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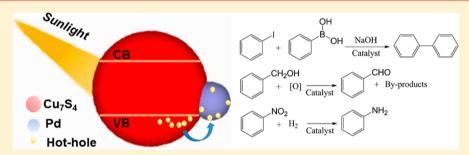
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# Near-Infrared Plasmonic-Enhanced Solar Energy Harvest for Highly **Efficient Photocatalytic Reactions**

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Supporting Information



ABSTRACT: We report a highly efficient photocatalyst comprised of Cu<sub>7</sub>S<sub>4</sub>@Pd heteronanostructures with plasmonic absorption in the near-infrared (NIR)-range. Our results indicated that the strong NIR plasmonic absorption of Cu<sub>7</sub>S<sub>4</sub>@Pd facilitated hot carrier transfer from Cu<sub>7</sub>S<sub>4</sub> to Pd, which subsequently promoted the catalytic reactions on Pd metallic surface. We confirmed such enhancement mechanism could effectively boost the sunlight utilization in a wide range of photocatalytic reactions, including the Suzuki coupling reaction, hydrogenation of nitrobenzene, and oxidation of benzyl alcohol. Even under irradiation at 1500 nm with low power density (0.45 W/cm<sup>2</sup>), these heteronanostructures demonstrated excellent catalytic activities. Under solar illumination with power density as low as 40 mW/cm<sup>2</sup>, nearly 80–100% of conversion was achieved within 2 h for all three types of organic reactions. Furthermore, recycling experiments showed the Cu<sub>7</sub>S<sub>4</sub>@Pd were stable and could retain their structures and high activity after five cycles. The reported synthetic protocol can be easily extended to other Cu<sub>7</sub>S<sub>4</sub>@ M (M = Pt, Ag, Au) catalysts, offering a new solution to design and fabricate highly effective photocatalysts with broad material choices for efficient conversion of solar energy to chemical energy in an environmentally friendly manner.

KEYWORDS: Heteronanostructures, solar photocatalysis, localized surface plasmon resonances (LSPR), copper sulfide

he direct conversion of solar energy to chemical energy using photocatalysts has received significant attention. Up to now, semiconductor-semiconductor, semiconductor-metal, and bimetal heteronanostructures have emerged as promising photocatalysts for photodegradation of organic contaminants, 1-3 hydrogen generation, 4-8 conversion of CO<sub>2</sub>,9 and organic synthetic reactions. 10-12 For example, palladium-based nanostructures have been widely employed for the catalytic reaction including the hydrogenation of nitrobenzene, oxidation of benzyl alcohol, and Suzuki coupling reaction due to their excellent catalytic activity. 7,10,11,13,14 In order to enhance the catalytic activity and reduce the dosage of noble metal, a number of synthetic strategies have been developed to fabricate nanostructures with open surface features such as desired active facets, 15-17 porous structures, 11,12 concave surfaces, <sup>18-20</sup> and nanoframe structures with small sizes. <sup>21-23</sup> In terms of photocatalyst design, more and more research efforts have been given to improve direct utilization of sunlight

in the visible region. 24-26 In addition, to enhance the light conversion efficiency, localized surface plasmon resonances (LSPR), arising from the collective oscillation of free carriers in the individual nanostructure stimulated by incident light, has been widely modeled and explored in noble metal nanostructures<sup>5,27–31</sup> for plasmonic photocatalysis, <sup>10,13,25,27,28,32</sup> sensors, 31,33,34 and photothermal ablation 35,36 applications.

Although noble metal nanostructure can be used alone as LSPR component and catalyst, <sup>25–27</sup> the semiconductor-metal heteronanostructures are relatively cheap and can offer higher light harvesting efficiency. To date,  $CeO_2$ -Au,<sup>37</sup>  $Cu_2O$ -Au,<sup>38</sup>  $TiO_2$ -Au,<sup>39</sup>  $CeO_2$ -Pt,<sup>40</sup> and CdS-Pt<sup>41</sup> heteronanostructures have been developed for photocatalytic H<sub>2</sub> generation. ZnO-

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Au, <sup>42</sup> Cu<sub>2</sub>ZnSnS<sub>4</sub>-Pt<sup>6</sup> and Cu<sub>2</sub>O-Au<sup>43</sup> heteronanostructures have been utilized for photodegradation of organic pollutants. All of them mainly make use of the visible or ultraviolet range irradiation light as energy source. According to the energy distribution in the solar spectrum, around 54.3%, 38.9%, and 6.8% of sunlight at the earth's surface is located in the nearinfrared (NIR, 760-3000 nm), visible (vis, 400-760 nm), and ultraviolet (UV, <400 nm) range, respectively. 44 Therefore, the development of semiconductor-noble metal heteronanostructures with NIR absorption, low cost, high stability, and outstanding catalytic performance is still critical and highly desirable for efficient solar photosynthesis. The copper chalcogenide nanocrystals demonstrating excellent tunable plasmonic absorption especially in the NIR region are promising candidates for building plasmon enhanced photocatalysts. Besides, their potential as organic reaction catalysts has not yet been fully explored. 45–49

Herein, for the first time we report a facile wet-chemistry strategy to synthesize heteronanostructure photocatalyst containing both noble metal (Pd) and Cu<sub>7</sub>S<sub>4</sub> domains with intimate interfacial contact. These Cu<sub>7</sub>S<sub>4</sub>@Pd nanocrystals, by combining NIR LSPR light-harvesting property of Cu<sub>7</sub>S<sub>4</sub> with the catalytic features of Pd, are excellent catalysts for solar photocatalysis of organic synthesis reactions. The LSPR effect enhanced photocatalytic activities of the Cu<sub>7</sub>S<sub>4</sub>@Pd heteronanostructures have been confirmed by both simulation studies and experimental evaluations through a series of organic reactions including Suzuki coupling reaction, selective oxidation of benzyl alcohol, and hydrogenation of nitrobenzene.

In a typical synthesis,  $Cu_7S_4$  nanocrystals were prepared by solvothermal decomposition of the single precursor  $Cu-(S_2CNBut_2)_2$  containing both copper and sulfur dissolved in oleylamine. The synthesis of  $Cu_7S_4@Pd$  was accomplished following a typical hot-injection method by introducing noble metal precursor  $Pd(S_2CNBut_2)_2$  into the as-prepared  $Cu_7S_4$  colloids. All synthetic steps were carried out under air-free conditions (see Supporting Information for details). Figure 1 shows the transmission electron microscopy (TEM) image and high-resolution transmission electron microscopy (HRTEM) image of  $Cu_7S_4@Pd$ . The average size of  $Cu_7S_4$  is 14 nm and the size of Pd particles grown onside is 4.3 nm. For each  $Cu_7S_4$ 

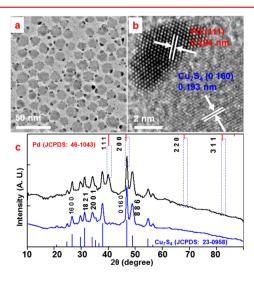
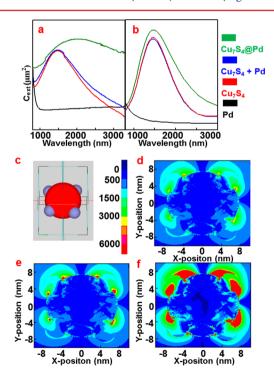


Figure 1. (a) TEM and (b) HRTEM images of  $Cu_7S_4@Pd$ . (c) XRD patterns of  $Cu_7S_4@Pd$  (black curve) and  $Cu_7S_4$  (blue curve).

nanoparticle, more than one Pd particle can be found attached to the surface. The HRTEM image (Figure 1b) demonstrates an interplanar distance of 0.193 nm in semiconductor domain, consistent with the (0 16 0) lattice spacing of anilite Cu<sub>7</sub>S<sub>4</sub>. In the noble metal domains, an interplanar distance of 0.224 nm indicates the face-centered cubic (fcc) Pd (111) planes. HRTEM results also reveal the intimate metal-semiconductor interface in the heteronanostructure, which is highly favorable for charge transfer in between.  $^{51}$  In comparison, TEM images of  $\text{Cu}_7\text{S}_4$  nanoparticles and Pd nanoparticles are shown in Supporting Information Figure S1. The crystallinity of the semiconductor domains and noble metal domains was further examined through powder X-ray diffraction (XRD) patterns (Figure 1c). The two distinct sets of diffraction peaks can be assigned to the anilite Cu<sub>7</sub>S<sub>4</sub> (JCPDS card 23-0958, Supporting Information Table S1) and Pd (JCPDS card 46-1043), respectively. Therefore, both TEM images and XRD patterns confirm the successful synthesis of the desired heteronanostructures. Furthermore, other heteronanostructures including Cu<sub>7</sub>S<sub>4</sub>@Au, Cu<sub>7</sub>S<sub>4</sub>@Pt, and Cu<sub>7</sub>S<sub>4</sub>@Ag can be prepared following similar procedures (see Supporting Information for details). By analyzing XRD patterns and HRTEM images, we also verified those heteronanostructures are composed of anilite Cu<sub>7</sub>S<sub>4</sub> and noble metal components with good crystallinity and tight interfacial connection (Supporting Information Figures S2 and S3).

The LSPR absorption spectra of Cu<sub>7</sub>S<sub>4</sub>@Pd, Cu<sub>7</sub>S<sub>4</sub>, and Pd were measured experimentally (Figure 2a) and simulated by finite difference time domain (FDTD) method (Figure 2b). Pd



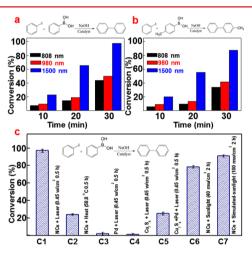
**Figure 2.** LSPR absorption spectra of different nanostructures obtained from experiment (a) and FDTD simulation (b). Green curves:  $Cu_7S_4$ @Pd heteronanostructures. Blue curves: physical mixture of  $Cu_7S_4$  and Pd nanoparticles. Red curves:  $Cu_7S_4$  nanoparticles. Black curves: Pd nanoparticles. (c) FDTD simulation setup for  $Cu_7S_4$ @Pd and electrical field intensity scale. (d–f) The 2D contour of the electric field intensities around the  $Cu_7S_4$ @Pd heteronanostructures under illumination of 808 nm (d), 980 nm (e), and 1500 nm (f), respectively.

demonstrates no LSPR peak above 1000 nm, while pure Cu<sub>7</sub>S<sub>4</sub> or physical mixture of Cu<sub>7</sub>S<sub>4</sub> and Pd gives clear absorption peak around 1500 nm, which can be observed from simulation as well. Moreover, the Cu<sub>7</sub>S<sub>4</sub>@Pd heteronanostructure demonstrates a red shift (~500 nm from experimental result) in LSPR peak with respect to that of Cu<sub>7</sub>S<sub>4</sub>. It has been reported that LSPR intensity in Cu<sub>7</sub>S<sub>4</sub> heavily relies on free carrier density in the form of cation deficiencies.<sup>52</sup> Pd growth on Cu<sub>7</sub>S<sub>4</sub> surface can possibly bond with sulfur atoms and reduce the exposure of Cu<sub>7</sub>S<sub>4</sub> to oxygen, which might annihilate vacancies in Cu<sub>7</sub>S<sub>4</sub>, resulting in LSPR peak red shift.<sup>52</sup> We may also relate the red shift to the refractive index change originated from the incorporation of Pd to LSPR surface, as observed by other groups. 53,54 Additionally, peak broadening effect of heteronanostructures were observed in both experimental and simulation results with reference to pure Cu<sub>7</sub>S<sub>4</sub> and the mixture of Cu<sub>7</sub>S<sub>4</sub> and Pd. Again it can be attributed to the larger dielectric constant of Pd compared to that of the solvent.<sup>52</sup> We also note the experimental spectrum of the Cu<sub>7</sub>S<sub>4</sub>@Pd heteronanostructures differs from the FDTD simulation spectrum in terms of peak position and peak width. We postulate this difference as a result of the inhomogeneous structure and size distribution of the real heteronanostructure sample, similar to previously reported phenomena. 56-61

LSPR effect is generally believed to be manifested in local electrical field enhancement. 46 To demonstrate the presence of this enhancement spatially and study its correlation with various wavelengths, the two-dimensional (2D) contour of the electron field intensity (XOY-plane, z = 0 nm) by FDTD simulation with illumination source of 808 (Figure 2d), 980 (Figure 2e), and 1500 nm (Figure 2f) are demonstrated by locating the Cu<sub>7</sub>S<sub>4</sub>@Pd nanocrystal in the center of a simulated box (Figure 2c). Control trials on Pd and Cu<sub>7</sub>S<sub>4</sub> were also performed (Supporting Information Figures S4 and S5). Very weak LSPR feature was observed around the Pd nanoparticle at 808, 980, and 1500 nm irradiation (Supporting Information Figure S4). Pd nanoparticles themselves barely have LSPR absorption at these three wavelengths and thus are unlikely the source of LSPR enhancement. Meanwhile, Cu<sub>7</sub>S<sub>4</sub> exhibits significant electrical field enhancement (Supporting Information Figure S5) with 1500 nm source triumphs other two wavelengths. Consequently the LSPR feature of the Cu<sub>7</sub>S<sub>4</sub>@Pd heteronanostructures is mainly attributed to the Cu<sub>7</sub>S<sub>4</sub> domain. As for the Cu<sub>7</sub>S<sub>4</sub>@Pd heteronanostructures, there is an apparent electrical field enhancement by all three wavelengths. In addition, the electrical field intensity for 1500 nm irradiation appears far stronger than 808 and 980 nm, indicating the overall LSPR of the heteronanostructure is more obvious if irradiation wavelength is close to the Cu<sub>7</sub>S<sub>4</sub> LSPR peak. In addition, enhanced LSPR feature around the Pd domain was observed, which may be attributed to the extended influence from semiconductor domain to noble metal domain across the interface. This result, together with our previous observation (Figure 2a), suggests a promising pathway to effectively expand the localized electrical field enhancement from Cu<sub>7</sub>S<sub>4</sub> to the whole Cu<sub>7</sub>S<sub>4</sub>@Pd heteronanostructure and offers potential to couple Cu<sub>7</sub>S<sub>4</sub> with other metal catalysts without strong LSPR features.

To assess catalytic activity of  $\text{Cu}_7\text{S}_4$ @Pd, Suzuki coupling reaction between iodobenzene and phenylboronic acid was used as the model reaction. The hydrophobic  $\text{Cu}_7\text{S}_4$ @Pd nanoparticles were dispersed into water with the help of cetyltrimethylammonium bromide (CTAB) (TEM image is

shown in Supporting Information Figure S6). Given that 1500 nm diode laser is close to Cu<sub>7</sub>S<sub>4</sub>@Pd LSPR peak position, here we applied 1500 nm laser as illumination source in our trials. The concentration of the catalyst stock solution was quantified by inductively coupled plasma mass spectrometry (ICP-MS), and the dosage was carefully calculated prior to each test (Supporting Information Table S2). Initially, control experiments were carried out without laser irradiation nor heating. No traceable product was detected. Moreover, since our photocatalytic system is based on LSPR enhancement effect, photon utilization efficiency is determined dominantly by resonance frequency of Cu<sub>7</sub>S<sub>4</sub>@Pd heteronanostructure. Irradiation source frequency at or close to intrinsic plasmon frequency on Cu<sub>7</sub>S<sub>4</sub>@Pd heteronanostructure would benefit catalytic activity most. To verify this effect, we applied 808, 980, and 1500 nm irradiation light for the Suzuki coupling reaction. The photocatalytic activities obtained in 1500 nm trial were much higher than those of 808 or 980 nm trials at all three reaction time intervals (10, 20, and 30 min). For example, with reaction time of 30 min, 1500 nm irradiation gave a 97% conversion (Figure 3a and Figure 3c1), while 808 nm resulted



**Figure 3.** Photocatalytic activity of  $\text{Cu}_7\text{S}_4@\text{Pd}$  nanostructure for Suzuki coupling reactions of iodobenzene with different reagents: (a) phenylboronic acid and (b) p-tolylboronic acid. Both reactions were under 808, 980, and 1500 nm laser irradiation for 30 min. The power density of each laser source is 0.45 W/cm². (c) Conversion comparison with different catalysts under various catalytic conditions. All lasers used here is the 1500 nm laser.

in 45% conversion and 980 nm yielded slightly higher than 50% conversion (Figure 3a). When phenylboronic acid was replaced with *p*-tolylboronic acid, we also observed similar trend (Figure 3b).

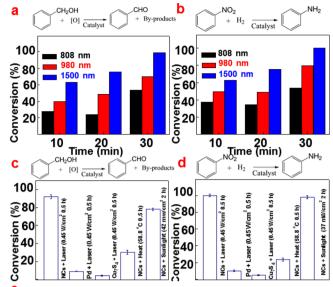
It is generally recognized that extensive LSPR features can give rise to photocatalysis and photothermal effect simultaneously. <sup>10,54</sup> In order to evaluate influence of these two effects, we used conventional heating as comparison tests. We began to record temperature changes with 1500 nm laser irradiation (0.45 W/cm²) and found the temperature raised and kept at 58.8 °C within 5 min (Supporting Information Figure S7). Thus, we ran the reaction with Cu<sub>7</sub>S<sub>4</sub>@Pd heteronanostructures at 58.8 °C for 30 min in dark environment (Figure 3c2). Less than 25% conversion was recorded. This is substantially different from nearly 100% conversion provided by laser irradiation from which we can conclude that photothermal effect only contributes to part of the catalytic effect, while

photocatalysis serves as prevailing factor to determine overall activity.

Additionally, to prove the synergetic effect of  $Cu_7S_4$  and Pd nanostructures as an integrated system we conducted reactions based on Pd nanoparticles alone,  $Cu_7S_4$  nanoparticles alone, and physical mixture of the two (no chemical bonding between two components like in  $Cu_7S_4@Pd$ ). It can be seen in Figure 3c3,c4 that neither Pd-only trial nor  $Cu_7S_4$ -only trial exhibited yield higher than 10%. These results can be interpreted as follows: the Pd domain has little contribution to the NIR LSPR effects, and  $Cu_7S_4$  alone has limited catalytic effect in the Suzuki coupling reaction. The mixture of these two components achieved  $\sim$ 32% conversion (Figure 3c5), which is far lower than that from  $Cu_7S_4@Pd$  (nearly 100% converted). This is a strong proof that intimate vicinity between  $Cu_7S_4$  and Pd domains is crucial, and the photocatalysis is a synergetic outcome of integrated  $Cu_7S_4$  and Pd components.

To evaluate the effectiveness of the Cu<sub>7</sub>S<sub>4</sub>@Pd heteronanostructures in other reactions, we further assessed them in the selective oxidation of benzyl alcohol and the hydrogenation of nitrobenzene. First we examined the plasmon enhancement effect on these two reactions through wavelength dependent studies. Sources of 808, 980, and 1500 nm were used. In both oxidation and hydrogenation reaction trials, 1500 nm trials demonstrated best conversions, followed by 980 nm, and then the 808 nm (Figure 4a,b). Similar to wavelength-dependent results obtained in the Suzuki coupling reaction, these results clearly show the plasmon resonance enhancement near the LSPR peak exhibits predominant influence in photocatalytic process. Again, the photothermal effect still serves as minor effect compared to that of photocatalysis. In oxidation reaction, direct heating the reaction solution at 58.8 °C gave conversion of less than 30% and in reduction reaction the conversion under identical conventional heating condition was 22% (Figure 4c,d). Neither of them is comparable to near 100% conversion obtained under 1500 nm irradiation (Figure 4c,d). In addition, we used pure Pd and Cu<sub>7</sub>S<sub>4</sub> to conduct control experiments. In both oxidation and reduction reactions, Pd or Cu<sub>7</sub>S<sub>4</sub> nanocatalysts yielded less than 10% conversion with 1500 nm irradiation (Figure 4c,d). Moreover, we found that in the benzyl alcohol oxidation reaction products, that is, benzaldehyde, benzyl benzoate, and benzoic acid (Figure 4e), 1500 nm source yielded 99.57% selectivity toward benzaldehyde, while 808 and 980 nm gave 95.87% and 93.43% selectivity, respectively. The selectivity toward benzyl benzoate also changes significantly with respect to wavelengths. The selectivity of 3.90% was obtained for 808 nm trial, 5.62% for 980 nm trial, and merely 0.28% for 1500 nm trial.

We further carried out the catalytic reaction with simulated sunlight source to examine the pragmatic feasibility of our photocatalyst. After being exposed to the simulated sunlight (100 mW/cm²) for 2 h, nearly 96% conversion was observed for Suzuki coupling reaction (Figure 3c7). Inspired by this promising result, we also conducted the solar photocatalysis reaction with real sunlight. Under the typical solar irradiation in local outdoor environment (the average solar power density was 40 mW/cm²), 78.6% iodobenzene was converted to biphenyl after 2 h exposure (Figure 3c6). In benzyl alcohol oxidation reaction, 77.8% conversion was obtained (the average solar power density was 42 mW/cm²), and ~97% conversion in nitrobenzene hydrogenation was achieved with average solar power density of 37 mW/cm² (Figure 4c,d). In addition, the recyclability tests based on Suzuki coupling reaction revealed



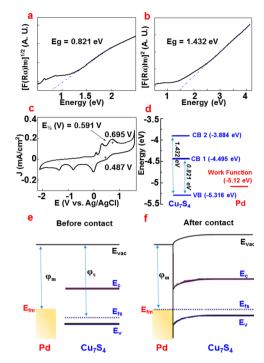
Conversion and selectivity in benzyl alcohol oxidation

Wavelength	Conversion	Selectivity (%)		
(nm)	(%)	Benzaldehyde	Benzyl benzoate	Benzoic acid
808	53.63	95.87	3.90	0.23
980	69.75	93.43	5.62	0.95
1500	99.72	99.57	0.28	0.15

**Figure 4.** Photocatalytic activities of Cu<sub>7</sub>S<sub>4</sub>@Pd in (a) selective oxidation of benzyl alcohol and (b) hydrogenation of nitrobenzene under 808, 980, and 1500 nm irradiation. The power density for three wavelength lasers is 0.45 W/cm². (c) Conversion comparison of different catalysts under different catalytic conditions in selective oxidation of benzyl alcohol. (d) Conversion comparison of different catalysts under different catalytic conditions in reduction of nitrobenzene. (e) Products selectivity profile in selective oxidation of benzyl alcohol using different irradiation wavelengths.

that the photocatalytic efficiency and catalyst morphology preserved after five cycles, which is desirable with respect to economical consideration (Supporting Information Figure S8). Lastly, because our synthetic protocol can be extended to  $\text{Cu}_7\text{S}_4\text{@Pt}$ ,  $\text{Cu}_7\text{S}_4\text{@Au}$ , and  $\text{Cu}_7\text{S}_4\text{@Ag}$ , we assessed their catalytic performances through oxidation and reduction reactions under sunlight for 2 h (the average solar power density was 47.5 mW/cm²). Our results indicated they all display fairly good catalytic activities (Supporting Information Figure S9).

In order to explain the photocatalytic enhancement mechanism, we measured band structure of  $\text{Cu}_7\text{S}_4$ . The indirect and direct band gap of  $\text{Cu}_7\text{S}_4$  was determined by Kubelka–Munk method<sup>62</sup> as 0.821 and 1.432 eV, respectively (Figure 5a,b). Valence band position was detected via electrochemical method<sup>62</sup> and calculated as -5.316 eV (Figure 5c,d). Furthermore, the gap between the top of valence band and Fermi level of  $\text{Cu}_7\text{S}_4$  is estimated to be 0.125 eV (see Supporting Information for calculation), that is, the Fermi level of  $\text{Cu}_7\text{S}_4$  ( $E_F = -5.191$  eV) is above and close to its valence band, representing a typical p-type semiconductor (Figure 5e).<sup>58</sup> As the experimental results suggest that reactions illuminated by 1500 nm ( $\sim$ 0.826 eV, close to LSRP peak) show far higher conversion rate than those by 808 nm (1.534 eV) and 980 nm (1.265 eV), it is unlikely that the interband



**Figure 5.** Plots of the indirect (a) and direct (b) band gap of  $Cu_7S_4$ . (c) The cyclic voltammograms of  $Cu_7S_4$ . (d) The energy level line-up of  $Cu_7S_4$ . (e,f) Energy band diagram of metal (Pd) and p-type semiconductor  $(Cu_7S_4)$  before (e) and after (f) contact.  $E_g$ : band gap.  $E_{\text{vac}}$ : vacuum energy.  $E_c$ : conduction band position.  $E_v$ : valence band position.  $\varphi_m$ : metal work function.  $\varphi_s$ : semiconductor work function.  $E_{\text{fm}}$ : metal Fermi level.  $E_6$ : semiconductor Fermi level.

transition has major effect on the catalytic reactions. We suggest that under 1500 nm illumination, LSRP absorption of Cu<sub>7</sub>S<sub>4</sub> generates "hot holes", which possess sufficient energy to overcome the small Schottky barrier and inject into Pd domain. It is possible the hot-hole injection renders the Pd surface electron-deficient, which then serves as a key contribution to the observed photocatalytic enhancement effect for Cu<sub>7</sub>S<sub>4</sub>@Pd. This hypothesis matches reasonably well with our experimental results. In terms of Suzuki coupling reaction, theoretical studies indicated that the rate-limiting step is the oxidative addition of aryl halides onto Pd(0).63 This process favors the positively charged Pd surface, which resembles electron-withdrawing ligands and can promote activation of aryl halides. 63 In the catalytic oxidation of benzyl alcohol, hot holes injected to Pd domain might function like oxidant and react in situ with benzyl alcohol and the derivative species adsorbed on Pd surface, so as to accelerate the reaction. In the hydrogenation reaction, Pd is generally considered active catalyst but suffers from rapid surface-poisoning due to strong binding of H atoms. 64,65 Previous studies suggested negative charges enhanced the binding of H atoms on Pd surface, while positive charges help with dissociation of adsorbed H atoms.<sup>64</sup> Hence, we propose the transferred hot holes can facilitate hydrogenation reaction through promoting H atom dissociation and thus keep Pd surface consistently active, leading to enhanced catalyst activity.

In conclusion, we have developed a facile strategy for the synthesis of  $\text{Cu}_7S_4@\text{Pd}$  heteronanostructures with excellent NIR LSPR properties and photocatalytic activities. This synthetic method can be easily extended to other semi-conductor—metal heteronanostructures. The  $\text{Cu}_7S_4$  semicon-

ductor domain acts as a plasmonic component for efficient photoharvesting in NIR region, while the Pd noble metal domain provides active sites for organic reactions. Experiment results indicate Cu<sub>7</sub>S<sub>4</sub> and Pd domains function as a synergetic system. Upon 1500 nm irritation and LSPR absorption, hotholes can be generated on Cu<sub>7</sub>S<sub>4</sub>, which can inject into Pd domain to render hole-rich Pd surface. This hole-rich Pd surface may serve as effective catalytic sites for Suzuki coupling, oxidation, and reduction reactions. Furthermore, unlike most of the traditional semiconductor-metal hybrid photocatalysts in which the LSPR of the noble metal nanoparticles assist the visible range absorption of the semiconductor, here Cu<sub>7</sub>S<sub>4</sub> nanoparticle utilizes NIR range photon through LSPR and extends the benefits to the metal catalyst. This leads to exciting potentials in photocatalysis especially considering that Cu<sub>7</sub>S<sub>4</sub> has been reported to demonstrate tunable LSPR at different carrier densities.<sup>52</sup> Although the exact mechanism and the synergetic roles of Cu<sub>7</sub>S<sub>4</sub> and Pd in these photocatalytic reactions need further investigations, this study opens up wide possibilities in utilizing NIR LSPR properties of copper chalcogenides to enhance photocatalysis. Furthermore, incorporation of various metal nanocatalysts with Cu<sub>7</sub>S<sub>4</sub> is expected to broaden materials choice and hence exhibit more fascinating catalytic performances.

#### ASSOCIATED CONTENT

# **S** Supporting Information

The Supporting Information is available free of charge on the ACS Publications website at DOI: 10.1021/acs.nanolett.5b00950.

Detailed experimental procedures, equipment list, simulation setup, and theoretical calculation steps; TEM images of Cu<sub>7</sub>S<sub>4</sub> and Pd nanoparticles (Figure S1); standard XRD peak locations of  $Cu_{2-x}S$  (Table S1); TEM, HRTEM images and respective XRD patterns of Cu<sub>7</sub>S<sub>4</sub>@Au, Cu<sub>7</sub>S<sub>4</sub>@Pt, and Cu<sub>7</sub>S<sub>4</sub>@Ag heteronanostructures (Figures S2 and 3); FDTD simulation results for Pd and Cu<sub>7</sub>S<sub>4</sub> nanoparticle with different irradiation wavelengths (Figures S4 and S5); TEM images of Cu<sub>7</sub>S<sub>4</sub>@Pd heteronanostructures in aqueous solution (Figure S6); the catalyst dosage applied in reactions (Table S2); reaction solution temperature change with respect to time under irradiation of different wavelengths (Figure S7); the recyclability test result and TEM image of Cu<sub>7</sub>S<sub>4</sub>@Pd after reactions (Figurew S8); the photocatalytic performance of Cu<sub>7</sub>S<sub>4</sub>@Pt, Cu<sub>7</sub>S<sub>4</sub>@Au and  $Cu_7S_4$ @Ag (Figure S9). (PDF)

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## **Author Contributions**

J.C. and Y.L. contributed equally to the manuscript.

All authors contributed to the preparation of this manuscript. L.W. conceived the idea. J.C., L.C., J.X., J.M., G.F., and L.W. performed experiments, data collection, analysis, and explanation. L.L. and L.Z. helped with simulation. Y.L., E.Z., H.W., and Y. H. helped with design of the experiments, data analysis, and organization of manuscript. All authors have given approval to the final version.

#### Notes

The authors declare no competing financial interest.

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