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CATALYSIS

Science and Technology

Edited by John R. Anderson and Michel Boudart

Volume 10

With 140 Figures



Editors

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Editorial

Our series of books on Catalysis: Science and Technology is by now nearly complete. Its purpose has been to collect authoritative and, if possible, definitive chapters on the main areas of contemporary pure and applied catalysis. Its style is not that of an Advances series, nor is it meant to be a collection of up-to-date reviews. If the chapters and the volumes were following each other in a neat, logical order, our series might be considered as trying to emulate the original Handbuch der Katalyse, pioneered by Professor G.M. Schwab in the 1940's, or be a new version of Catalysis, the series edited by Professor P.H. Emmett in the 1950's. As a matter of expediency, to avoid the delays involved in assembling a complete volume of related chapters, we decided at the outset to publish the chapters as received from our authors.

We submit that, by the time our series is complete, our main objectives will have been met. We are most thankful to all our contributors for their co-operation. The Science and the Technology of Catalysis will prosper as a result of their hard work.

General Preface to Series

In one form or another catalytic science reaches across almost the entire field of reaction chemistry, while catalytic technology is a cornerstone of much of modern chemical industry. The field of catalysis is now so wide and detailed, and its ramifications are so numerous, that the production of a thorough treatment of the entire subject is well beyond the capability of any single author. Nevertheless, the need is obvious for a comprehensive reference work on catalysis which is thoroughly up-to-date, and which covers the subject in depth at both a scientific and at a technological level. In these circumstances, a multi-author approach, despite its well-known drawbacks, seems to be the only one available.

In general terms, the scope of Catalysis: Science and Technology is limited to topics which are, to some extent at least, relevant to industrial processes. The whole of heterogeneous catalysis falls within its scope, but only biocatalytic processes which have significance outside of biology are included. Ancillary subjects such as surface science, materials properties, and other fields of catalysis are given adequate treatment, but not to the extent of obscuring the central theme.

Catalysis: Science and Technology thus has a rather different emphasis from normal review publications in the field of catalysis: here we concentrate more on important established material, although at the same time providing a systematic presentation of relevant data. The opportunity is also taken, where possible, to relate specific details of a particular topic in catalysis to established principles in chemistry, physics, and engineering, and to place some of the more important features into a historical perspective.

Because the field of catalysis is one where current activity is enormous and because various topics in catalysis reach a degree of maturity at different points in time, it is not expedient to impose a preconceived ordered structure upon Catalysis: Science and Technology with each volume devoted to a particular subject area. Instead, each topic is dealt with when it is most appropriate to do so. It will be sufficient if the entire subject has been properly covered by the time the last volume in the series appears. Nevertheless, the Editors will try to organize the subject matter so as to minimize unnecessary duplication between chapters, and to impose a reasonable uniformity of style and approach. Ultimately, these aspects of the presentation of this work must remain the responsibility of the Editors, rather than of individual authors.

The Editors would like to take this opportunity to give their sincere thanks to all the authors whose labors make this reference work possible. However, we all stand in debt to the numerous scientists and engineers whose efforts have built the discipline of catalysis into what it is today: we can do no more than dedicate these volumes to them.

Preface

NMR methods have for a considerable time been standard processes for the analysis of molecular structure: so much so that they are now universally regarded as indispensable for this purpose. Nevertheless, with the passage of time, NMR methodology has been elaborated to levels of ever increasing complexity and analytical sophistication so that the non-specialist may now be readily excused for the belief that for anything beyond relatively elementary methods one would be well advised to work in collaboration with the specialist experts.

The application of NMR methods to the field of catalysis occurred, in the main, relatively late in the day, mainly because those catalysts of greatest industrial importance, that is heterogeneous catalysts, are solids and so require special NMR methods if usefully narrow NMR lines are to be observable. Even so, magic-angle spinning NMR methodology is now thoroughly well established and is finding increasing use in the study of catalyst structure. Of course, conventional NMR methods have been used for a considerable time for the analysis of the products of catalytic reactions.

Chapter 1 of the present volume by Professor Jacques Fraissard and his collaborators is designed to give an account of the application of NMR methods to the field of catalysis, but not including the conventional use of NMR for reaction product analysis, since this is already well covered in the existing NMR literature.

The fact is that those who wish to use NMR methods will receive the greatest reward if they approach the subject with a reasonable grounding in the theory, and for this reason Chapter 1 gives an introduction to the more important aspects of NMR theory, in the light of which the later parts of the Chapter are to be viewed. Following this theoretical

X Preface

introduction, Chapter 1 proceeds to a discussion of various specific applications, including the study of adsorbed molecules, the structure of important classes of catalysts by NMR methods using nuclei such as ²⁹Si, ²⁷Al and ⁵¹V, the use of NMR methods for studying the acidity of solids, the NMR of physisorbed ¹²⁰Xe for the study of catalyst structure, the use of ¹⁹⁵Pt NMR for the structure of platinum catalysts, and the use of NMR methods (via line width) for estimating molecular mobility, thus addressing the question of molecular diffusion in catalysts.

Our aim is thus to provide those who work in the field of catalytic science and technology with an account of NMR methods which should prove of relevance to their problems, together with a summary of the existing literature in the light of which the likely application of various NMR methods to future problems may be judged.

Since the present volume is the penultimate one in the series, the opportunity has been taken in Chapter 2 to provide a glossary which gives the meaning of the more commonly used special terms used in catalytic science and technology. Established practitioners in the field will probably find little of novelty here, but the compilation will hopefully be of value to non-specialists coming to the field for the first time.

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Chapter 1

Application of NMR Methods to Catalysis

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1. Introduction

The aim of this Section is to give a brief historical account of NMR spectroscopy and to present the various sections of this work.

The NMR phenomenon was discovered in 1946 and very rapidly became one of the most powerful tools for the elucidation of molecular structure and dynamics, particularly in organic chemistry. NMR spectroscopy consists of inducing transitions between magnetic levels of nuclear spins differentiated by the application of a magnetic field. The transition frequency corresponding to a nucleus in a given chemical environment is a particularly sensitive probe of the latter. If the transition of nuclei of a given element in different environments can be resolved, precise unambiguous information about the structure, the conformation and the molecular motion of the system can be obtained. The corresponding spectrum is then referred to as "high resolution, HR".

From 1950–1970, HR-NMR studies were mainly concerned with liquids since effects of certain nuclear interactions, which can cause excessive broadening, are averaged to zero or to discrete isotropic values due to the rapid random motion of the molecules. During this period, particularly rich for NMR theory, most studies were related, for reasons of sensitivity, to nuclei which were abundant and easily detected (H, F, P...). In the last 10 years, superconducting high field, and especially, Fourier transform techniques have made it possible to observe nuclei of low abundance and/or low detection sensitivity, (for example some isotopes of C, Si, etc.).

The application of NMR to solids during this period was very limited. The main reason is that in rigid systems (solids, but also very strongly chemisorbed molecules) the interaction which can cause considerable broadening of the signals cannot be averaged to a small value by the motion of the species.

The potential of NMR spectroscopy is however such that it was unthinkable not to use such a tool to study rigid systems. The result has been the development, since about 1970, of sophisticated experimental techniques for signal narrowing

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Chapter 1

Application of NMR Methods to Catalysis

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1. Introduction

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The application of NMR to solids during this period was very limited. The main reason is that in rigid systems (solids, but also very strongly chemisorbed molecules) the interaction which can cause considerable broadening of the signals cannot be averaged to a small value by the motion of the species.

The potential of NMR spectroscopy is however such that it was unthinkable not to use such a tool to study rigid systems. The result has been the development, since about 1970, of sophisticated experimental techniques for signal narrowing

so as to obtain spectral resolution similar to that for liquids. These are principally: magic angle spinning (MAS); high-power dipolar coupling and appropriate multipulse sequences. In addition, the cross-polarization (CP) technique was developed to overcome the problem of low sensitivity in the solid state NMR of nuclei of low abundance (¹³C, ²⁹Si, etc.). A comprehensive survey of the various experimental techniques available in multinuclear solid state NMR, the information which can be deduced from the spectra in each case, and a very large range of applications in various fields, can be found in the excellent books of Fyfe [1] and Gerstein and Dybowski [2], while Abragam [3] discusses principles.

In a comprehensive study of a solid adsorbent acting as catalyst in interaction with adsorbed molecules, different aspects should be included:

- The study of the adsorbent itself;
- The identification of the active surface sites in the presence of adsorbed molecules;
- The state of adsorbed molecules at different temperatures;
- The study of catalytic transformations at the solid surface;
- Finally the mobility of the protons, counterions and adsorbed species at the surface.

In this work we shall not give an exhaustive review of all the NMR studies performed in the field of solid catalysts (surface properties, chemisorption and reaction mechanisms). We shall simply show through a few selected examples the interest of studying the various interactions to which nuclear spins are submitted as a means of resolving certain problems of heterogeneous catalysis.

Section 2 gives a short review of the physical background of the main types of nuclear magnetic interactions affecting the NMR spectra of solids, and of the various experimental techniques applied in NMR studies of solids.

Section 3 completes the previous one with a specific study of adsorbed species. These sections are intended merely to make it easier to understand the applications described thereafter without having to refer continuously to textbooks. We would point out that certain experimental details will be given in the examples rather than in these sections.

Section 4 concerns the use of broad-line NMR in the study of rigid lattices (systems in which the motion of the chemical species is severely reduced). The spectrum then usually depends on the dipolar interactions which are directly related to the distances between nuclear spins and, therefore, between the atoms. We discuss various applications to the study of proton distribution on solid surfaces (structure, heterogeneous-equilibria, acidity).

Chemical shifts of quasi-rigid chemical species can be determined if the signal can be narrowed either by the above mentioned HR-NMR techniques or by increasing the motion of the species. This is the case, for example, of chemisorbed phases. In section 5 we show how the adsorption of bases can be used to induce the motion of acidic hydrogens of solids and to determine their chemical shifts indirectly. We show also the interest of MAS-NMR for the study of the acidity of solid catalysts.

Section 6 deals with the study of the structure of solids by all HR-NMR techniques. We shall mainly discuss the study of zeolites (²⁹Si, ²⁷Al).