

Preparation of Hexafluoroacetone by Vapor Phase Oxidation
of Hexafluoropropene

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Hexafluoroacetone was readily formed by circulating a gaseous mixture of hexafluoropropene and oxygen over platinum group metals supported on carbon. Reaction temperatures, ranging from 130 to 170 °C, gave both high selectivity and conversion for the hexafluoroacetone formation using a Pd/C catalyst.

Hexafluoroacetone(HFA) is becoming widely used as a modifier for a copolymer of ethylene and tetrafluoroethylene¹⁾ and as a cross-linking agent of fluoroelastmer.²⁾ It is also utilized as an industrial solvent³⁾ and an intermediate for the preparation of certain organofluorine compounds.²⁾

HFA is produced by various reactions⁴⁾ such as fluorination of hexachloroacetone with anhydrous HF, isomerization of hexafluoropropylene oxide, or oxidations of octafluoroisobutylene and hexafluoropropene(HFP) with O₂. Among these reactions, the oxidation of HFP is considered to be the simplest and the most convenient. We have therefore studied on the HFP oxidation catalyzed by platinum group metals, which are known to be generally capable of catalyzing oxidations at lower reaction temperatures.

Various platinum group metals, supported on carbon, were commercially obtained (Nihon Engerhart Co.). Some catalysts were prepared by impregnation method at room temperature. The HFP oxidation was carried out by circulating gaseous HFP (Mitsui-Du Pont Fluorochemical Co., purity > 99.9%) mixed with O₂ over a catalyst (0.5 g, 16-20 mesh) at 110-190 °C in a circulating reactor(volume, 0.32 dm³). The reaction start and progress were followed by observing the decrease in pressure due to addition of O₂ to the fluoroolefin. The reaction products were analyzed by

infrared spectroscopy and gas chromatography using a 8 m column packed with Porapak R.

When V_2O_5 , MoO_3 , or Ag_2O was used as a catalyst, the reaction proceeded at temperatures higher than 250 °C. No HFA was found at all as an oxidation product. A fair amount of HFA was formed, however, after an induction period when Pd, dispersed on several supports such as carbon, SiO_2 and TiO_2 . Besides HFA, a small amount CO_2 was found in the reaction product of the Pd-catalyzed oxidation. Among the supported Pd catalysts, Pd dispersed on carbon gave the most favorable results regarding conversion and selectivity of HFA formation.

Then, catalytic activities of Pt group metals supported on carbon were compared with each other. As is shown in Table 1, the Pt/C catalyst was particularly effective in shortening the induction period. The commercial catalysts in general showed higher activities even when they contained a smaller amount, such as 0.5%, of an active metal component.

Table 1. Oxidation of hexafluoropropene over carbon-supported Pt group metals

Catalyst ^{a)}	Reaction time /min	Induction period/min	Conversion of HFP/mol%	Selectivity for HFA formation/mol%
0.5%Pd/C(Com.) ^{b)}	150	120	54.7	87.4
2.0%Pd/C(Com.)	120	55	55.1	83.3
5.0%Pd/GC-1(450)	120	60	48.4	86.7
2.0%Pt/C(Com.)	60	30	42.5	82.1
5.0%Pt/GC-1(500)	60	10	54.4	96.8
0.5%Rh/C(Com.)	120	50	51.4	82.8
5.0%Rh/GC-1(500)	120	80	21.5	94.8
0.5%Ru/C(Com.)	120	50	63.2	80.9
5.0%Ru/GC-1(500)	150	100	30.2	67.1
2.0%Ir/C(Com.)	60	25	47.5	85.1

a) Unless otherwise noted by numbers in parentheses, the reduction in H_2 (400 Torr) was carried out at 450 °C. Reaction conditions were the same as those described in Table 1. b) Com. denotes the catalyst sample was a commercial product.

The reaction temperatures had a significant effect as is exhibited in Fig.1 which shows the results of the reaction promoted by the Pd/C catalyst. The catalyzed reaction proceeded well at 130 °C or above, but temperatures higher than 170 °C were unsuitable because of the activation of CO₂ formation. The molar ratio of O₂ to HFP, P_{O_2}/P_{HFP} , in the range of about 0.8 to 1.5 was preferable to obtain high selectivity of the HFP formation together with high HFP conversion(Fig.2).

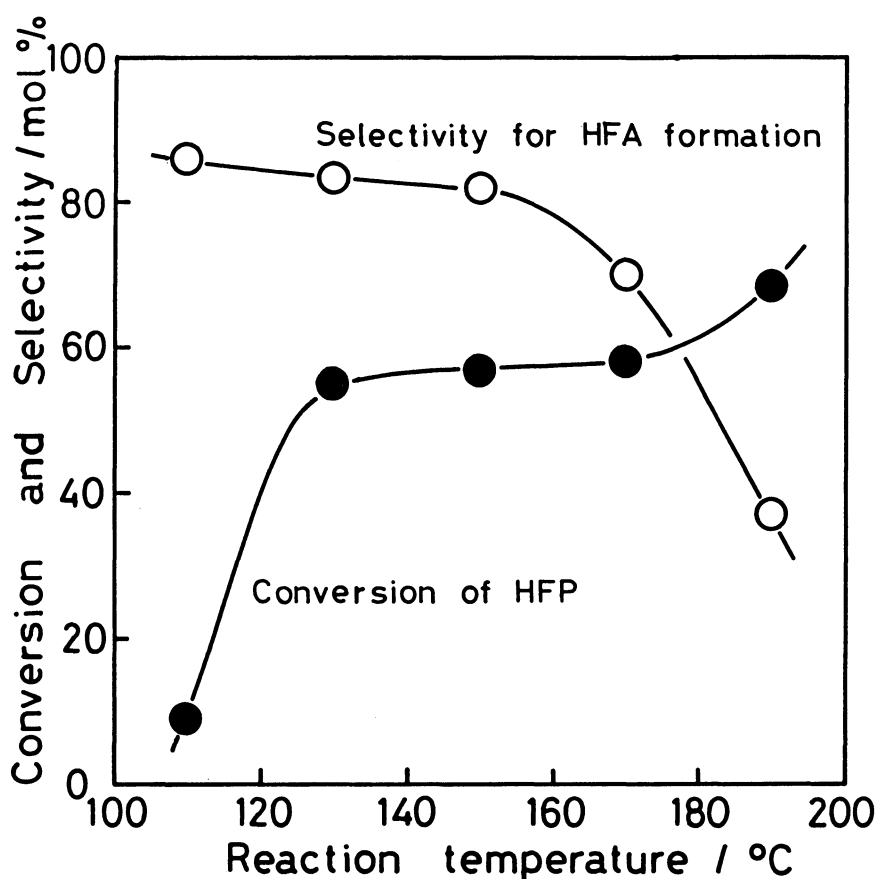


Fig.1. Effect of reaction temperature on catalytic activity.

Reaction conditions

Catalyst : 2%Pd/Carbon (0.5 g), Time : 2 h ,
Initial pressure : 258 Torr (O₂/HFP = 1).

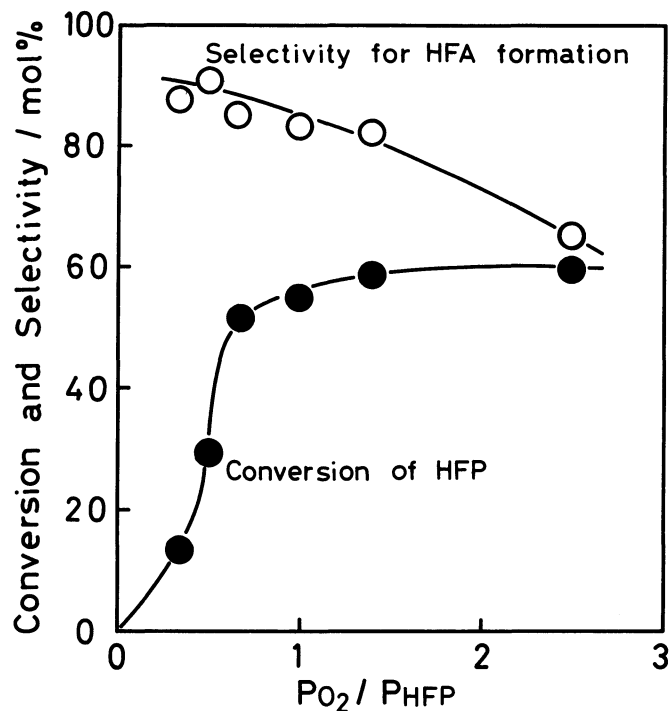


Fig. 2. Effect of O_2 pressure on catalytic activity.

Reaction conditions
 Catalyst : 2%Pd/Carbon(0.5 g), Time : 2 h,
 Temperature : 130 °C ,
 Initial pressure : 150-414 Torr (PHFP=129 Torr)

The authors are grateful to Mitsui-Du Pont Fluorochemical Company for financial support extended to this study.

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(Received September 9, 1987)