Effect of Presulfurization on the Formation of Coke on Supported Metal Catalysts

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Received February 1, 1985; revised December 16, 1985

Presulfurization of Pt/Al_2O_3 , Ir/Al_2O_3 , and $Pt-Ir/Al_2O_3$ catalysts induces an increase in the amount of coke deposited during decomposition of cyclopentane. There is strong indication that such an increase could be the consequence of a higher production of olefinic compounds whose polymerization on the acidic sites of the alumina results in extensive coke deposition on the support. In the opposite sense is the observation that sulfur is able to inhibit the autodeactivation of the metal, which is thus protected from the coking reaction. Such a feature could explain the greater stability observed on sulfided reforming catalysts. \oplus 1986 Academic Press, Inc.

INTRODUCTION

Naphtha reforming catalysts are usually sulfided. In spite of the poisoning effect, addition of small quantities of sulfur improves the behavior of the catalysts, increases their stability and favors their startup (1-3).

Sulfur, through its adsorption, can block a fraction of the metallic surface which then becomes inaccessible to catalytic reaction. As a result, the activity of supported platinum for such reactions as hydrogenation of benzene, exchange of benzene with deuterium and hydrogenolysis of cyclopentane are lowered by sulfidation of the platinum. Nevertheless, selectivities for exchange related to hydrogenation, and for hydrogenation related to hydrogenolysis are significantly enhanced (4, 5). The reason why sulfidation improves the behavior of industrial catalysts can probably be explained by the high toxicity of sulfur for hydrogenolysis reactions.

On the other hand, coke deposited during hydrocarbon reactions is also a selective poison. In previous work, we have already shown that the toxicity of coke (defined as the number of accessible platinum atoms deactivated by one atom of carbon) was 2.5 for cyclopentane hydrogenolysis, 0.6 for benzene hydrogenation, and 0 for exchange of benzene with deuterium (7).

The selective poisoning by coke or sulfur can be accounted for by the heterogeneous surface of the catalysts (8). Therefore, just as some reactions are structure sensitive and occur only on a fraction of the metallic surface area (e.g., hydrogenolysis of cyclopentane or exchange of benzene with deuterium) (4, 9, 10), poisoning can be selective if the poison is adsorbed on particular catalytic sites. This is why the catalytic activity of reactions occurring on such sites is strongly lowered by adsorption of the poison under consideration. From the comparable selective effect of coke and sulfur, it can be inferred that sulfur adsorption and coke formation occur preferentially on hydrogenolysis sites, avoiding exchange sites. In agreement with this hypothesis, Lankhorst et al. (11) showed that treating silica-supported Pt catalyst at 450°C with a hydrocarbon/hydrogen mixture resulted in much more severe deactivation for the samples containing larger particles than for those containing smaller particles. Engels et al. (12) have also proved that highly dispersed platinum catalysts are less sensitive to coke formation. Then, in a recent work

(13), we have pointed out that both the reactions of coke formation by cyclopentane injection and of hydrogenolysis of cyclopentane have exactly the same structure sensitivity. This is why in the case of Pt supported on alumina increasing crystallite size leads to enhanced catalytic activity for both hydrogenolysis of cyclopentane and coking (10). As a consequence, sulfur, on account of its important toxicity for cyclopentane hydrogenolysis, has to be adsorbed on large platinum particles. This hypothesis also accounts for the greater sulfur resistance observed with the small particles of Rh (14) and Pt (15). According to Gallezot et al. (15) this is due to the electronic properties of these small particles, which differ from those of bulk metal. Therefore, when the size of the crystallites is decreased, transfer from metal to support causes an electron-deficient character to appear on the metal. The deficiency in electrons could explain the reduced aptitude of the small platinum particles for adsorbing an acceptor compound such as sulfur.

Thus, coke formation, hydrogenolysis of cyclopentane, and sulfur adsorption reactions probably take place on the same metallic reactive sites. From these observations it follows that presulfurization of catalysts should decrease the extent of the coking reaction, thereby resulting in a greater stability as observed on sulfided reforming catalysts. The present study was undertaken to investigate whether sulfur is able to inhibit coke formation on Pt/alumina and Pt-Ir/alumina supported catalysts. We have also studied the influence of the nature of the support, the influence of the metallic accessibility and the influence of the composition of bimetallic Pt-Ir catalysts on the changes of coking rates affected by sulfurization of all the catalysts. The coking agent employed was cyclopentane and the products of decomposition of this hydrocarbon during the coking reaction at 430°C were analyzed by gas chromatography. Then, in order to study the effect of sulfur on the accumulation of carbonaceous deposits on

platinum, some experiments were carried out on platinum black, without any support.

EXPERIMENTAL

The supported metallic catalysts (Pt, Ir, and Pt-Ir) were made by impregnation of two high-purity γ -Al₂O₃ powders (Al₂O₃) Degussa oxide C 100 m²/g (low acidity) and Al_2O_3 GFS 400 Rhone Poulenc 210 m²/g (high acidity) with aqueous solutions of chloroplatinic and chloroiridic acids in the appropriate concentrations to give catalysts of different metal loading (Pt/Al₂O₃ and Ir/ Al_2O_3) or various atomic percent [Ir/(Ir + Pt) ranging from 0 to 100]. HCl was added in order to obtain a constant chlorine content. After impregnation the catalysts were dried overnight at 100°C, then calcined under an air stream for 8 h at 500°C, and finally reduced under flowing hydrogen for 8 h at 500°C. The platinum black catalyst was prepared by alkaline fusing according to Adams et al. (16).

Dispersion values were determined with a gas volumetric system. A vacuum in the system of 10^{-6} Torr was created with a turbomolecular pump. Prereduced samples were reduced again for 2 h at 500°C, then outgassed at this temperature and cooled to 25°C. Metal accessibilities were obtained by H₂ chemisorption, O₂ chemisorption, and H₂-O₂ titration (17).

The catalysts were sulfided at 500°C for 90 min under a flow of H₂S and H₂ with a H₂S/H₂ volume ratio of 5/100 and a flow rate of 60 cm³ min⁻¹ (g · cat.)⁻¹. After sulfidation the samples were treated with flowing hydrogen for 8 h at 500°C. Under such experimental conditions we have previously shown (5) that the sulfur coverage (θ_s = S/acc. metal) is almost 0.5, and can vary slightly with the nature of the support and the nature of the metal (6).

The coking reaction was carried out at atmospheric pressure in a classical flow reactor; 1 g of the prereduced catalyst was reduced again under flowing hydrogen at 500° C for 2 h and cooled to 430° C for 1 h.

Catalysts	Al ₂ O ₃	Metal loading (%)	Cl (%)	Dispersion (%)	d (Å)
Pt/Al ₂ O ₃ G ₁	GFS	0.56	1.3	47	18
G_2	GFS	0.56	1.2	22	38
G ₃	GFS	0.56	1.5	12	71
Pt/Al ₂ O ₃ D ₇	Degussa	0.56	0.6	56	15
D_9	Degussa	1.85	1.1	57	15
\mathbf{D}_1	Degussa	5.45	1.2	29	29
\mathbf{D}_{10}	Degussa	10.1	1.1	11.3	75
D_4	Degussa	10.9	1.0	7.9	107
Ir/Al ₂ O ₃ I ₄	Degussa	0.56	0.9	71	11
I_1	Degussa	1.01	1.0	66	12
I ₅	Degussa	1.52	1.2	67	12
I_2	Degussa	1.20	0.9	40	20
I_3	Degussa	1.04	0.7	15	52
Pt-Ir/Al ₂ O ₃					
(72-28)	Degussa	Pt + Ir = 1.58	1.1	63	13
(51-49)	Degussa	Pt + Ir = 1.72	1.1	65	13
(39-61)	Degussa	Pt + Ir = 1.53	1.1	60	14

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Catalysis	A12O3	(%)	CI (70)	(%)	u
Pt/Al ₂ O ₃ G ₁	GFS	0.56	1.3	47	
G ₂	GFS	0.56	1.2	22	
G ₃	GFS	0.56	1.5	12	
Pt/Al ₂ O ₃ D ₇	Degussa	0.56	0.6	56	
D9	Degussa	1.85	1.1	57	
\mathbf{D}_1	Degussa	5.45	1.2	29	
\mathbf{D}_{10}	Degussa	10.1	1.1	11.3	
D_4	Degussa	10.9	1.0	7.9	1
Ir/Al ₂ O ₃ I ₄	Degussa	0.56	0.9	71	
I_1	Degussa	1.01	1.0	66	
I ₅	Degussa	1.52	1.2	67	
I_2	Degussa	1.20	0.9	40	
I_3	Degussa	1.04	0.7	15	
Pt-Ir/Al ₂ O ₃					
(72-28)	Degussa	Pt + Ir = 1.58	1.1	63	
(51-49)	Degussa	Pt + Ir = 1.72	1.1	65	
(39-61)	Degussa	Pt + Ir = 1.53	1.1	60	

Catalyst Characteristics

Cyclopentane (Fluka purum) was employed as reactant and was introduced at 2 cm³/h into the gas flow with $P_{C_5H_{10}} = 0.3$ atm and $P_{\rm H_2} = 0.7 \, \rm atm.$

In the case of sulfided catalysts, coking and sulfurization were carried out in the same reactor without exposure to air of the catalyst.

Analysis of coke deposition was made by temperature-programmed oxidation (19), with the temperature increasing from 25 to 550°C at the rate of 13°C min⁻¹. Analysis of the CO₂ produced was carried out at intervals of 1 min by gas chromatography.

RESULTS

I. Effect of Presulfurization on the Formation of Coke on Metallic Supported Catalysts

Different Pt/Al₂O₃ and Ir/Al₂O₃ monometallic catalysts and Pt-Ir/Al₂O₃ bimetallic catalysts were coked by the cyclopentane reaction for 60 min. The characteristics of these catalysts are summarized in Table 1.

1. Pt/Al_2O_3 . Table 2 allows a comparison to be made between the amount of coke deposited on the sulfided catalysts (C_s) and the nonsulfided ones (C_n) . It is worth noting that in all cases coking is more extensive on sulfided catalysts.

Furthermore, the change in coke deposition is not affected by metallic accessibility, since the C_s/C_n ratio is almost constant whatever the dispersion. However, when considering the two Pt/Al₂O₃ series it can be noticed that:

(i) C_n for the high acidity, high surface

TABLE 2

Comparison of Coking Extents on Sulfided and Nonsulfided Pt/Al₂O₃ Catalysts

Catalysts	\overline{d} (Å)	θs	C _n = %C (nonsulfided catalyst)	C _s = %C (sulfided catalyst)	C _s /C _n
G	18	0.51	0.95	1.20	1.26
G_2	38	0.81	0.63	0.83	1.32
G_3	71	0.83	0.34	0.44	1.29
D_7	15	0.45	0.62	0.97	1.56
D_9	15	0.53	1.80	2.80	1.55
\mathbf{D}_1	29	0.41	1.25	2.01	1.61
D_{10}	75	0.49	0.86	1.39	1.62
D_4	107	0.51	0.78	1.32	1.69

TABLE 3

Comparison of Coking Extents on Sulfided and Nonsulfided Ir/Al₂O₃ Catalysts

Catalysts	d̄ (Å)	θ_{S}	$C_n = \%C$ (nonsulfided catalyst)	$C_s = \%C$ (sulfided catalyst)	C _s /C _n
L	11	0.91	0.14	0.45	3.21
L	12	0.84	0.25	0.71	2.84
Is	12	0.88	0.34	0.93	2.73
Ĩ,	20	0.64	0.15	0.45	3.00
I3	52	0.58	0.10	0.28	2.80

area support is only 50% higher than C_n for the low area, low acidity support for the same metal loading and dispersion (G₁ and D₇). This result can be explained by assuming that metal produces coke precursors which can be polymerized on the acidic sites of the support. At low working time (1 h), the amount of coke is comparable on both Degussa and GFS aluminas. However, at higher working time (10 h), we have shown that the coke content on catalyst D₇ (Pt/Al₂O₃ Degussa) is 1.1% while on catalyst G₁ (Pt/Al₂O₃ GFS) the coke content is 4.1%.

(ii) The nature of the support plays a prominent part in the C_s/C_n ratio which is lower on GFS alumina than on Degussa alumina.

2. Ir/Al_2O_3 . Iridium catalysts supported on Degussa Al₂O₃ were coked in the experimental conditions previously described. The C_s/C_n ratios, collected in Table 3, point to an important effect of the sulfurization on the coking of Ir/Al₂O₃ catalysts.

3. Pt-Ir/Al₂O₃. Some Pt-Ir/Al₂O₃ catalysts were coked by cyclopentane injection. The same experiments were also carried out on presulfurized catalysts. Table 4 shows that the amount of coke deposited on the whole catalyst decreases from pure platinum to pure iridium supported catalysts. Moreover, sulfurization induces an increase in coke level which is more important on iridium than on platinum and the C_s/C_n ratio varies monotonically from pure platinum to pure iridium. In parallel with this, θ_s , measured in a previous work (6), increases monotonically from pure platinum to pure iridium.

II. Effect of Catalyst Presulfurization on Selectivity in the Transformation of Cyclopentane during the Coking Reaction

In previous work (20, 21) it was pointed out that the amount of coke deposited during the reaction of cyclopentane is always proportional to the activity in dehydrogenation vielding cyclopentadiene. In this work our interest has turned to the study of the effect of catalyst presulfurization on the activity for cyclopentane disappearance, and n-pentane, cyclopentene, and cyclopentadiene formation. Table 5 summarizes the results obtained on some samples of catalysts. It is worth mentioning that on all catalysts, presulfurization induces an important lowering in hydrogenolysis activities when concentrations in dehydrogenation products are increased; this is very much the case for catalysts supported on Degussa alumina.

III. Effect of Presulfurization on the Deposition of Coke on the Metal of Pure Metallic or Supported Metallic Catalysts

In previous work it has been proved that coke deposited on the metal is oxidizable at

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Comparison of Coking Extents on Sulfided and Nonsulfided Bimetallic Pt-Ir/Al₂O₃ Catalysts

Catalysts	θs	C _n = %C (nonsulfided catalyst)	C _s = %C (sulfided catalyst)	$C_{\rm s}/C_{\rm n}$
Pt/Al ₂ O ₃ (D ₉)	0.53	1.80	2.80	1.55
Pt-Ir/Al ₂ O ₃ (72-28)	0.63	1.30	2.18	1.68
$\frac{\text{Pt-Ir}/\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3}{(51-49)}$	0.68	0.91	1.56	1.71
Pt-Ir/Al ₂ O ₃ (39-61)	0.75	0.56	1.08	1.93
Ir/Al ₂ O ₃ (I ₅)	0.84	0.34	0.93	2.73

Catalyst Coking			Composition of the gas phase (%)				
	extent	Cyclopentane	n-Pentane	Cyclopentene	Cyclopentadiene	Light hydrocarbons	
D ₄ (1.0 g)	0.78	58.82	24.63	3.81	0.30	12.44	
D_4 sulfided (1.0 g)	1.32	88.84	4.03	5.43	0.61	1.09	
I_1 (1.0 g)	0.25	74.06	4.49	2.85	0.20	18.40	
I_1 sulfided (1.0 g)	0.71	70.87	16.37	4.30	0.43	8.03	
I ₅ (1.0 g)	0.34	69.79	4.02	2.34	0.25	23.6	
Is sulfided (1.0 g)	0.93	61.32	23.84	3.96	0.41	10.47	

TABLE	5
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a lower temperature than is required to oxidize coke deposited on the support (7,13). In Table 6 are collected the amounts of coke oxidizable at 300°C on some sulfided and nonsulfided catalyst samples which have been coked for 60 min by the cyclopentane reaction. The systematic lowering for sulfided catalysts clearly demonstrates that the coverage of the metal by coke is decreased by sulfurization when coke accumulation on the whole catalyst is increased.

To provide direct evidence that sulfided platinum is less sensitive to coke formation than pure metal, a study of the effect of presulfurization was carried out on platinum black. In order to increase the accuracy of analysis, these experiments were made at 400°C without hydrogen in the cyclopentane flow.

Table 7 shows that coke deposition on

TABLE 6

Effect of Catalyst Presulfurization on the Amount of Coke Oxidizable at 300°C

Catalysts	at. C/(g cat.) \times 10 ¹⁹
D ₁	3.70
D_2 sulfided	3.17
D_4	3.97
D₄ sulfided	3.27
G	2.90
G ₁ sulfided	2.17

platinum is markedly inhibited by sulfurization of the metal, and Table 8 lists the amounts of coke deposited on alumina when in a mechanical mixture with platinum black during the coking reaction by cyclopentane. The results clearly show that coke deposition is enhanced when platinum is sulfided.

Finally, the neutralization by KOH of the acidic sites of alumina is able to decrease the amount of the coke deposited on this support by more than 90% (21). Thus, when Pt/Al₂O₃ catalysts are treated with KOH, the coke accumulated on this catalyst is essentially deposited on the metal. One sample of Pt/Al₂O₃ catalyst was thus neutralized by KOH at 5% in aqueous solution. One part of this catalyst was coked by cyclopentane while a second part was sulfided before coking. The results, given in Table 9, bring additional proof that sulfurization of metal inhibits coke deposition on this metal.

TABLE 7

Effect of Catalyst Presulfurization on the Amount of Coke Deposited on Platinum Black

Catalysts	θ,	at. C/(g cat.) \times 10 ¹⁹
Pt black nonsulfided $(S = 2 m^{2}/a)$	0	1.53
Pt black sulfided	1.1	0.90

Effect of Metal Presulfurization on the Amount of Coke Deposited on the Alumina

Catalysts	at. C/(g Al ₂ O ₃) \times 10 ¹⁹
Al ₂ O ₃ Degussa with nonsulfided Pt black	1.00
Al ₂ O ₃ Degussa with sulfided platinum black	1.67

DISCUSSION

In previous work performed on sulfided Pt/Al_2O_3 , Ir/Al_2O_3 , or $Pt-Ir/Al_2O_3$ catalysts, Menon and Prasad (22), Apesteguia et al. (5, 23, 24), and Barbier *et al.* (6) pointed out that treatment at 500°C in a H₂ atmosphere induces only partial removal of the adsorbed sulfur. They noted that the remaining sulfur is localized on the metal. This resulting strong or "irreversible" sulfur will be present on the reforming catalysts and, according to Engle (25) and Haensel (26) it is able to prolong the life of these catalysts. Hayes et al. (27) suggested that essentially all the platinum interacts with sulfur to form a platinum-sulfur complex whose reactivity is lower than that of the original platinum so that coke normally produced through excessive dehydrogenation does not occur. On the other hand, the comparable effects of sulfur and coke on the activity and selectivity of platinum catalysts (7) have brought us to the conclusion that sulfur adsorption and coke formation take place on the same catalytic sites. From this we inferred that sulfur could prevent coking of metallic catalysts.

Contrary to such hypotheses, this work has now shown that presulfurization of alumina-supported metallic catalysts induces increased coverage of the catalyst by coke deposition. This result can be explained by taking into account the high cyclopentadiene production on sulfided catalysts. It was in fact previously shown that the amount of coke deposited on a supported Pt/Al₂O₃ catalyst during coking by

cyclopentane is always in a linear relationship with the partial pressure in the diolefine which is able to induce accumulation of carbonaceous deposits on the support as result of polymerization on the acidic sites of the alumina. This enhanced activity of sulfided catalysts in dehydrogenation reactions has been previously described (28, 29)and can be explained in different ways. First, sulfurization of platinum catalysts has been shown by a kinetic study to induce a decreasing adsorption energy for olefinic compounds. Second, as a result of poisoning of hydrogenolysis activity, sulfur could be able to increase the production of those olefinic compounds which are not destroyed by the hydrogenolysis reaction. Finally, as has been suggested here, sulfur could inhibit the autodeactivation of metals, thus preserving their dehydrogenation activity.

The protection of the metal from the coking reaction was obviously demonstrated by using pure metallic catalysts or aluminasupported platinum catalysts deprived of acidic sites by KOH treatment. However, in the case of platinum black, coke deposition is only reduced by half when platinum is sulfided. Yet is well known, for example, in HDS operation, that metallic sulfides can be covered by coke deposition. From this observation it follows that olefine polymerization yielding coke formation can also be produced on the sulfided platinum atoms. In return, the coking reaction is largely inhibited on sulfided platinum supported on nonacidic alumina.

All these results are in agreement with

TABLE 9

Comparison of Coking Exte	ents on Sulfided and
Nonsulfided KOH-Treated	l Pt/Al ₂ O ₃ Catalysts

Catalysts	at. C/(g cat.) \times 10 ¹⁹
$D_7 + KOH$	4.27
$(D_7 + KOH)$ sulfided	0.90

many patents (1, 3, 25, 26, 31, 32) which recommend the presulfurization of catalysts in order to improve their lifetimes. The effect of sulfur adsorption would be to protect the metal from the coking reaction. Such protection can be said to be the consequence of the heterogeneous metallic surface if one assumes that the hydrogenolysis reaction, coke formation, and sulfur adsorption take place on the same metallic reactive sites.

On the other hand, the same protection of the metal can be explained by assuming that coke production, like the hydrogenolysis reaction, require large ensembles of sites. Sulfur adsorption could be able to break up the periodicity of the surface and as a result prevent coke formation on the metal or the hydrogenolysis reaction.

Alternatively, changes in the activity and selectivity of partially poisoned catalysts can be attributed to a "ligand effect" which involves the assumption that the nature and the strength of a chemical bond between an adsorbate and a metallic surface atom is influenced by the neighbors of that surface atom. Also, assuming that cyclopentadiene is the precursor of coke, it is likely that its adsorption will be all the more stabilized as the metal is more able to donate electrons, thus resulting in the formation of a species very similar to the stable cyclopentadienyl ion. In the case of sulfided platinum, it has been clearly shown (15) that an electronic transfer from platinum to adsorbed sulfur induces an electron deficiency on the metal. Cyclopentadiene adsorption would then be more stabilized on nonpresulfurized platinum. It is also more likely to react with another cyclopentadiene molecule, in order to induce more polymerization, on nonsulfided platinum catalysts.

In conclusion, as a first estimate, presulfurization of alumina-supported platinum catalysts induces an increase in coke formation on the whole catalyst. This increase could be the consequence of a higher production of olefinic compounds in the gas phase leading to an extensive coke deposition on the support as a result of polymerization on the acidic sites of the alumina. On the other hand, sulfur is able to inhibit the autodeactivation of the metal which is thus protected from the coking reaction. This observation agrees with the greater stability observed in sulfided reforming catalysts.

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