention, and attitudes toward electric mobility. Such extensions would provide a more comprehensive understanding of how EV advertising constructs sustainability discourse and how these representations are subsequently interpreted and negotiated by consumers.

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