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**English media idioms of US confrontations across cultures:**  
The Charleston Massacre - white supremacy vs African American dignity

The frequent fatal shooting in the US of unarmed black men by white police officers is rooted in the longstanding issue of racial disparities – systemic racism being a persistent major phenomenon in the history of the nation, as the protests organized by the ‘Black Lives Matter’ movement and other movements have successfully foregrounded, also thanks to the attention of the media.

A specific multimodal lexicon, with accompanying gestures, appears to be unfolding to give voice to nationwide protests, rioting (‘Hands up, don’t shoot!’ ‘I can’t breathe’, etc.) and debates which, through the contemporary media, are also audible abroad.

This continuing racial confrontation, grounded in the unsettled issue of racial profiling, displays an intrinsically cross-cultural confrontation between black consciousness vs. the allegedly unconscious ‘white privilege’, or, on the illegal side, ‘white supremacy’, which are starkly opposing visions/cultures within the same nation, both voiced through the same language.

In this volatile contrast, a key event was the 2015 Charleston Church Massacre, which is the focus of this study. On the evening of June 17, 2015, Dylann S. Roof, a white man, killed nine black people at Mother Emanuel Church in that city. Instead of words of hostility and vengeance, the language of forgiveness and healing was immediately spoken in the following media-enhanced conversation.

A new transformative language of racial confrontation, with its own lexicogrammar (Hasan 1987; Berber Sardinha 2012), seems to be developing mainly through the media (van Dijk 1991, 2008; Fairclough 1995, Fairclough, Mulderrig and R. Wodak 2011). The present study aims to identify this context-specific, re-semiotized English lexicon and comment on some of its traits from a cross-cultural discourse-historical perspective (Wodak and Reisigl 2015).