Streszczenie w języku angielskim

The current PhD dissertation is devoted to the ethnosemantics of the concept of happiness in American English and Polish. Its main purpose is to elicit and abstract the definitions of happiness in both languages which appear to be the cultural modifications of the universal understanding of the concept. Although the core of the concept of happiness lies in its universal meaning supported by philosophical doctrines, it is the peripheries of the notion in both languages that constitute the ethnosemantics of the concept *happiness* in American English and Polish which are based on respective American and Polish culture.

It seems clear that the semantics of the notion of happiness in respective American English and Polish is culture-specific. Indeed, culture plays a tremendous role in the present work since it enables to semantically specify the analysed concept and contributes to some novelty of the dissertation. The notion of happiness is approached from a cultural point of view, namely on the basis of Geert Hofstede's (1994) model of cultural diversity which refers to such cultural variables as large vs small power distance, individualism vs collectivism, masculinity vs femininity and high vs low uncertainty avoidance.

Clearly enough, the universal approach to the semantics of happiness appears insufficient today in a world of intercommunicative processes between people of different cultural backgrounds and different native languages. It turns out that their understanding of various universal concepts including happiness is by no means the same. Furthermore, such the *status quo* and ignorance of particularistic variations of meaning may lead to frequent misunderstandings between interlocutors simply because their own perception of reality proves to be predominantly culture-specific.

Although there exist plenty of attempts to define the concept of happiness which highlight a number of types of happiness, Wierzbicka (1971: 228) postulates that there is only one definition of happiness, that is, happiness is something everyone desires to achieve, and if someone was happy, they felt something what everyone wanted to feel. This, paradoxically, does not define the concept of happiness in a clear or precise way: to the contrary, such a definition of the notion starts a broad discussion about the semantics of happiness in American English and Polish.

The first chapter depicts the methodology of the thesis which focuses on scientific syncretism and scholarly reductionism. The former relates to cognitive semantics exploited within the linguistic worldview with some basic elements of a structural description of reality. The research data encompasses American and Polish aphorisms and other literary excerpts regarding happiness as well as American and Polish surveys on happiness. In order to assure the academic reliability of the research, 241 American respondents and 273 Polish interviewees constitute 514 subjects of the surveys conducted in the USA and in Poland from April 2012 to August 2015. The latter makes reference to a link between language and culture and strictly reduces the analysis to the model of cultural diversity posited by Hofstede (1994), as mentioned above.

One should bear in mind that the main idea of the current research is based on the Sapir-Whorf' hypothesis which postulates that language as a social phenomenon and a system in which we are raised and taught to think since our birth shapes the way we perceive the reality.[1] Consequently, different language systems which reflect their different societies make people think and view the world in a different way[2] (Sapir 1949, Whorf 1956). Naturally, it leads to a conclusion that people of different cultural background conceptualise and express their thoughts linguistically in a different way, as Schaff (1967: 99) notices. Furthermore, Miklaszewska (2010: 120) stresses the fact that according to Sapir language serves as a guide through social reality as well as a factor influencing people's conceptualisation and cognitive process in general. It must be clearly stressed at this point that the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis serves as a base and lies in the understanding and development of the current work.

Thus, as mentioned before, the main aim of the present thesis is to reflect and depict a culture-specific concept of happiness in American English and Polish, that is, to describe linguistic pictures of happiness in both languages from a cross-cultural communication perspective. The dissertation is to clearly show and substantiate the existence of universals and particularities with regard to various conceptual notions on the basis of happiness. As a matter of fact, in order to achieve this highly intricate purpose, it seems to be indispensable to refer and to explore some specific aspects of

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[1] This idea is commonly known in linguistics as linguistic determinism.

[2] This postulate gives rise to linguistic relativism.

linguistic reality in American and Polish cultures by means of eliciting answers to the following questions:

a) How do Americans and Poles conceptualise happiness, or in other words, how do they perceive, comprehend and linguistically express the concept of happiness?

b) What are the metaphorical dimensions of the conceptualisation of happiness in the two languages and cultures?

c) How do both nationalities value happiness and what is their hierarchy of values concerning the concept of happiness?

d) What semantic fields do Americans and Poles create with regard to the concept of happiness?

e) How do the different age groups of both nationalities define the concept of happiness and what are the differences in viewing the concept by them?

f) What sociolinguistic factors matter in the conceptualisation of the concept of happiness in both languages?

g) Does culture affect the use of language of a given ethnic group?

h) What is the difference between Americans and Poles in defining the concept of happiness as for the power distance dimension of cultural variability?

i) To what extent do both nationalities differ in the conceptualisation of happiness in terms of the individuality vs collectivism criterion of cultural diversity?

j) How much do Americans and Poles vary in viewing happiness with regard to the masculinity vs femininity dimension of cultural variability?

k) To what degree are Americans different from their Polish counterparts in the perception of happiness concerning the uncertainty avoidance dimension of cultural diversity?

l) What is the influence of American culture on Polish one in the era of globalisation and postmodernity regarding the concept of happiness in Polish?

m) Is it possible to provide a reliable and universally acknowledged definition of happiness regardless of culture-specific determinants existing both in American English and Polish?

It is obvious that the essential task of the thesis is concerned with the semantics of happiness: however, sociometric factors such as the ethnic group, gender, age, education or the place of living will play a supportive yet significant role in the overall research. Consequently, the current project is intended to be carried out within the framework and rules of ethnolinguistics[3] or cultural linguistics[4], both of which encompasses language, man and culture as fundamental subjects of academic study.

In addition, the semantic analysis of the chosen American and Polish aphorisms and other literary extracts alongside with the surveys' data on happiness collected from the questionnaires completed by Americans and Poles will be made with the aid of my own typology of human values, being, de facto, a modification of Puzynina's (1992) and Jedliński's (2000) ones. As a result, for the purpose of the present work human values are divided into the following axiological types:

1) transcendental (God, religion, faith)

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[3] This term is coined by the Lublin School of Linguistics with such recognised scholars as Jerzy Bartmiński (1990, 2006) or Ryszard Tokarski (1990, 1995) who explore the relation between language and culture.

[4] Anusiewicz (1994, 1998) tends to use this name for studying the relations between language and culture.

2) spiritual (love, friendship)

3) moral (honour, justice, faithfulness, altruism, honesty, patriotism, truth)

4) interpersonal (family, friends, socialising)

5) professional (work, career)

6) cognitive (wisdom, knowledge)

7) esthetic (beauty, ugliness, art)

8) personal (talent, courage, smartness, ambition)

9) prestigious (fame, education, high social status)

10) hedonistic (sex, fun, contentment, joy)

11) vital (life, health)

12) materialistic (money, well-being, wealth).

Obviously, three tools of the research, that is, English and Polish dictionary definitions of happiness, American and Polish aphorisms, quotations and literary extracts about happiness and the surveys conducted in English and Polish, applying cognitive strategies of categorisation, metaphor and target vs source domains as well as axiological mechanisms are believed to be necessary and efficient to reveal the essence of the concept of happiness in American English and Polish from a cultural perspective.

The second chapter refers to different levels of understanding the concept of happiness. To begin with, philosophy as part of humanities is believed to be a significant outcome of two dimensions, that is culture and civilisation. For instance, American and Polish cultures belong to Western civilisation which promotes a set of universal values that result from Greek, Roman and Christian philosophical ethics and are expressed by means of language. As mentioned earlier, Hofstede (1994) claims that culture is the software of the mind, and considerably affects people's thinking and their linguistic understanding of the universal and abstract concept of happiness which becomes language- and culture-specific. As a result, there are conspicuous differences in viewing the concept in national cultures as well as in its expression in national languages.

Moreover, as posited by Hofstede (1994: 8-9) the difference between particular cultures are due to different systems of values proper to each of them. They do not appear at random but, as mentioned earlier, form patterns with an implicit hierarchy and can be ranked into four primary dimensions of cultural diversity: large vs small power

distance, individualism vs collectivism, masculinity vs femininity, high vs low uncertainty avoidance. Therefore, the order of values followed by a given ethnic group alongside with a dimension of cultural variable someone's culture belongs to determines people's final perception of particular universal concepts. Following Hofstede's (1994) postulate, it must be clearly stated that culture as a software of people's mind explains and clarifies the way people view reality, including the notion of happiness in particular culture communities.
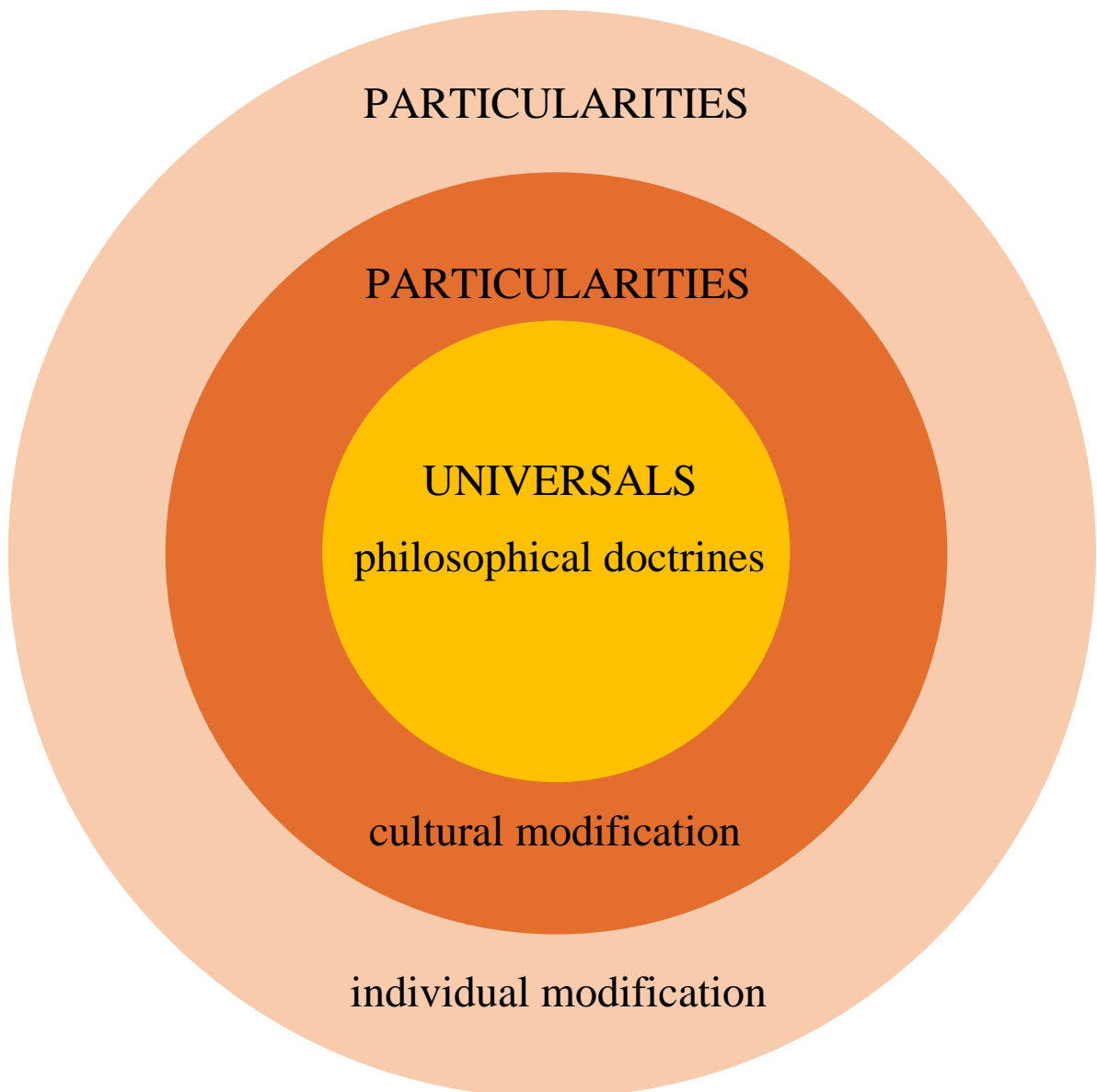

Fig. 2. The centre and peripheries of the concept of happiness (Paduch 2011: 62)

The already mentioned dependence among culture, philosophy and language ascribed to the concept of happiness can be illustrated in the onion graph above (**Fig. 2**).

It shows a distinction between its two complementary spheres – centre and peripheries, where the latter encompasses culture-specific and individual components.

The third chapter is wholly concerned with the categorisation, metaphorisation and axiology of the concept of happiness in American culture: all the findings and assumptions are possible to be made due to the American respondents who provided the necessary data for the linguistic analysis and semantic interpretation. In contrast to the universal viewing of the analysed concept, the semantic analysis of the American corpus concerning the notion of happiness is to reveal the American particularity in understanding and depicting the emotion due to a system of values typical of American culture and American mental programming. Here are instances of how Americans conceptualise *happiness*:

Happiness is lots of money.
I associate happiness with prosperity in life.
I am happy when I do well in my work.
A happy person is someone who is at comfort in their own space and with the environment that surrounds them.
The most vital condition of happiness is a sense of achievement.
My happiness depends on confidence and positivity towards everyday life.
Material things make me happy.
To be happy, I go to the park and just enjoy the sunlight and fresh air.
What I appreciate most in my life is Sunday roast.

Taking into account all the analysis made above, the categorisation of the concept of happiness in American English includes 31 conceptual categories including the category of *other* through which the American respondents view the notion, and this can be visualised in the following graph:[5]

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[5] Please note that the percentage calculations attached to the categories through which American respondents understand the concept of happiness have been based on a multiple choice basis, and that is why the constituent results of all the categories cannot be summed up and make up the ultimate sum of 100 per cent. This also applies to the percentage results of the categorisation of the concept of happiness in Polish, presented in the next chapter.

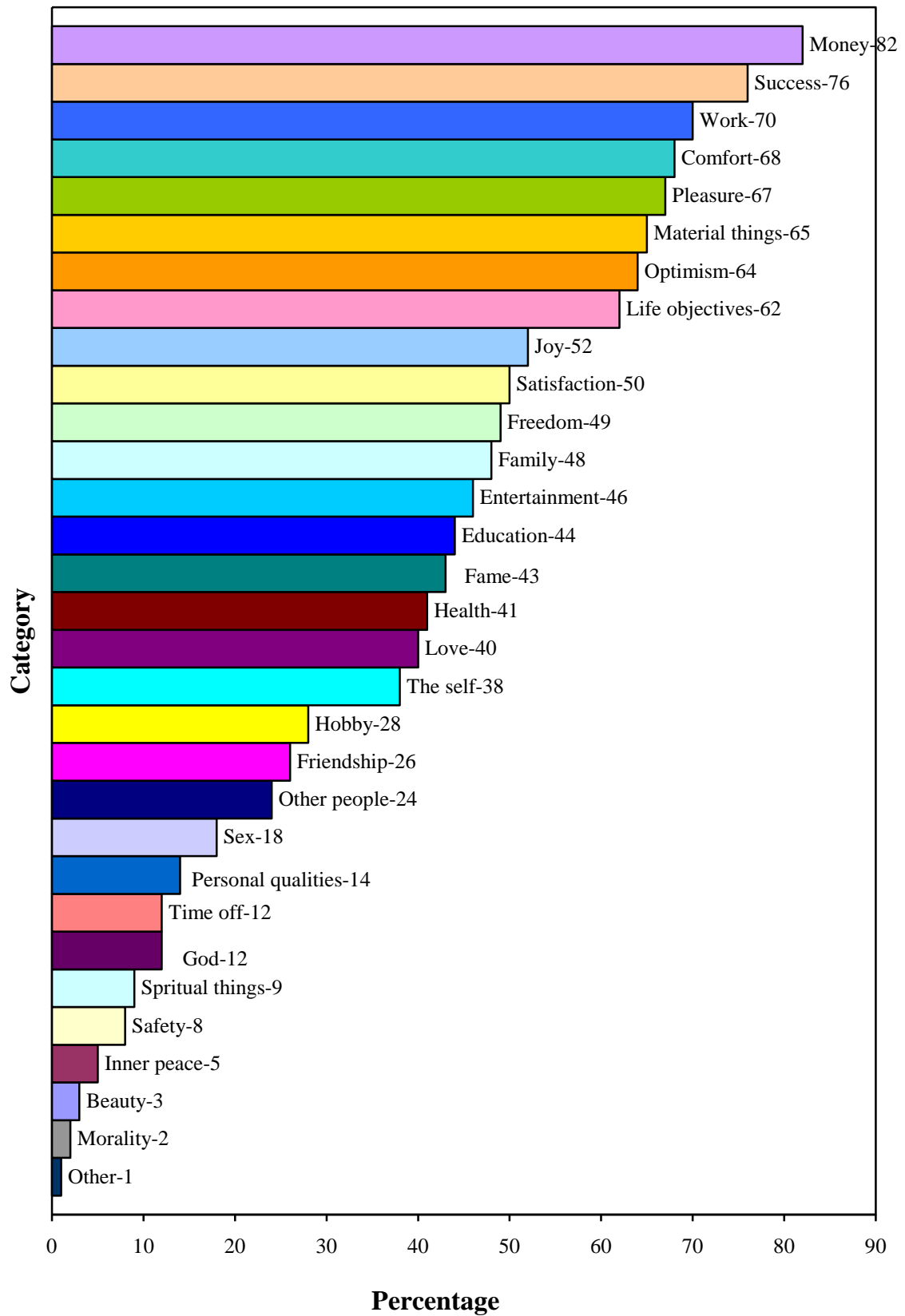# Categorisation of Happiness in American English

Fig. 4. Categorisation of the concept of happiness in American English

In short, the survey on happiness conducted among the American respondents reveals that Americans conceptualise the notion by dint of ten basic metaphorical categories: the American respondents' preferences in understanding the concept of happiness through metaphorical concepts can be indicated by the following graph:
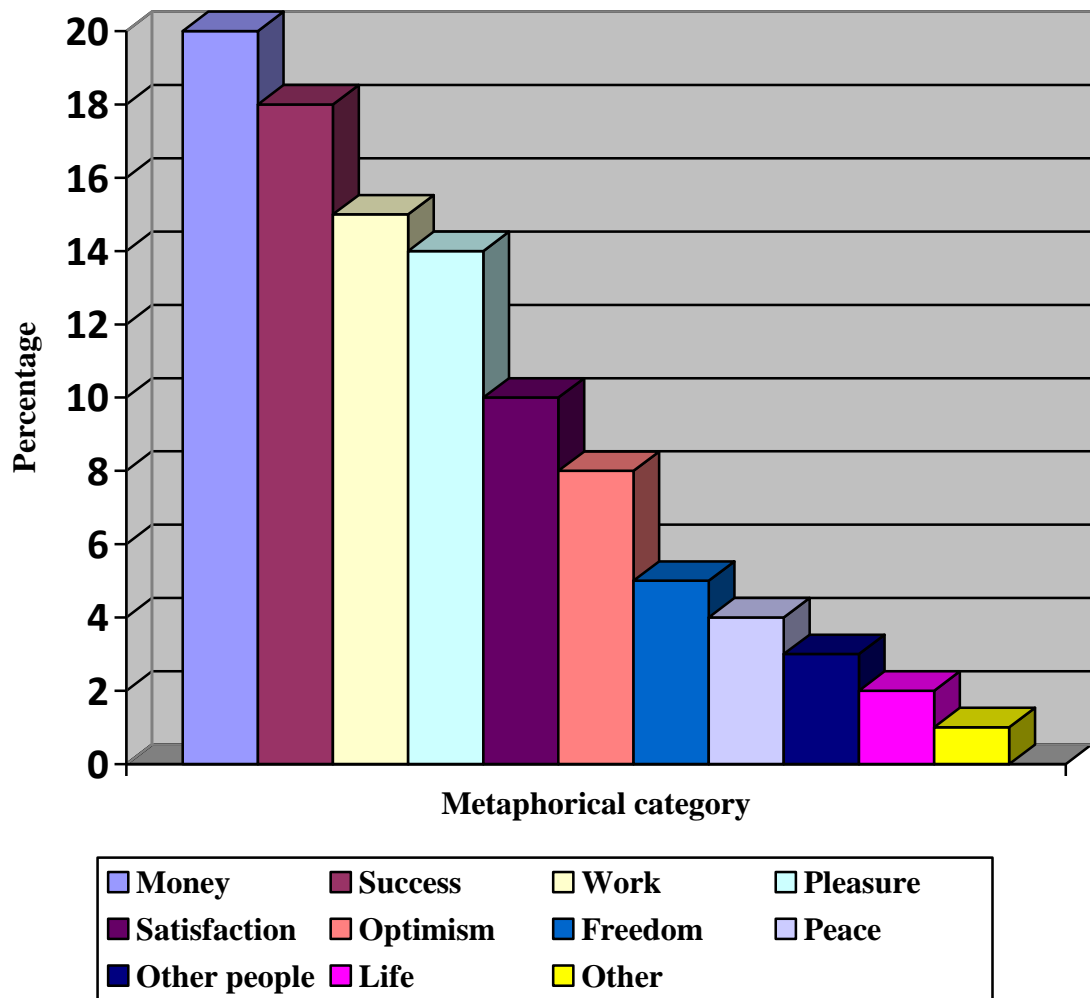

Fig. 6. Metaphorisation of the concept of happiness in American English

Here are some examples of metaphorical definitions of *happiness* in American English:

Happiness is a lucrative job.
Happiness is accomplishing goals in one's life.
Happiness is a professional career.
Happiness is being productive.
Happiness is a bottle of sparkling wine in the fridge at all times.

Happiness is everything what makes you free.

Happiness is a smooth sailing with no drama or worries.

Happiness is having the person you love with you.

The survey proves that 75 per cent of Americans think and understand the concept of happiness in a metaphorical way making up a set of source-target domains relations which supplement the semantics of happiness with regard to American society.

Needless to say, the American respondents depict the concept of happiness based on their axiological hierarchy and conceptualise the emotion in accordance with American cultural values. The set of values typical of American culture guides the life of Americans, inspires their actions and outlines their priorities and life objectives. The mind of American people is programmed with these values which affect not only their mind but also the language they tend to use. Thus, the axiological hierarchy of happiness in American English can be illustrated by the following graph:
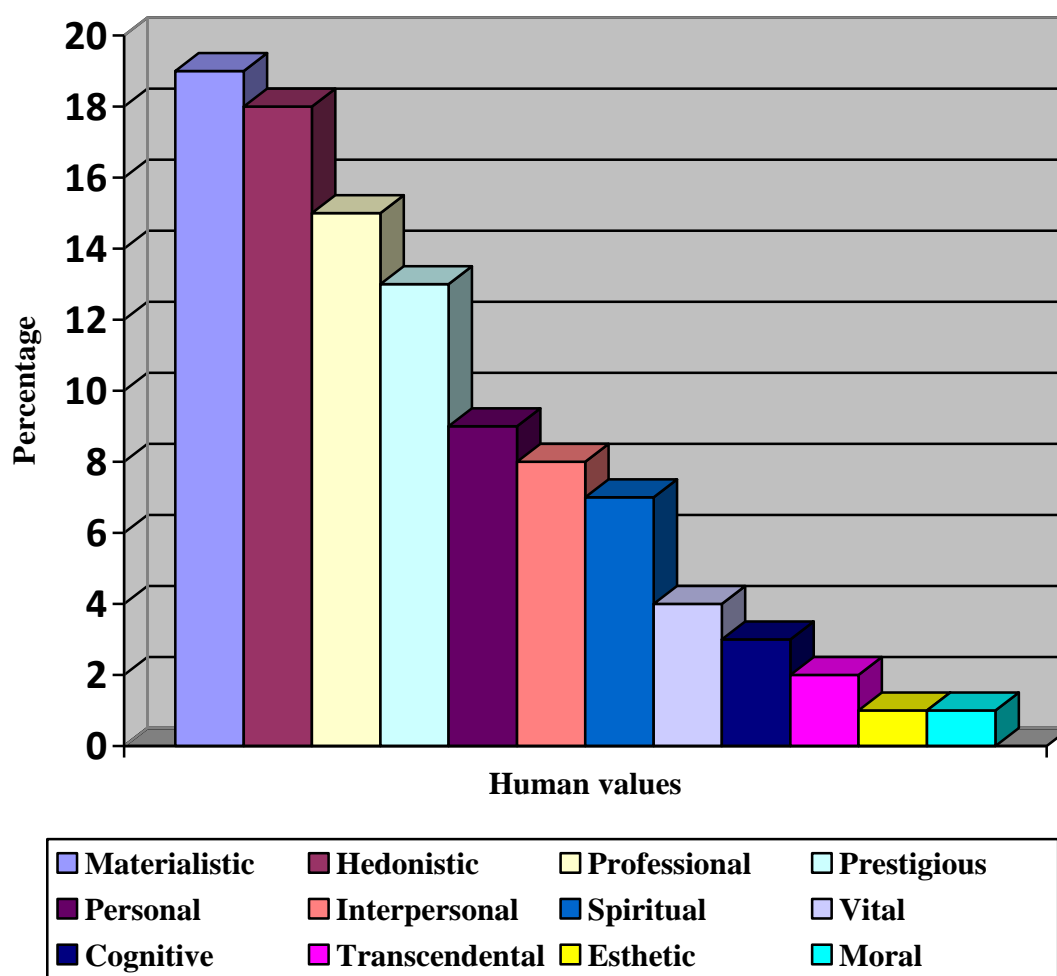
Fig. 22. Axiological hierarchy of Americans with regard to the concept of happiness

Chapter Four is entirely devoted to the conceptualisation of happiness in Polish based on empirical material, and therefore any conclusions and findings made should be treated as of *a posteriori* nature and of pragmatic value. Here are some definitions of happiness collected from the Polish subjects:

> *Happiness is a loving and caring family.*[6]
> *I associate happiness with a lack of healthy problems.*
> *I am happy when I am really in love.*
> *A happy person is somebody who has a well-matched partner.*

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[6] As mentioned before, any examples of Polish conceptualisation of the concept of happiness presented in Chapter Four have been translated from Polish into English by the author of the dissertation.

My happiness depends on my friends.

A winning ticket in a lottery could make me happy.

The most crucial aspect of happiness is a permanent dream job.

The accomplished goals make me happy.

To be happy, I pray.

What I value most in life is religion.

On the basis of the collected data, a classification of the 23 categories, including the category of *other*, through which Poles perceive happiness can be illustrated in the graph below:
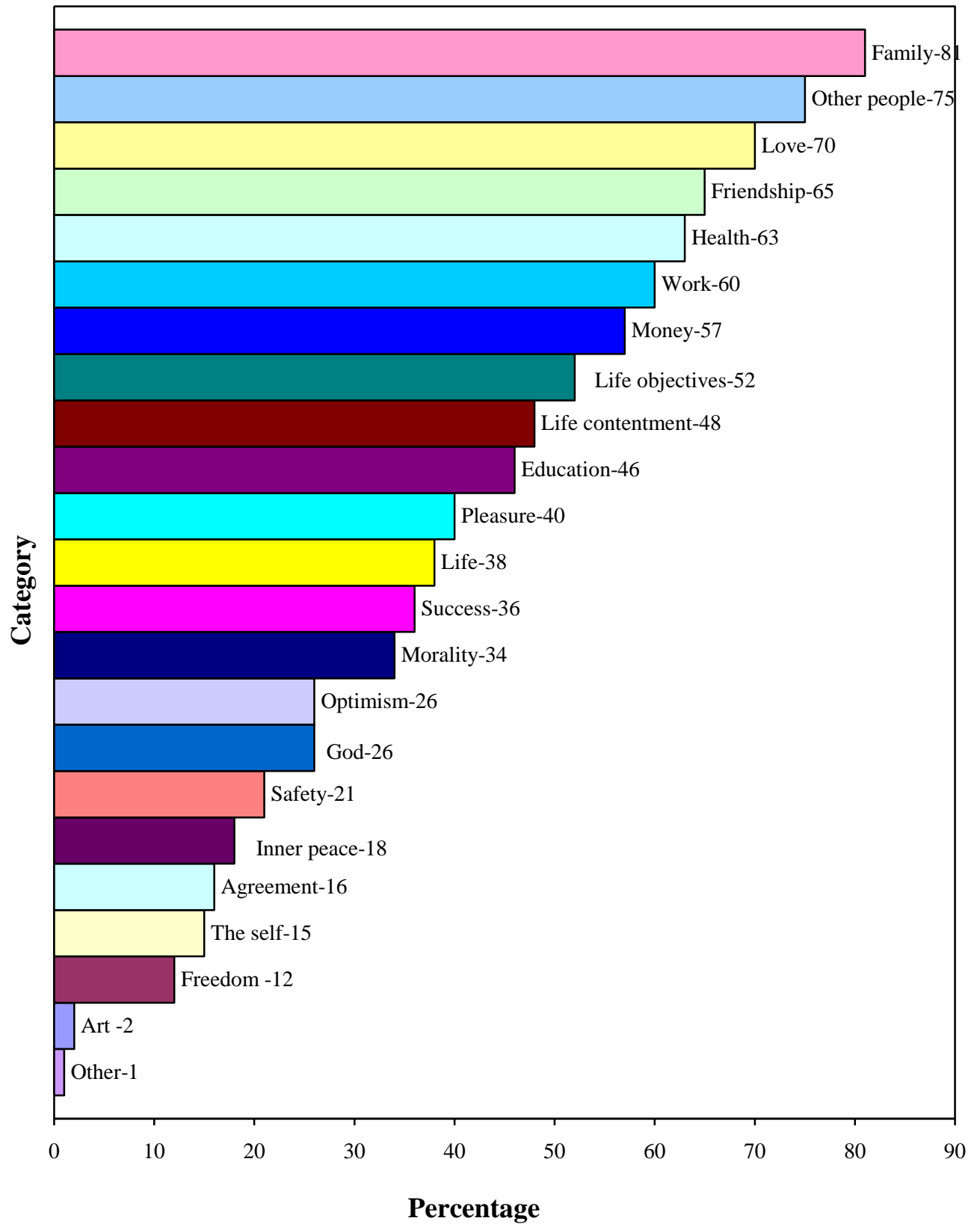
Categorisation of Happiness in Polish

Fig.26. Categorisation of the concept of happiness in Polish

Interestingly, around 48 per cent of the Polish respondents, when asked directly whether or not they are happy, give a positive answer, whereas 32 per cent of them admit that they are not happy in their life. However, around fifteen per cent of the interviewees say that it is difficult to say if they are really happy or not. Finally, about five per cent of the Poles state that they are not sure about their happiness; in fact, they claim to be happy only sometimes or be rather happy.

Based on the data provided by the Polish respondents one can come to a conclusion that Poles conceptualise happiness metaphorically on the basis of ten major metaphorical categories. Below there are some metaphorical mappings through which Poles view their happiness:

Happiness is a loving and supportive family.
Happiness is the health of my family.
Happiness is a life full of love.
Happiness is an unexpected gift.
Happiness is prosperity.
Happiness is a comfortable flat.
Happiness is having a decent job.
Happiness is a good husband.
Happiness is a warm meal.

The graph below indicates which metaphorical categories of happiness are most popular with the Polish respondents:
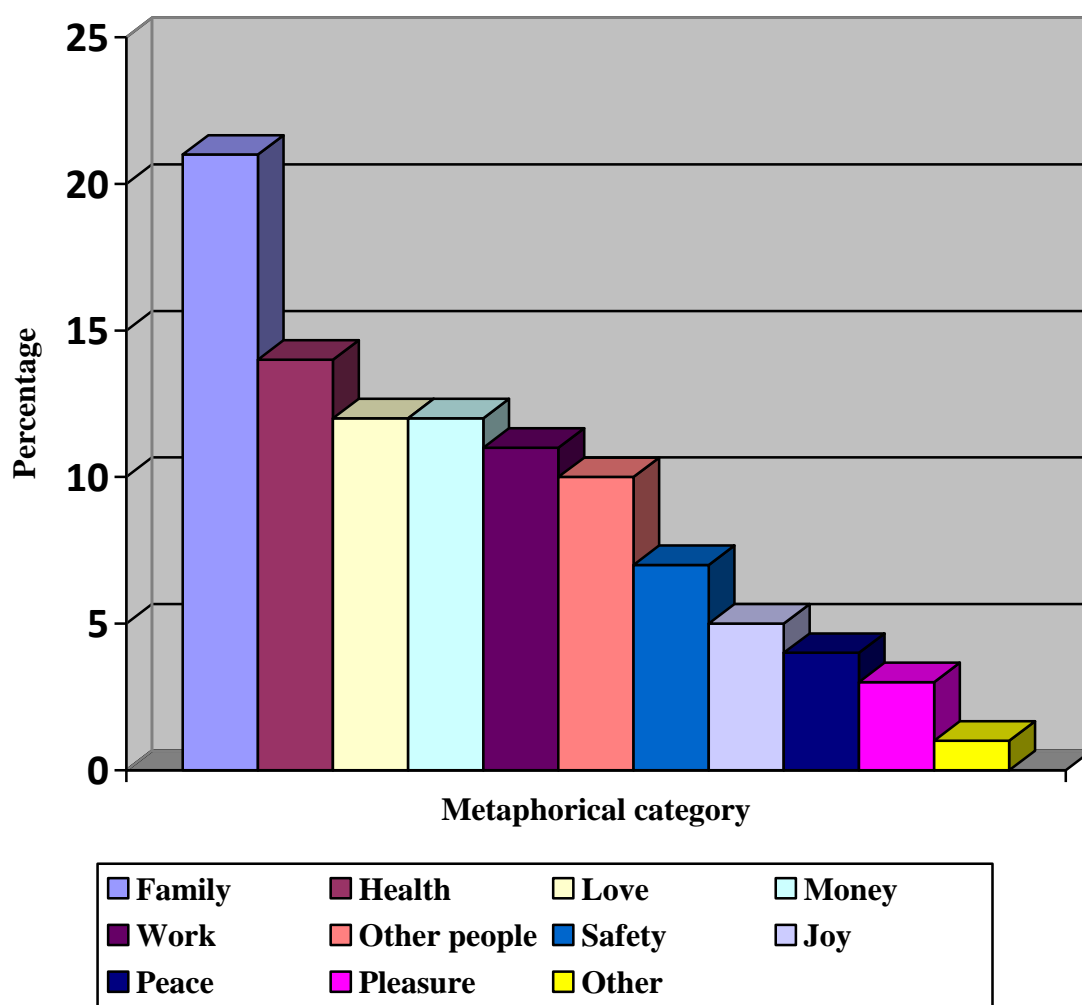
Fig.28. Metaphorisation of the concept of happiness in Polish

It should be stressed that similarly to the American respondents, the Polish interviewees conceptualise the notion of happiness via metaphorical mappings in which happiness as an emotional and target domain is understood in terms of numerous source domains whose task is to elicit and clarify the meaning of the concept. In reality, out of 273 Polish respondents 212 of them view the concept of happiness through metaphorical extension, which means that about 76 per cent of Poles think and conceptualise happiness by dint of metaphor. This only substantiates the fact that metaphor is firmly grounded in people's minds that produce metaphorical utterances more or less consciously on a large scale.

Needless to say, the categorisation and metaphorisation of happiness among the Polish respondents clearly indicates that while approaching the notion of happiness Poles view, understand and depict the emotion according to their axiological hierarchy

they follow in their life, and surely enough, this axiology reflects the dominant values of Polish culture. One should bear in mind the fact that Poles conceptualise happiness via values which have been created by Polish culture, that is by Polish people who belong to a particular ethnic group called Poland. Clearly enough, it is Poles that follow a set of values, view the concept of happiness, and generate certain statements based on this particular axiological system. Thus, the axiological hierarchy of happiness in Polish can be illustrated by the following graph:
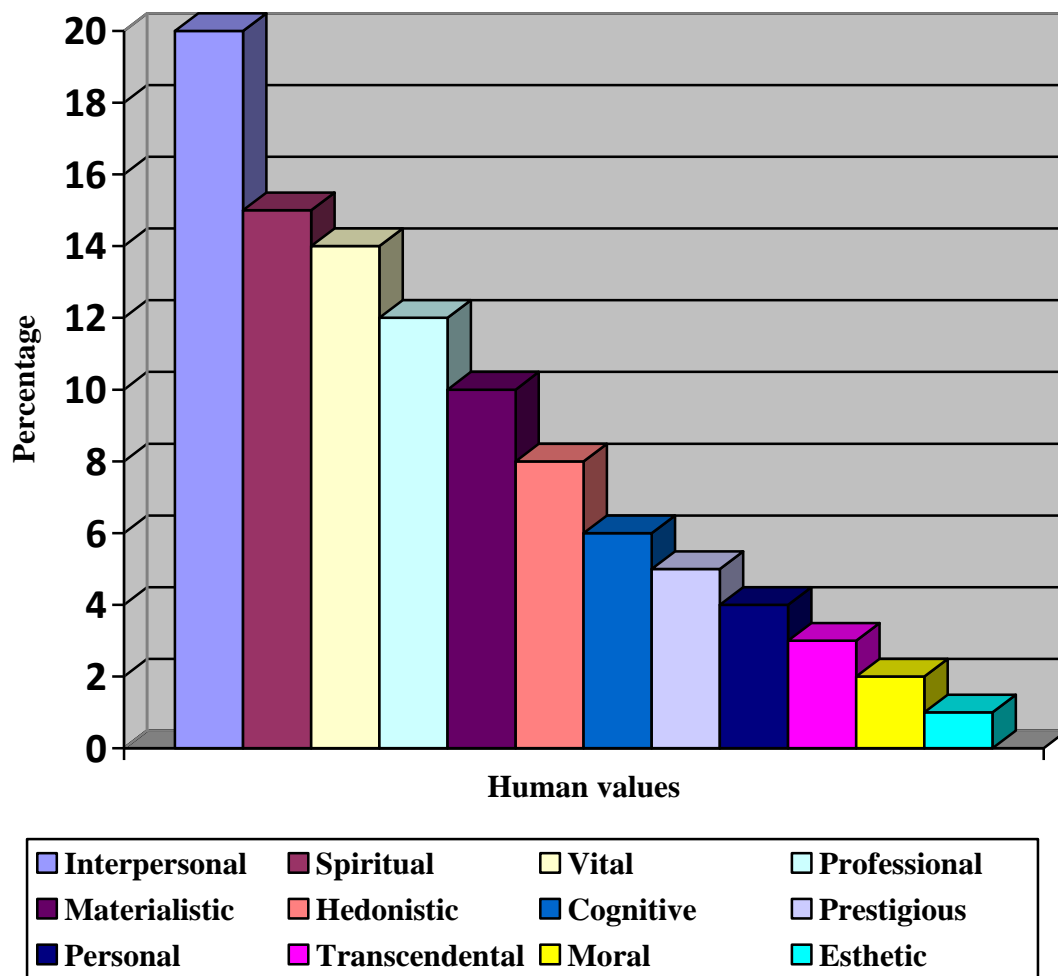

Fig.44. Axiological hierarchy of Poles with regard to the concept of happiness

The axiological analysis of the conceptualisation of happiness in Polish reveals that Poles give priority to interpersonal, spiritual, vital and professional values while defining the semantics of happiness. Surely, such an order of importance indicated by the Polish respondents highlights cultural tendencies of Polish society concerning

axiological preferences. Also, this shows what human values dominate the "Polish mind" designed and formed by Polish culture. Here are a few linguistic manifestations of this sort:

> *Happiness is being aware of having the most precious things in life: love,*
> *a family and friends.*
> *I associate happiness with good health of my family and friends.*
> *I am happy when I am really in love.*
> *A happy person is someone who is satisfied with their job.*
> *The most important factor of happiness is being healthy and surrounded by*
> *close relatives and friends.*
> *My happiness depends on my boss at work.*
> *Success in family and professional life could make me happy.*
> *To be happy, I am undergoing medical treatment.*
> *What I value most in my life is the love of another person.*

The last chapter of the present dissertation is intended to highlight the most crucial and conspicuous values of respective American and Polish culture in regard to the semantics of the concept of happiness in American English and Polish.

As a matter of fact, both the American aphorisms and other text data alongside with the linguistic corpus of empirical data regarding the concept of happiness substantiate that the most central human values in American culture are certainly materialistic, professional and hedonistic ones and as such they define the semantics of happiness in American English giving rise to a code of happiness typical of American culture, which could be called a pragmatic code of happiness in American English. It should encompass five major human values found in American culture that have a huge impact on the semantics of the concept of happiness in American English, namely money, work, success, comfort and pleasure. All the human values overlap, prove to be inseparable and are dependent on one another, forming a specific circle of happiness in American culture. This can be presented graphically as follows:
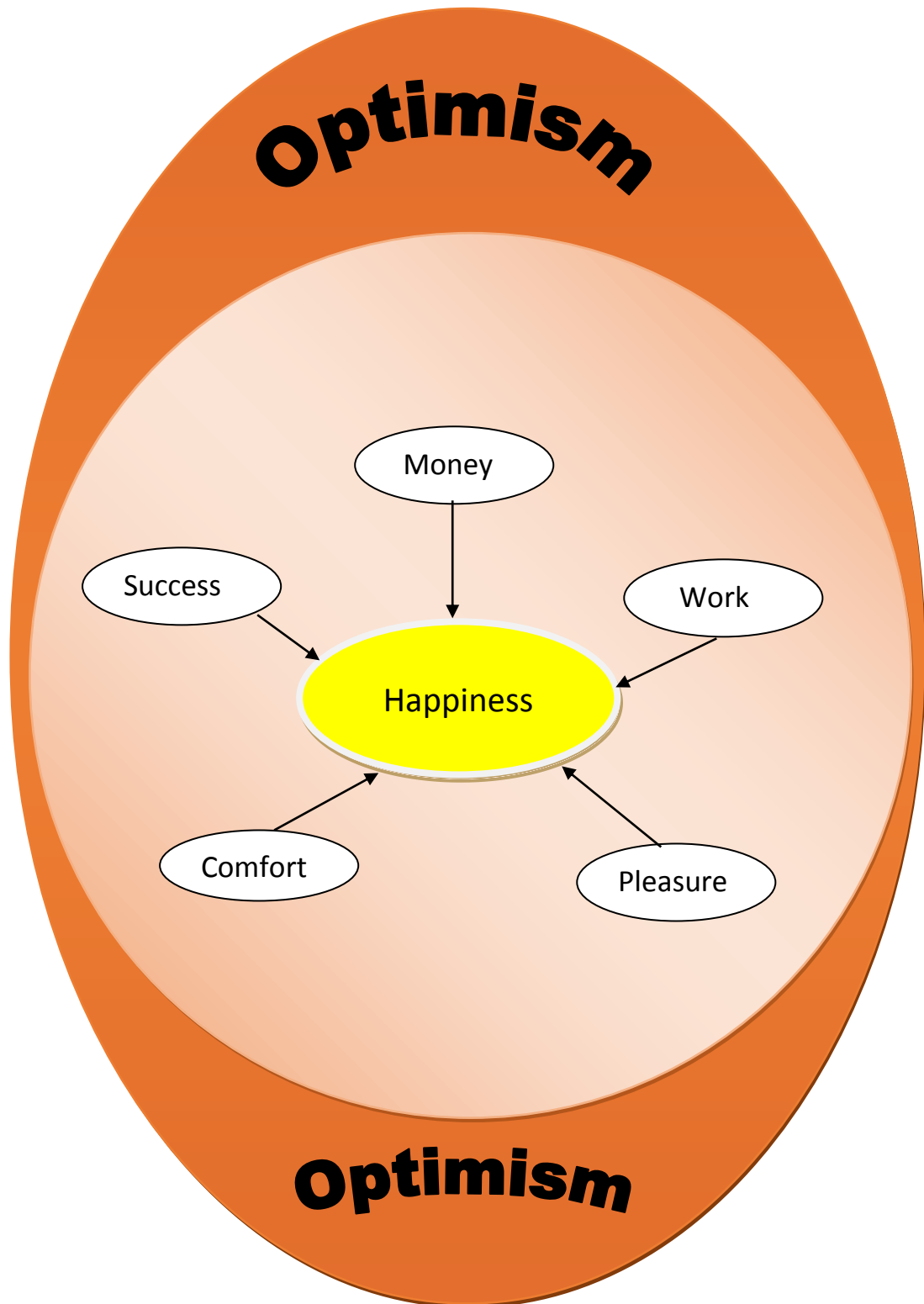
Fig.48. An American code of happiness

However, this image of happiness in American English would be incomplete to many without a special category or rather a special value Americans are endowed with,

namely optimism. According to the respondents, 50 per cent of Americans perceive happiness through this category; yet it seems that a true value of this category is far more substantial. Optimism and an optimistic attitude to life expressed by American people and easily noticed on a regular basis give them entitlement to happiness more than anyone else. Americans have an innate capacity for approaching life events in an optimistic way and with plenty of energy to overcome life hardships.

Like in the ethnosemantics of the concept of happiness in American English that is filled up with some values typical of American culture, there are several primary values in Polish culture which have a considerable effect on the semantics of happiness in Polish. In short, the text data analysis and the empirical findings with regard to the notion of happiness indicate that the semantics of happiness in Polish is designed by two essential axiological values in Polish culture, that is interpersonal and spiritual ones, supported by another two values, vital and professional. The four mentioned human values cultivated in Polish culture seem to play a crucial part in the ethnosemantics of the concept of happiness in Polish.

Unlike the ethnosemantics of happiness in American English in which the central values seem to be focused on pragmatism, the concept of happiness in Polish culture is viewed differently, and therefore the central values related to the notion vary from their American counterparts and create a relatively romantic code of happiness which is based on five major values, that is family, friends, love, health and work. However, the first three categories appear to be the absolute core of the concept of happiness in Polish, yet closely supported by the other two. The categorisation, metaphorisation and axiology of happiness in Polish depicted on the basis of the empirical data as well as Polish aphorisms justify the rightness of postulating a romantic circle of happiness in Polish that can be presented graphically in the following way:
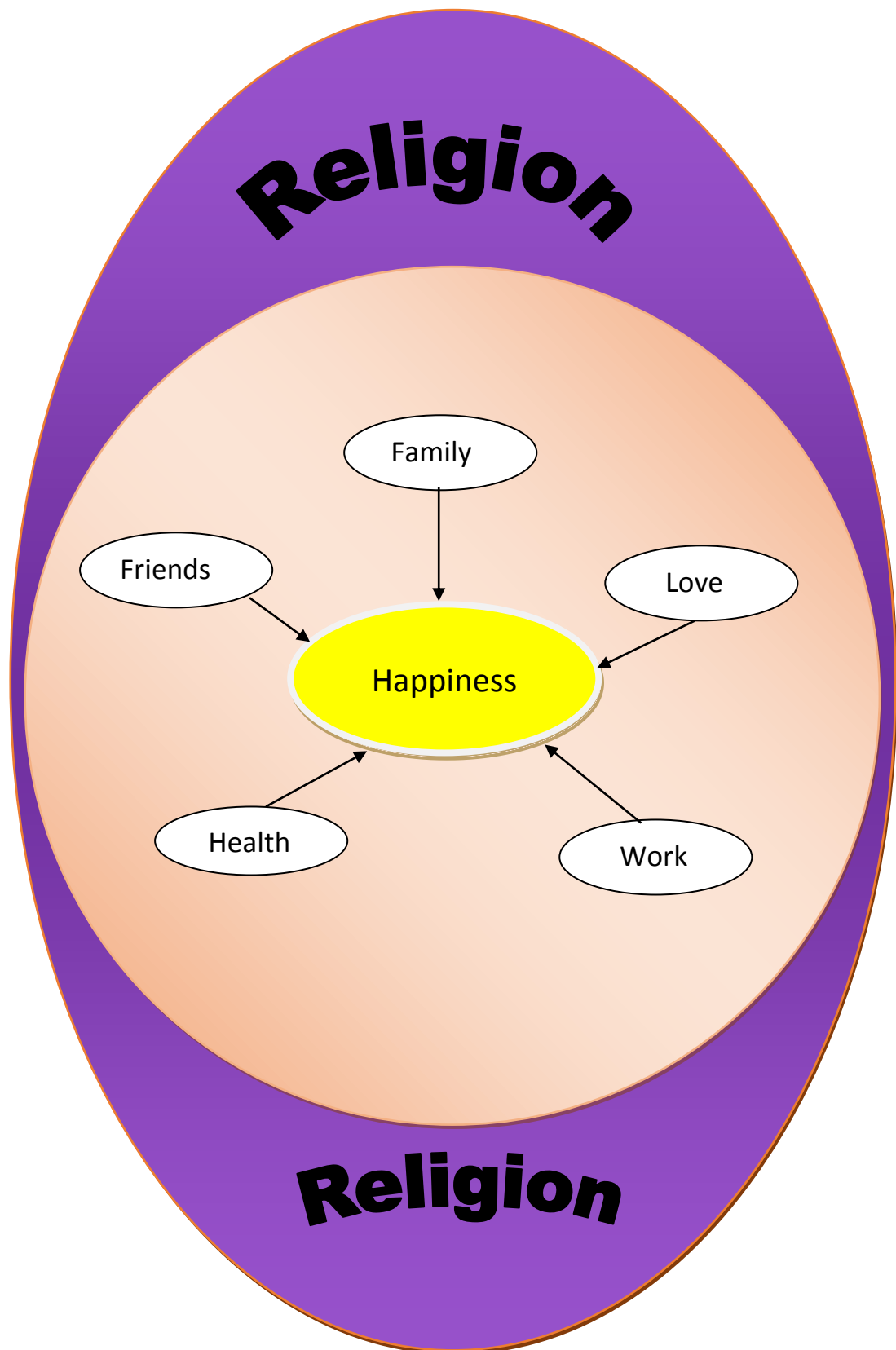
Fig. 49. A Polish code of happiness

In addition, it appears fairly crucial while talking about the concept of happiness in Polish to mention one more thing: although ignored by the respondents and consequently not included in the Polish code of happiness, religion which belongs to transcendental human values is truly believed to be of elementary importance in Polish culture[7] and in the semantics of happiness in Polish, especially when it comes to the perception of the notion by middle-aged Poles and seniors. Christian values has a long tradition in Polish history and some conspicuous social events took place hand in hand with Polish Church and Catholic faith including the pontificate of John Paul II, a Polish cardinal and archbishop of Cracow who was elected to be a pope in 1978.

It seems that the distinctive features of Americanisation like pragmatism, consumerism and a cult of money merge into the Polish social and cultural reality of the 21st century for at least two reasons. First and foremost, American culture interferes with the minds of young Poles in a worldwide process of globalisation. Secondly, young Polish people seem to be easily attracted to seductive elements of American pop culture that provoke and stimulate inexperienced members of the new democratic and capitalist society.

The present research is characterised by three features. Firstly, the findings of it positively verify the Sapir-Whorf (1949, 1956) hypothesis concerning language determinism and language relativism. A crucial issue of the thesis is a postulate that culture is a software of the mind which affects and shapes the linguistic output of Americans and Poles in their perception of the concept of happiness. Secondly, Geert Hofstede's (1994) model of cultural diversity usually applied in business sciences is successfully used in the thesis to unmask the semantic differences in the concept of happiness in American English and Polish; the findings can be hopefully exploited for intercultural communication purposes as well. Finally, the analysis of the American and Polish corpora of empirical data makes it possible to uncover the ethnosemantics of the concept of happiness in American English and Polish, as well as to provide an axiological universal definition of happiness depending on cultural determinants.

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[7] However, at this point it seems necessary to mention the fact that at the beginning of the 21st century the authority of Church is gradually decreasing in Poland and, as a result, the impact of Catholic Church on the mentality of Poles also does not appear so conspicuous as it used to be.