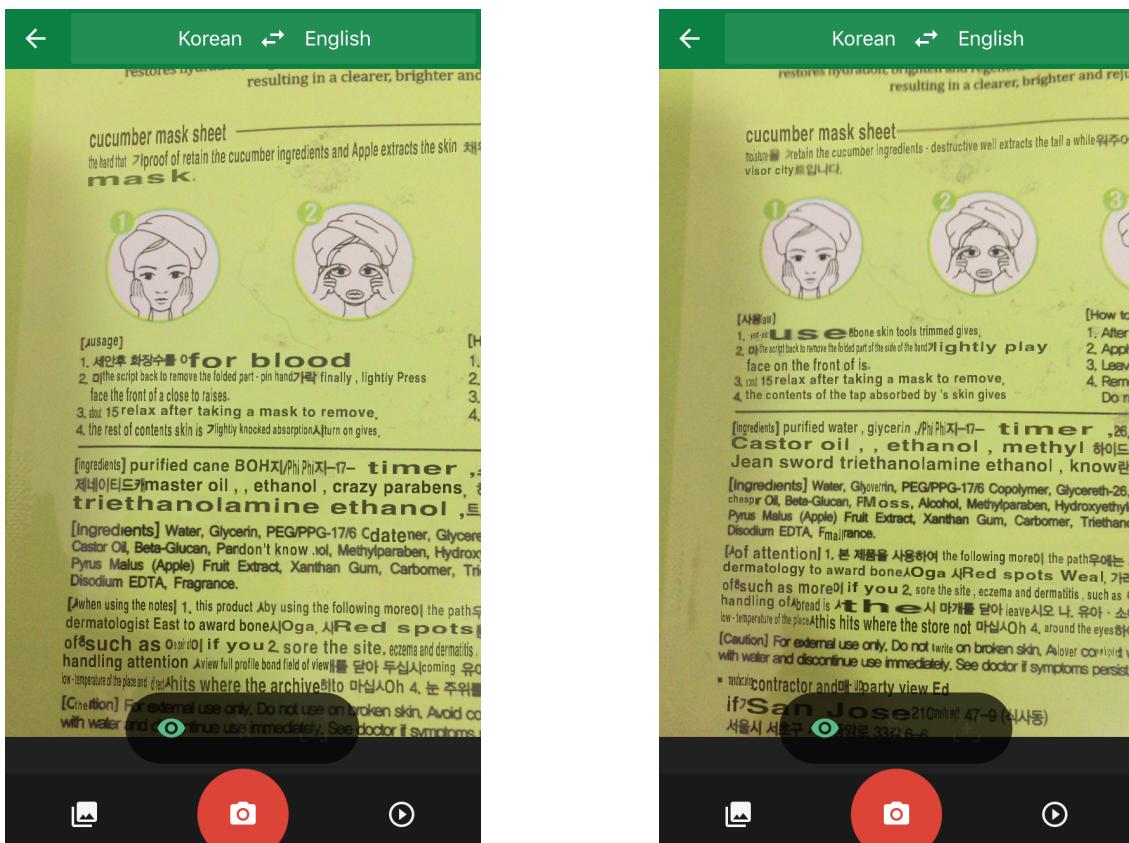


(Above)

Charcoal nose mask gets translated into just nose (which to be fair is at least the right body part) or just laughing. Also the word within the red bubble becomes “subtitle”! Not very successful.

(Below)

A cucumber face mask, where instruction 1 should read “After cleansing, dry face thoroughly” but instead gets translated into “for blood” or “use bone skin tools trimmed gives,”. Both of which make absolutely no sense and sound somewhat terrifying. Not even close to successful.



Discussion

Google translate has a smartphone app that allows users to hold their phone up to text in a foreign language and translate it in real time. The translated word gets overlaid with its translation. The most effective use that this technology posses is being able to translate simple words or instructions — such as “stop” or “exit”. When asking the app to translate an entire sentence, this is when the effectiveness significantly reduces. Perhaps a tourist could use this app for signs but in places like America, signs that require attention usually have a translation for popular languages underneath or visual cues. Sentences are already a bit complex for google translate to handle when manually entered into their translator but when reading live text the app must also take into account lighting, font style, and perhaps wear in signs that can cause some letters to fall off.

If google translate was running in AR at its current state there would be a couple of pros but mostly cons. A large con would be that it takes a while to translate and when moving the app itself tends to lag. Therefore if someone was walking down the street, depending on how far away they are from the text or any lighting issues, the words could constantly be re-translating which would be an inconvenience at the least. Another con would be that mistranslated text could cause serious health or safety hazards. Users would expect the app to be accurate and trust it blindly.

Pros are that simple things, such as stop signs or restroom signs would be easily translated. The issue with immediately translating and not allowing the user to see the original word is that the user never then learns the language. Words like stop and restroom can be translated once and if the user wants they should be able to toggle it on or off. Otherwise what reason would anyone have for learning another language if they can just translate it in real time? I think if google translate made it to AR there would need to be some indication of what words are translated and perhaps to aid the user in learning the new words (by, for example, showing the pronunciation of the word). This way users are wary of translated words and the usefulness of learning another language is not lost, as it is made easier and simpler for the user to learn by hearing things like pronunciation.

An important thing to remember is not everything can be translated. There are idioms or euphemisms in languages that only make sense in context of the actual language it was created in.