*INEOS OPEN*, **2025**, *8 (1–3)*, 22–24

**DOI: 10.32931/io2509a**

CuPt/MFI Catalysts for Propane Dehydrogenation

M. A. Kashkina,\*a,b A. B. Ponomaryov,a A. V. Smirnov,b E. V. Pisarenko,с and M. V. Shostakovskya

a Nesmeyanov Institute of Organoelement Compounds, Russian Academy of Sciences, ul. Vavilova 28, str. 1, Moscow, 119334 Russia  
b Department of Chemistry, Lomonosov Moscow State University, Leninskie Gory 1, str. 3, Moscow, 119991 Russia  
с Department of Cybernetics of Chemical Technological Processes, Mendeleev University of Chemical Technology of Russia, Miusskaya pl. 9, Moscow, 125047 Russia

**Corresponding author:** M. A. Kashkina, e-mail: mariia.ivanova@chemistry.msu.ru  
Received 10 October 2024; accepted 15 November 2024

Abstract

The neutralization of MFI zeolite acid sites with NaCl using an impregnation–calcination–washing (ICW) method followed by the co-impregnation of the zeolite support with Cu(NO3)2 and H2PtCl6 yields highly active and stable CuPt/MFI catalysts for propane dehydrogenation. The presence of acid sites in the initial zeolite strongly affects the Pt dispersion as well as the overall activity and stability of the catalysts. The CuPt/MFI catalysts with the zeolite SiO2/Al2O3 molar ratio of 80 demonstrated stable operation (deactivation constant of 0.0035 h–1) at 540 °C, 0.1 MPa, weight hourly space velocity (WHSV) of 28 h–1 for 35 h.

**Key words:** propane dehydrogenation, zeolite, platinum, CuPt nanoparticles, impregnation–calcination–washing method.

Introduction

Propylene is among the most important compounds in the chemical industry and is extensively used for the production of monomers, polymers, and basic organic chemicals [1]. The propane dehydrogenation (PDH) process is a cost-effective industrial method for producing propylene compared to the traditional pyrolysis and catalytic cracking [2]. The use of copper as a promoter enhances the selectivity and stability of Pt-based catalysts for PDH owing to the formation of Cu–Pt alloys or solutions [3, 4]. Although the addition of Cu improves the selectivity, it leads to a decrease in the platinum dispersion due to surface coverage by Cu [5]. A wide range of supports for Pt systems such as Al2O3, SiO2, mixed oxides and zeolites have been proposed [6]. When utilizing acidic zeolites as platinum supports, it is essential to suppress their acidity to prevent side reactions, such as cracking, olefin oligomerization, and aromatization. Alkali metals are efficient in suppressing the zeolite acidity [7]. In this work, the ICW method involving the use of a large amount of NaCl followed by the removal of its excess through washing [8, 9] was used to reduce the acidity of MFI zeolites.

Results and discussion

CuPt propane dehydrogenation catalysts were prepared in two steps. First, the zeolite acid sites were neutralized with NaCl using the ICW method. Then the zeolite support was co-impregnated with Cu(NO3)2 and H2PtCl6 (Scheme 1). The impact of various factors in their preparation (SiO2/Al2O3 and Cu/Pt ratios, calcination temperatures at different stages, treatment order) on the catalytic properties was investigated.

Scheme 1. Synthesis of CuPt/MFI catalysts.

The samples obtained were designated as (*x*Na)T1wT2(*y*Cu*z*Pt) where *x*, *y*, and *z* represent Na, Cu, and Pt content in wt %, respectively. T1 stands for the calcination temperature post NaCl impregnation, T2 is the calcination temperature post washing, and "w" means a water washing step.

The detailed experimental procedures are given in the Electronic supplementary information (ESI).

No reflections attributed to Pt were observed on the XRD patterns of the samples both with and without Cu, which indicates that Pt particles are too small to be detected by XRD analysis and platinum is well dispersed on the zeolite surface (Fig. S1 in the ESI).

The performance of CuPt/MFI catalysts is significantly influenced by the concentration of the zeolite acid sites. The platinum dispersion, measured by CO chemisorption, increased with higher acidity of the initial zeolites, leading to improved activity and stability of the catalysts (Fig. 1a). A sharp decrease in the activity and stability of the catalysts was observed when the zeolite calcination temperature reached 500 °C post introducing NaCl excess (Fig. 1b). At this point, Na+ cations largely neutralized the zeolite acidity, while they compete with Pt for acid sites, negatively affecting the distribution of platinum. Conversely, reducing the calcination temperature to 150 °C resulted in an increase in the remaining acid sites, which contributed to the Pt dispersion and catalyst activity.

**Figure 1.** Effect of the SiO2/Al2O3 molar ratio in the zeolite, the reaction conditions: WHSV = 28 h–1, 540 °C, 0.1 MPa (***a***). Effect of the calcination temperature on the catalyst activity and stability, the reaction conditions: WHSV = 28 h–1, 570 °C, 0.1 MPa (***b***).

The addition of copper dramatically enhanced the catalyst stability (Fig. 2a). The optimal Cu/Pt atomic ratios for CuPt/MFI-80 catalysts ranged from 1 to 10, ensuring that platinum was well-dispersed on the zeolite surface (Fig. 2b). With an increase in the Cu/Pt ratio, copper atoms may obstruct specific platinum sites, diminishing the availability of Pt and causing a decrease in the activity and stability of the catalysts.

**Figure 2.** Activity of the CuPt/MFI-80 catalysts with and without Cu (***a***). Effect of the Cu/Pt atomic ratio on the Pt dispersion (***b***). The reaction conditions: WHSV = 28 h–1, 540 °C, 0.1 MPa.

Table 1 summarizes the data on the CuPt catalysts for propane dehydrogenation reported to date in comparison with some catalysts prepared in the present study. MFI-80-(3Na)400w150(0.3Cu0.1Pt) catalyst showed seven times higher specific activity (12 s–1) (Fig. S2 in the ESI) than the best earlier reported CuPt/MFI catalyst, 0.1Pt0.4CuK@S-1, which was prepared by introducing platinum and copper during the synthesis of silicalite-1 [10].

**Table 1.** Comparison of the catalytic performance of CuPt propane dehydrogenation catalysts

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Catalyst | WHSV, h–1 | *Т*, °С | C3H6 yield, % | Feed composition | Pt, % | Time on stream, h | Specific activity, s–1 ***a*** | Deactivation constant, h–1 | IP***b*** | Ref. |
| 0.1Pt0.4CuK@S-1 | 5.4 | 550 | 40 | C3H8/N2 = 1/3 | 0.16 | 73 | 1.73 | 0.005 | 355 | [10] |
| 0.1Pt10Cu/Al2O3 | 4 | 550 | 19 | C3H8/H2/N2 = 8/8/34 | 0.1 | 12 | 0.91 | 0.012 | 76 | [11] |
| (3Na)w(0.17Cu0.5Pt) | 28 | 540 | 27.5 | Pure C3H8 | 0.55 | 35 | 2.02 | 0.0035 | 577 | this work |
| (3Na)w(0.3Cu0.1Pt) | 28 | 570 | 30.1 | Pure C3H8 | 0.09 | 8 | 12.08 | 0.020 | 600 | this work |
| ***a*** specific activity is defined as the moles of C3H6 formation per Pt g-atom per second; ***b*** IP is the specific activity/deactivation constant [9]. | | | | | | | | | | |

Conclusions

Hence, a precise control over the acidity (through the SiO2/Al2O3 ratio, calcination temperatures) and the Cu/Pt ratio is crucial to achieve the high Pt dispersion and active and stable CuPt/MFI catalyst for PDH. The ICW method provides a simple and convenient way to enhance the Pt dispersion as well as the activity and stability of PDH catalysts.

Acknowledgements

This work was supported by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation (agreement no. 075-00276-25-00).

The phase compositions were characterized using the equipment supported by the national project "Science and Universities".

Electronic supplementary information

Electronic supplementary information (ESI) available online: the experimental section, XRD patterns, and specific activity of the resulting catalysts in PDH. For ESI, see DOI: 10.32931/io2509a.

References

E. V. Pisarenko, A. B. Ponomarev, A. V. Smirnov, V. N. Pisarenko, A. A. Shevchenko, *Theor. Found. Chem. Eng.*, **2022**, *56*, 687–722. DOI: 10.1134/S0040579522050335

J. J. H. B. Sattler, J. Ruiz-Martinez, E. Santillan-Jimenez, B. M. Weckhuysen, *Chem. Rev*., **2014**, *114*, 10613–10653. DOI: 10.1021/cr5002436

Z. Ma, Z. Wu, J. T. Miller, *Catal.*, *Struct. React.*, **2017**, *3*, 43–53. DOI: 10.1080/2055074X.2016.1263177

S. Sun, G. Sun, C. Pei, Z.-J. Zhao, J. Gong, *J. Phys. Chem.* *C*, **2021**, *125*, 18708–18716. DOI: 10.1021/acs.jpcc.1c04295

S. Veldurthi, C.-H. Shin, O.-S. Joo, K.-D. Jung, *Catal. Today*, **2012**, *185*, 88–93. DOI: 10.1016/j.cattod.2011.11.021

Z.-P. Hu, D. Yang, Z. Wang, Z.-Y. Yuan, *Chin. J. Catal.*, **2019**, *40*, 1233–1254. DOI: 10.1016/S1872-2067(19)63360-7

Y. Zhang, Y. Zhou, L. Huang, S. Zhou, X. Sheng, Q. Wang, C. Zhang, *Chem. Eng. J.*, **2015**, *270*, 352–361. DOI: 10.1016/j.cej.2015.01.008

A. B. Ponomaryov, A. V. Smirnov, E. V. Pisarenko, M. V. Shostakovsky, *Microporous Mesoporous Mater.*, **2022**, *339*, 112010. DOI: 10.1016/j.micromeso.2022.112010

A. B. Ponomaryov, A. V. Smirnov, E. V. Pisarenko, M. V. Shostakovsky, *Appl. Catal.*, *A*, **2024**, *673*, 119588. DOI: 10.1016/j.apcata.2024.119588

J. Zhou, Y. Zhang, H. Liu, C. Xiong, P. Hu, H. Wang, S. Chen, H. Ji, *Nano Research*, **2023**, *16*, 6537–6543. DOI: 10.1007/s12274-022-5317-z

G. Sun, Z. J. Zhao, R. Mu, S. Zha, L. Li, S. Chen, K. Zang, J. Luo, Z. Li, S. C. Purdy, A. J. Kropf, J. T. Miller, L. Zeng, J. Gong, *Nat. Commun*., **2018**, *9*, 4454. DOI: 10.1038/s41467-018-06967-8