Why are Korean speakers so particular about relevance conditionals?

Sentences like (1) are known as Relevance Conditionals (RCs). Unlike ordinary conditionals, the antecedent does not specify the conditions under which the consequent is true. Rather, it expresses a possible situation where the utterance of the consequent is relevant (Bhatt and Pancheva 2006; Scheffler 2008; etc.).

(1) If you're hungry, there's pizza in the fridge.

RCs are also found in Korean. Unlike English, however, RCs are not always acceptable. For example, while the RCs like (2) are widely accepted as felicitous, the RCs like (3) are considered relatively worse and the acceptability varies from speaker to speaker.

(2) hanna yaksokha-ca-myen celtay ne-l sokinun il eps-ul ke-ya
one promise-EXH-if, never you-ACC deceive NML not.exist- will-DECL
'If I may make a promise, I'll never deceive you.'

(3) a. (?)pi-ka o-myen, oscang.an-ey wusan-i iss-e.
rain-NOM come-if closet.inside-at umbrella-NOM exist-DECL.
'If it rains, there's an umbrella in the closet.'

b. %ipen cwumal-ey hankaha-myen, caymissnun yenghwa sanyenghay.
this weekend-at not.busy-if, interesting movie on.show
'If you are free this weekend, there's an interesting movie on.'

c. *molu-si-myen, hankukcencayng-un 1950-nyen-ey ilenass-ta.
don't.know-HON-if the.Korean.war-Top 1950-year-in break.out-DECL
'If you didn't know, the Korean war began in 1950.'

In this presentation, I propose an analysis of Korean RCs, regarding their peculiar distributions. I argue that, as was the case with Japanese (Shizawa, 2011) or English (Franke, 2007), Korean RCs are divided into two types. First, in Type2 RCs like (2), the antecedent is understood as an explicitly expressed essential condition, one of the constitutive rules of speech-acts in Searle (1965, 1969). For example, the antecedent in (2), which includes a speech-act word *yaksokha-* 'promise', expresses the speaker's intention that the following utterance will be presented as committing the speaker to do the act. This is exactly what Searle's essential condition says. In English, conditionals like 'if I may say so, ...' were claimed to relate to communicative rules in some fashion (Franke, 2007). Thus, the antecedent in Type2 modifies the following speech-act by overtly spelling out the essential condition.

In Type1 RCs like (3), which seems to correspond to Franke's *intelligibility conditionals*, the antecedent modifies the primary speech-act of the consequent, which can be derived from the literal statement (i.e. secondary speech-act) of the consequent, in the sense of Searle (1985). For example, in (3a), the primary illocutionary act of the consequent must be COMMEND like "Take that umbrella!", and the antecedent specifies the condition (i.e. rain) for the primary COMMEND act. In this way, Type1 RCs (the seemingly relevance conditionals) count as conditionalized imperatives. If it is difficult for the hearer to figure out the primary illocution, the sentence is hardly acceptable. For example, (3c) is infelicitous because it is hard to determine what the primary illocution is. (3b) is slightly better than (3c). Although the hearer doesn't know exactly what the primary illocution is, at least he can infer that it must be some kind of suggestion, e.g. "Let's go to the movies!" or "See the movie!"

The number of words: 500

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