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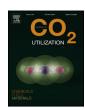
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# Thermokinetic and microstructural analyses of the CO<sub>2</sub> chemisorption on K<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub>-Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub>

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#### ABSTRACT

Sodium zirconate (Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub>) was synthesized via a solid-state reaction. Subsequently, a portion of the prepared Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub> was mechanically mixed with 5 wt.% potassium carbonate (K<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub>). The Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub> and K-Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub> samples were characterized, and the CO<sub>2</sub> capture processes were evaluated. The potassium addition did not modify the structural or microstructural characteristics of the  $Na_2ZrO_3$ . However, during CO<sub>2</sub> chemisorption, the material presented some important variations that depended on the potassium addition. The maximum CO<sub>2</sub> capture of the Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub> sample was observed at  $T \ge 550$  °C, while the CO<sub>2</sub> capture of the K-Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub> sample was significantly favored at 400 °C. According to DSC analysis, the CO<sub>2</sub> capture increase observed at lower temperatures was due to the formation of a K-Na carbonate eutectic phase. Additionally, for the samples demonstrating effective CO<sub>2</sub> capture at relatively low temperatures, SEM microstructural analysis demonstrated the formation of a Na<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub>–ZrO<sub>2</sub> mesoporous external shell. Moreover, some kinetic parameters were determined. The isothermal data were fitted to a double exponential model related to the direct  $CO_2$  chemisorption  $(k_1)$  and diffusion processes  $(k_2)$ . The K- $Na_2ZrO_3$  sample presented higher  $k_1$  and  $k_2$  values than  $Na_2ZrO_3$  at all temperatures investigated, confirming that the potassium addition improved the CO<sub>2</sub> capture process. Further, the potassium in Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub> significantly enhanced the CO<sub>2</sub> capture at approximately 400 °C, in comparison to the Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub> sample. Finally, it was observed that potassium negatively compromised the chemisorption of CO<sub>2</sub> after several cycles, due to potassium segregation and sublimation.

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#### 1. Introduction

In recent decades, the increase in greenhouse gas (GHG) levels in the atmosphere has focused international attention on global warming. Among the various GHGs,  $CO_2$  is the largest contributor with respect to its present content in the atmosphere [1,2].

There are three options for reducing the total  $CO_2$  emitted into the atmosphere, including the use of renewable energy, reductions in  $CO_2$  emissions and enhanced  $CO_2$  sequestration. The first option requires a decrease in the amount of energy consumed, for example, by using energy more efficiently. The second option requires switching to the use of renewable energy sources and non-fossil fuels, such as hydrogen. The third option involves the development of technologies to capture and sequester  $CO_2$  at high concentrations [1,2]. In the case of the third option, several materials have been proposed and analyzed as possible  $CO_2$  captors. The materials proposed include zeolites, activated carbons, hydrotalcites, supported amines and different alkaline and earth alkaline ceramics as promising  $CO_2$  captors due to their favorable sorption behaviors [3-7].

Among the proposed alkaline ceramics, lithium and sodium zirconates ( $\text{Li}_2\text{ZrO}_3$  [8–13] and  $\text{Na}_2\text{ZrO}_3$  [14–19]) have attracted the attention of researchers due to their adequate thermal stability and sorption capacity, as well as the ease of fabrication of these materials. This behavior is attributed to their excellent thermal stability, kinetics and  $\text{CO}_2$  capture capacity. Specifically,  $\text{Na}_2\text{ZrO}_3$  exhibits some of the most promising characteristics as a possible  $\text{CO}_2$  captor. For example,  $\text{Na}_2\text{ZrO}_3$  presents better  $\text{CO}_2$  capture efficiencies in comparison to lithium-based absorbents [10,14–17,20–22]. Despite the importance of this application, this material has not been deeply analyzed.

However, it has been demonstrated that the CO<sub>2</sub> chemisorption process can be significantly improved in lithium ceramics following the addition of sodium or potassium carbonates [23–26]. The process of CO<sub>2</sub> chemisorption on this mixed alkaline ceramic-carbonate produces a molten carbonate phase, decreasing the partial fusion temperature and increasing the various diffusion processes involved in the CO<sub>2</sub> capture reaction mechanism as a result [17,27]. Therefore, the aim of the present work is to evaluate the CO<sub>2</sub> chemisorption process in the K<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub>–Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub> system at different temperatures. In particular, the microstructural, kinetic and regeneration changes produced in the ceramic are analyzed.

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#### 2. Experimental

Sodium zirconate (Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub>) was prepared via a solid-state reaction. Zirconium oxide (ZrO<sub>2</sub>, Aldrich) and sodium carbonate (Na<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub>, Aldrich) were mechanically mixed and heat treated at 850 °C for 12 h. For the Na<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub> case, an excess of 10 wt.% was used to compensate the sublimation of sodium during the reaction time [15]. After Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub> synthesis, part of this sample was mechanically mixed with 5 wt.% potassium carbonate (K<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub>, Aldrich). The samples were labeled as follows: the pure sodium zirconate was named Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub>, and the potassium containing sample was labeled K-Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub>.

The Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub> and K-Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub> samples were characterized using X-ray diffraction (XRD), scanning electron microscopy (SEM), and nitrogen adsorption. To obtain X-ray diffraction patterns, a diffractometer (Bruker AXS, D8 Advance) coupled to a copper anode X-ray tube was used. The compounds were identified by the corresponding JCPDS files (Joint Committee Powder Diffraction Standards). The microstructural characteristics of Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub> and K-Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub> before and after the CO<sub>2</sub> capture process were determined using N<sub>2</sub> adsorption/desorption and SEM. For the N<sub>2</sub> adsorption/desorption experiments, the isotherms were acquired in a BelJapan Minisorp II at 77 K using a multipoint technique. The samples were degassed at room temperature for 24 h under vacuum prior to analysis. Then, the SEM images were taken on a JEOL JMS-7600F microscope.

Different CO<sub>2</sub> chemisorption experiments (dynamic and isothermal) were performed using a Q500HR instrument from TA Instruments. Initially, the sodium zirconate samples were dynamically heated from room temperature to 850 °C under a CO<sub>2</sub> atmosphere at 5 °C/min. Then, isothermal experiments were performed to evaluate the effect of potassium on the Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub>-CO<sub>2</sub> reaction mechanism. For isothermal analysis, the samples were initially heated to 850 °C at 50 °C/min with a subsequent isothermal treatment of 15 min under N<sub>2</sub> flow. This procedure was conducted to ensure that all of the samples received an equivalent sintering process prior to performing the CO<sub>2</sub> chemisorption isotherms. Additionally, this heating process desorbed all of the water and CO<sub>2</sub> previously trapped in the samples as a result of the handling processes. After this heating process, each sample was cooled to the respective isothermal temperature to perform an independent CO<sub>2</sub> chemisorption process. Once the sample reached the corresponding temperature, the gas flow was switched from N<sub>2</sub> to CO<sub>2</sub>, and the isothermal experiments were performed using a gas flow rate of 60 mL/min. Some of the Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub>-CO<sub>2</sub> isothermal products were re-characterized microstructurally using SEM. Finally, Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub> and K-Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub> samples, as well as some of the Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub>-CO<sub>2</sub> and K-Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub>-CO<sub>2</sub> isothermal products, were characterized by thermogravimetric (TGA and DTG) and differential

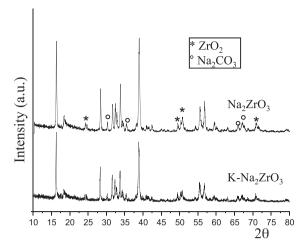


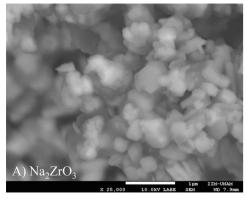
Fig. 1. XRD patterns of the  $Na_2ZrO_3$  and K- $Na_2ZrO_3$  samples prepared via a solid-state reaction. The secondary phases were labeled with different symbols.

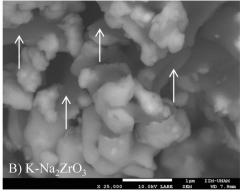
scanning calorimetry (DSC). These experiments were carried out using a previously described thermogravimetric set-up (using  $N_2$  as carrier gas) with DSC equipment from Instrument Specialists Inc. For the DSC experiments, the samples were heated from room temperature to 600 °C at 20 °C/min under an inert argon atmosphere. Finally, different multicycle  $CO_2$  chemisorption–desorption experiments were performed at 400 and 700 °C (chemisorption) and 850 °C (desorption) to elucidate the thermal stability and cyclic performance of both samples.

#### 3. Results and discussion

To establish the structural and microstructural characteristics of both sodium zirconates ( $Na_2ZrO_3$  and  $K-Na_2ZrO_3$ ), the samples were analyzed by XRD, SEM and  $N_2$  adsorption. Fig. 1 shows the XRD patterns of the  $Na_2ZrO_3$  and  $K-Na_2ZrO_3$  samples after thermal treatment at 850 °C and the corresponding potassium addition. The diffraction patterns fitted to JCPDS file 35-0770 corresponds to monoclinic  $Na_2ZrO_3$ , although the presence of  $ZrO_3$  and  $ZrO_3$  was also observed. The presence of these secondary phases can be attributed to the  $ZrO_3$  chemisorption process, producing these phases during sample handling, or to an incomplete solid-state reaction process. Additionally, the  $ZrO_3$  diffraction pattern showed was very similar to that of  $ZrO_3$ , as the  $ZrO_3$  concentration was insufficient for quantification by this technique.

The morphologies and particle sizes of the samples were analyzed by SEM (Fig. 2). Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub> and K-Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub> presented similar morphologies and particle sizes. The particles presented dense





 $\textbf{Fig. 2.} \ \ \text{Backscattered electron images of the Na}_2\text{ZrO}_3 \ (A) \ \ \text{and K-Na}_2\text{ZrO}_3 \ (B) \ \ \text{samples. The arrows indicates the presence of flat dark particles associated to the K}_2\text{CO}_3.$ 

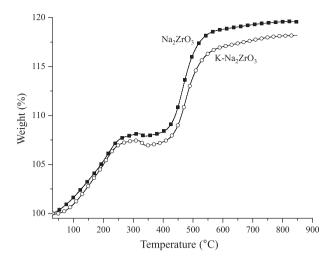
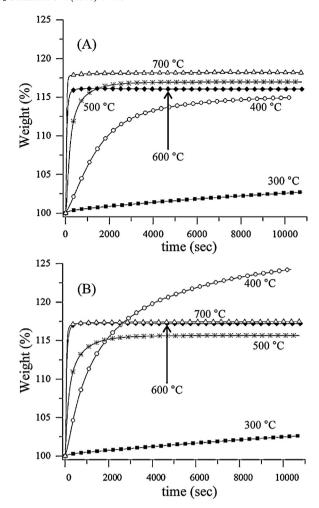


Fig. 3. Dynamic thermogravimetric curves of  $Na_2ZrO_3$  and  $K-Na_2ZrO_3$  samples, between 30 and 850  $^{\circ}C$  into a  $CO_2$  flux.

polyhedral morphologies with an average particle size of approximately 500–800 nm. These particles produced agglomerates measuring approximately 5  $\mu$ m. In the K-Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub> sample, some flat dark particles were observed, which were associated with the presence of K<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub>. The surface morphology was analyzed via N<sub>2</sub> adsorption. The Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub> and K-Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub> samples presented surface areas of 1.5 and 1.1 m<sup>2</sup>/g, respectively, according to the BET model [28,29].

After characterizing the structures and microstructures of Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub> and K-Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub>, both materials were thermally analyzed under CO<sub>2</sub> flow (Fig. 3). Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub> and K-Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub> presented typical and similar CO<sub>2</sub> dynamic chemisorption behaviors. The thermograms show two different weight increases. The first weight increase was produced between 30 and 290 °C, while the second was produced at temperatures higher than 400 °C. The first process was associated with the chemisorption of CO<sub>2</sub> on the particle surface. At this point, a thin Na<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub> external shell, mixed with ZrO<sub>2</sub>, is likely produced over the Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub> particle surface. In contrast, the second weight increase was produced at T > 400 °C, as a result of the activation of diffusion processes [27]. Although the potassium addition did not appear to significantly modify the dynamic CO<sub>2</sub> chemisorption, nonetheless, between 290 and 400 °C, an interesting difference in the thermograms can be observed. While the Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub> sample lost 0.29 wt.% in this temperature range, the K-Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub> sample lost 0.82 wt.%, which is approximately three times the weight loss. This result may be associated with a partial CO<sub>2</sub> desorption process produced over the particle surface, which indicates a different CO<sub>2</sub> absorption-desorption equilibrium than that observed for the Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub> sample. A similar effect was previously observed in the Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub> and Na<sub>2</sub>(Zr-Al)O<sub>3</sub> systems [30].

To analyze the influence of the potassium addition on the  $CO_2$  capture process in  $Na_2ZrO_3$ , different isothermal experiments were performed between 300 and 700 °C (Fig. 4). For the  $Na_2ZrO_3$  case (Fig. 4A), all of the isothermal experiments followed a typical exponential behavior, where the  $CO_2$  chemisorption increased as a function of temperature. At 300 and 400 °C, the isotherms did not reach equilibrium after 3 h, and the weight increments were 2.0 and 14.3 wt.%, respectively. Later, a more rapidly increasing exponential behavior was obtained for the sample treated at 500 °C, which significantly increased the  $CO_2$  chemisorption behavior (18.5 wt.%). Treating the sample isothermally at 600 °C resulted in a partial decrease in the  $CO_2$  chemisorption. This atypical phenomenon has recently been associated with a  $Na_2CO_3$ – $ZrO_2$  external shell densification process, as the external shell presents a degree of mesoporosity at  $T \leq 550$  °C, which allows for

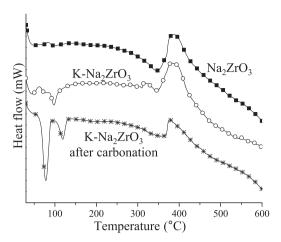


**Fig. 4.** Isothermal analyses at different temperatures (300–700  $^{\circ}$ C) of the Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub> (A) and K-Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub> (B) samples.

higher  $CO_2$  chemisorption [17,31]. Finally, at 700 °C, the intercrystalline diffusion processes are activated, recovering the  $CO_2$  chemisorption behavior, which increases as a function of temperature.

However, although the K-Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub> sample (Fig. 4B) presented a similar exponential behavior, some significant variations were also observed. At 300 °C, the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> chemisorbed was very poor (2.6 wt.%), as in the Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub> case. Nevertheless, the K-Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub> sample presented the highest CO<sub>2</sub> chemisorption at 400 °C, with a value of 24.2 wt.%. Later, between 500 and 700 °C, the CO<sub>2</sub> chemisorption values decreased, although the CO<sub>2</sub> chemisorption process occurred faster during the initial minutes of the test than the behavior observed at 400 °C. It has been reported that the process of CO<sub>2</sub> absorption in Na- or K-containing lithium ceramics produces a molten lithium-sodium or lithium-potassium carbonate phase [23-26,31]. The K and Na additions usually do not exceed 5-10 wt.% because the main intention of adding these elements is to improve the diffusion processes due to partial melt processes. Therefore, to demonstrate that the partial melting process of the Na<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub>-K<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub> eutectic phase is present in the Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub> external shell, different DSC experiments were carried out. Additionally, the potassium addition produced more rapid densification of the porosity in the Na<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub>-ZrO<sub>2</sub> external shell because the isothermal capture of CO<sub>2</sub> in the K-Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub> sample decreased at 500 °C and not at 600 °C, as in the Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub> case.

Fig. 5 shows different DSC analyses of the Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub> and K-Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub> samples. In the K-Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub> case, the sample was analyzed



**Fig. 5.** DSC analysis of the  $Na_2ZrO_3$  and  $K-Na_2ZrO_3$  samples and the  $K-Na_2ZrO_3$  sample previously treated at 400 °C into a  $CO_2$  flux.

before and after the  $\rm CO_2$  capture processes. Initially ( $T < 150~\rm ^{\circ}C$ ), the three samples presented calorimetric behaviors that fit very well with the thermogravimetric experiments. The different peaks observed in this temperature range correspond to superficial or crystalline dehydration processes. After the carbonation process, the K-Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub> sample presented the highest endothermic dehydration peaks, which are associated with the water affinity presented by the Na<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub> produced over the highly hygroscopic Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub> particle surface. However, additional information that can be obtained from the decarbonation peaks is observed below 300  $^{\circ}$ C. The Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub> sample presented a single well-defined endothermic peak with an onset temperature of 255  $^{\circ}$ C and an

enthalpy ( $\Delta H$ ) value of 179.3 kJ/mol. However, the K-Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub> sample presented a double peak, which corresponds with the superficial Na<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub> presence because the Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub> sample had added K<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub>. These two peaks could not be separated for parameter determination, so the onset temperature and  $\Delta H$  values obtained were 247 °C and 125.2 kJ/mol. It is clear that both the onset temperature and  $\Delta H$  were reduced by the K<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub> addition, which is in agreement with the formation of the carbonate solid solution [33]. In the third case (K-Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub> sample isothermally treated at 400 °C in a CO<sub>2</sub> atmosphere), the corresponding  $\Delta H$  value was 100.5 kJ/mol. Thus, the  $\Delta H$  value continued to decrease, as the Na<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub>-K<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub> eutectic phase was completely formed during previous carbonations.

To complete the analysis of sample characterization, Figs. 6 and 7 present SEM images of the Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub> and K-Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub> samples following isothermal treatment at 500 °C in a CO<sub>2</sub> atmosphere. The backscattered electron image (BSEI) confirms the presence of two phases in the surface region, due to the different contrasts observed in the particles. These two phases are identified as ZrO<sub>2</sub> and Na<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub> or K-containing Na<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub> (the eutectic carbonate phase), as they are the Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub> carbonation products. In this case, the Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub> phase is not identifiable in the image because the remaining Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub> must be located within the particle's core, as it has been reported in other micrometric CO2-alkaline ceramic reaction models [4,27]. The difference in observed contrast arises from the difference in the mean atomic number,  $\bar{Z}$ , of  $ZrO_2$  $(\bar{Z} = 18.666)$  relative to the mixed carbonate phase (for the Na<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub>  $\bar{Z} = 8.666$ , which is the majority phase). The  $\bar{Z}$  difference produces changes in the backscattered electron coefficient, n, of the two phases [33,34]. Thus, the dark phase corresponds to the mixed carbonate phase, while the lighter phase is ZrO<sub>2</sub>. Although the K-Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub> particle size did not change significantly after the

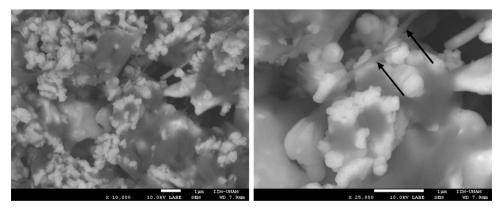


Fig. 6. Backscattered electron images of the Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub> sample isothermally treated at 500 °C into a CO<sub>2</sub> atmosphere. The arrows indicate the filament-like particle formations.

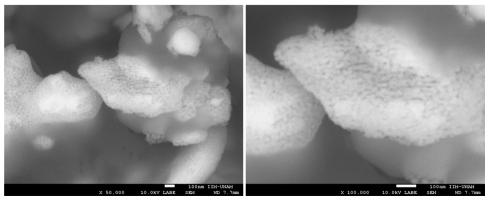


Fig. 7. Backscattered electron images of the K-Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub> sample isothermally treated at 500 °C into a CO<sub>2</sub> atmosphere.

**Table 1**Kinetic parameters obtained from the isothermal fitting to the double exponential model

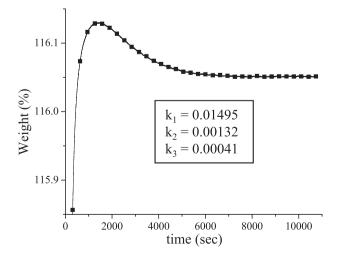
T (°C)	$k_1  (s^{-1})$	$k_2 (s^{-1})$	$R^2$
Na <sub>2</sub> ZrO <sub>3</sub>			_
300	0.00045	0.00012	0.99876
400	0.00043	0.00026	0.99908
500	0.00271	0.00056	0.99688
600	0.00953	0.00184	0.99153
700	0.01496	0.0001	0.94342
K-Na <sub>2</sub> ZrO <sub>3</sub>			
300	0.00832	0.00005	0.9997
400	0.00113	0.00021	0.99992
500	0.00659	0.00127	0.9998
600	0.01495	0.00132	0.99233
700	0.01904	0.00025	0.98244

carbonation process, the mixed carbonate phase (dark phase) produced layered-like and filamentous structures, and the presence of mesoporosity was evidenced (see Fig. 7). These results are in good agreement with a previous report in which the presence of an external mesoporous phase was reported in  $Na_2ZrO_3$  as a result of carbonation at  $T \le 550$  °C [17].

To analyze whether the potassium addition affects the  $CO_2$  capture process of  $Na_2ZrO_3$ , the isothermal data were fitted to a double exponential model, as a result of the two different processes taking place: (1)  $CO_2$  chemisorption occurs over the  $Na_2ZrO_3$  particle surface  $(k_1)$ , which induces the formation of an external shell of alkaline carbonate and  $ZrO_2$ , and (2) the  $CO_2$  chemisorption is kinetically controlled by diffusion processes  $(k_2)$  [35–39]:

$$y = A \exp^{k_1 t} + B \exp^{k_2 t} + C$$

where y represents the weight percentage of chemisorbed  $CO_2$ , t is the time, and  $k_1$  and  $k_2$  are the exponential constants for the  $CO_2$  chemisorption over the  $Na_2ZrO_3$  particle surface and the chemisorption of  $CO_2$  kinetically controlled by diffusion processes, respectively. Additionally, the pre-exponential factors A and B indicate the intervals over which each process controls the whole  $CO_2$  capture process, and the constant C denotes the y-intercept. All of the exponential constant parameters are presented in Table 1. It can be observed that, independently of the potassium addition, the direct  $CO_2$  chemisorption constant values  $(k_1)$  are higher than that



**Fig. 8.** Isotherm of the K-Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub> sample treated at  $600\,^{\circ}$ C into a CO<sub>2</sub> flux. The sample was fitted to a triple exponential model, as it was evidenced in the presence of an additional process; the CO<sub>2</sub> desorption.

of the CO<sub>2</sub> chemisorption kinetically controlled by diffusion processes  $(k_2)$ . This result is in good agreement with previous reports [35,36,39] and indicates that the rate limiting step is the CO<sub>2</sub> chemisorption, which is kinetically controlled by diffusion processes. However, at 400 °C, the  $k_1$  values decreased independently of the potassium addition. This effect is attributed to the partial superficial desorption of CO<sub>2</sub> observed during dynamic thermogram analysis in the same temperature range. Additionally, it should be noted that the  $k_1$  and  $k_2$  constants were different for the Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub> and K-Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub> samples. K-Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub> presented higher  $k_1$  and  $k_2$  values than Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub> throughout the entire temperature range, confirming that potassium addition improves the CO<sub>2</sub> capture process. It should be noted that the potassium addition enhances the initial reaction process upon melting because the liquid phase promotes the superficial CO<sub>2</sub> reaction and the porous diffusion processes.

Once the high-temperature isotherms were analyzed more thoroughly, a third process was identified, i.e., CO<sub>2</sub> desorption. This process was evidenced by a slight decrease in the weight  $(T \ge 600 \, ^{\circ}\text{C}, \text{ see Fig. 8})$ . The chemisorption/desorption equilibrium was not present at lower temperatures because there may not have been a desorption process. Therefore, this isotherm showed three different trends. At short times, the increase in weight was equal to that observed for the other isotherms, after fitting these data to a double exponential model. The  $k_1$  and  $k_2$  values obtained fitted the previous analysis very well. Then, the curve showed a lag period, in which the absorption did not increase. At long times, the desorption process became evident, although it was minimal. The samples only lost between 0.03 and 0.05 wt.%, due to the considerably low value of  $k_3$  (0.00041 s<sup>-1</sup>). Thus, using the entire data range, a different fitting was performed with a triple exponential model. This model considers three processes, including (1) the CO<sub>2</sub> chemisorption over the sample particle surface, (2) the CO<sub>2</sub> chemisorption that is kinetically controlled by diffusion processes and (3) the CO<sub>2</sub> desorption.

Finally, multicyclic experiments were performed with the K-Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub> sample. The CO<sub>2</sub> chemisorption process was performed at 400 and 700 °C, but it was necessary to perform the desorption process at 850 °C because at lower temperatures, the desorption of CO<sub>2</sub> was not produced. Fig. 9A shows the cyclic performance of the K-Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub> sample. It can be observed that the CO<sub>2</sub> capture efficiency decreased significantly after each chemisorptiondesorption cycle at 400 °C. This effect is associated with the potassium and sodium segregations and the sublimation of potassium that occurred during the desorption processes performed at 850 °C. Previous multicyclic reports on alkaline ceramics, specifically, lithium ceramics such as K-Li<sub>4</sub>SiO<sub>4</sub> and K-Li<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub>, have demonstrated better cycling stabilities [4,10,18,24,32,36,40–44]. However, in such cases, the desorption temperatures were always equal to the chemisorption temperatures (T < 630 °C). At this temperature, the influence of the potassium-lithium segregation and sublimation processes must be reduced. Nevertheless, it is not possible to use the same conditions for Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub>-CO<sub>2</sub> because the Na<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub> decomposition temperature is approximately 850 °C.

When  $Na_2ZrO_3$  and  $K-Na_2ZrO_3$  were tested at 700 °C, the cycling stability appeared to be sufficient (Fig. 9B). However, the  $CO_2$  capture decreased in both cases as a function of the cycle number; the  $CO_2$  desorption capacity of the  $K-Na_2ZrO_3$  sample decreased, while the  $Na_2ZrO_3$  sample appeared to partially decompose. The  $CO_2$  capture of  $Na_2ZrO_3$  decreased from 4.76 to 4.2 mmol/g, while that of  $K-Na_2ZrO_3$  decreased from 4.48 to 4.01 mmol/g (Fig. 9C). This effect may be associated with different effects, such as the particle sintering process and the Na and K sublimation processes. Hence, the potassium addition does not seem to produce any significant change, as the  $CO_2$  capture behavior is mainly produced

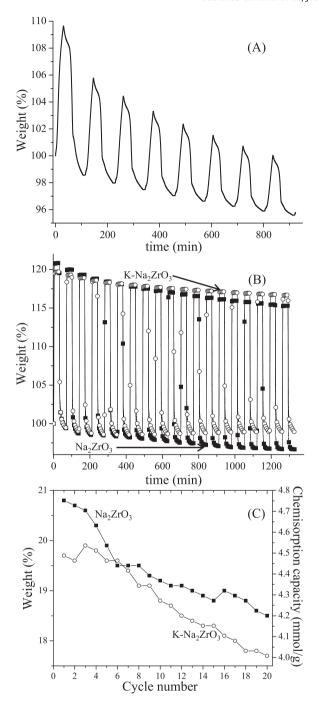


Fig. 9. Multicycle performance of CO<sub>2</sub> chemisorption/desorption in K-Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub>, in which the consecutive CO<sub>2</sub> chemisorptions were performed at 400 °C for 30 min, while the desorption processes were performed at 850 °C over 30 min into a N2 flux (A and B). Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub> and K-Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub> multicycles experiments, in which the CO<sub>2</sub> chemisorption were performed at 700 °C (C).

by intercrystalline diffusion processes at this temperature range [17].

## 4. Conclusions

Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub> was synthesized via a solid-state reaction. Further, part of the Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub> sample was also mechanically mixed with K<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub> (5 wt.%). Then, both samples were characterized structurally and microstructurally, and the CO<sub>2</sub> capture process was evaluated. Although the CO<sub>2</sub> dynamic experiments did not show significant differences following the addition of potassium, the isothermal analysis did. The K-Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub> sample treated at 400 °C captured more CO<sub>2</sub> than the Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub> original sample over all of the analyzed temperature range. Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub> usually presents the best CO<sub>2</sub> capture behavior at T > 550 °C. Under these conditions, the CO<sub>2</sub> capture of the samples in this work was very close to 100% efficiency (specifically, 98%). Independent of the potassium addition, the direct  $CO_2$  chemisorption constant values  $(k_1)$  were found to be higher than that of the CO<sub>2</sub> chemisorption that was kinetically controlled by diffusion processes  $(k_2)$ . The increased  $CO_2$  chemisorption was attributed to the formation of a K-Na carbonate eutectic phase, which can produce a partial liquid phase, favoring the diffusion of CO<sub>2</sub> through the mesoporous external shell. This possibility was supported by various DSC and isothermal analyses and SEM observations.

Conversely, the potassium addition produced a CO<sub>2</sub> desorption process at T 600 °C, which was not observed in the Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub> sample. Finally, multicycle experiments were performed at 400 and 700 °C to elucidate the thermal stability and CO2 capture efficiency through different cycles in both ceramics. In this case, it was observed that the addition of potassium did not stabilize the CO<sub>2</sub> chemisorption behavior after several cycles, due to potassium segregation, and sublimation developed during CO<sub>2</sub> desorption at 850 °C. Therefore, the addition of K to Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub> significantly enhances the CO<sub>2</sub> capture behavior of the material at approximately 400 °C, relative to that of the Na<sub>2</sub>ZrO<sub>3</sub> sample, although the thermal and cyclic stability of this sample were compromised.

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