

Advances in
Catalysis

Volume 50



ADVANCES IN CATALYSIS

VOLUME 50

Edited by

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First edition 2006

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ISBN-13: 978-0-12-007850-9

ISBN-10: 0-12-007850-3

ISSN: 0360-0564

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Printed and bound in The Netherlands

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Preface

For more than five decades, the methods of surface physics and chemistry have provided some of the most incisive results advancing our understanding of the catalytic action of solids at the molecular scale. Characterizations by physical methods have demonstrated the dynamic nature of catalyst surfaces, showing that their structures, compositions, and reactivities may all be sensitive to temperature and the composition of the reactive environment. Thus, the most insightful catalyst characterizations are those of catalysts as they function. This volume of *Advances in Catalysis* is dedicated to the topic of physical characterization of solid catalysts in the functioning state. Because the literature of this topic has become so extensive, the representation will extend beyond the present volume to the subsequent two volumes of the *Advances*.

The literature of this subject has generated its share of jargon, which has been held to a minimum in the following contributions. The term *in-situ* is widely used to describe catalyst characterization experiments, but with inconsistent meanings. We suggest that it might be best to use this term to describe experiments with strict control of all parameters that might affect the surface properties of a catalyst, whether or not a catalytic reaction may be operative. We have preferred to minimize use of this term and to refer explicitly to functioning, working, or operating catalysts when appropriate. Alternatively, the term *operando* has been applied (e.g., B. M. Weckhuysen, *Phys. Chem. Chem. Phys.* **5**, 4351 (2003)) to the characterization of catalysts by spectroscopic methods with simultaneous measurements of catalytic activity (and/or selectivity and/or stability). Unfortunately, many authors have used this term more loosely, for example, without reporting any catalyst performance data, and it seems to be at risk of becoming as vague in usage as “in situ;” we largely avoid it in this set of volumes.

It is generally desirable to integrate measurements representing a working catalyst surface with measurements that characterize the activity, selectivity, and/or stability of the catalyst, such as can be determined by use of gas chromatography or mass spectrometry of products. It is important to keep in mind that when a reactor is designed to serve optimally as a cell for measurements of catalyst surface properties, it may not be the kind of ideal reactor that would provide activity, selectivity, or stability data that can be interpreted fundamentally in terms of kinetics and chemical reaction engineering.

The growing interest in physical characterization of solid catalysts as they function has stimulated a new series of congresses, the first held in Lunteren (The Netherlands) in 2003 and the second in Toledo in 2006. The subject has been documented in recent books (B. M. Weckhuysen, Ed., "In situ Spectroscopy of Catalysts," American Scientific Publishers, 2004, and J. F. Haw, Ed., "In situ Spectroscopy in Heterogeneous Catalysis," Wiley-VCH, 2002) and in topical issues of journals: *Top. Catal.* **15** (2001); *Phys. Chem. Chem. Phys.* **5**, issue 20 (2003); and *Catal. Today* **113** (2006). It is our intention that our set of volumes be more nearly comprehensive than these publications, as well as providing many newer results.

In the present volume, Gladden, Mantle, and Sederman summarize the application of magnetic resonance imaging techniques to represent both local flow fields in reactors containing solid catalyst particles and conversions within model reactors. The techniques provide a non-invasive, chemically specific measurement technique that leads to representation of a reactor over length scales ranging from Angstroms to centimeters.

Hansen, Helveg, and Datye report on atomic-scale imaging of supported metal nanocluster catalysts in the working state. High-resolution transmission electron microscopy allows atomic-resolution imaging of transition metal catalysts during exposure to reactive gases at elevated temperatures, providing insights into the structure, morphology, and dynamics of supported catalysts with various surfaces and interfaces as they function. Examples include evidence of the location of a barium promoter in a ruthenium catalyst for ammonia synthesis and environment-induced morphology changes in supported copper catalysts for methanol synthesis.

Lauritsen and Besenbacher summarize research on model catalyst surfaces investigated by scanning tunneling microscopy (STM). They show atomic-scale information obtained by STM elucidating the formation of surface alloys; wetting; blocking of reactive step edges; and identification of electronic states at the edges of nanoclusters. These results have helped to guide the preparation of new high-surface-area catalysts.

Hunger and Wang provide an account of advances in the characterization of solid catalysts in the functioning state by nuclear magnetic resonance spectroscopy. Examples include investigations of zeolite-catalyzed reactions with isotopic labels that allow characterization of transition states and reaction pathways as well as characterization of organic deposits, surface complexes, and reaction intermediates formed in catalyst pores.

Bürgi and Baiker summarize progress in the application of attenuated total reflection infrared spectroscopy for investigation of solid catalysts functioning in the presence of liquid-phase reactants. The technique allows the detection of liquid-phase products and the investigation of species adsorbed on catalysts during reaction, even in the presence of strongly adsorbing solvents. Under some conditions, changing catalyst structures can be investigated with this technique.

H. KNÖZINGER
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Contents

CONTRIBUTORS	xi
PREFACE	xiii

Magnetic Resonance Imaging of Catalysts and Catalytic Processes

L. F. Gladden, M. D. Mantle and A. J. Sederman

I. Introduction	2
II. Introduction to MRI Techniques	5
A. Principles of MR Measurements	5
1. Obtaining an Image	5
2. Nuclear Spin Relaxation Times	7
3. The k-Space Raster	10
B. Measurement of Diffusion, Dispersion, and Flow	13
1. Phase-Encoding Methods	13
2. Time-of-Flight Methods	18
3. Rapid Image Acquisition	19
C. Contrast Mechanisms	19
1. Obtaining Chemical Information	19
2. Relaxation and Transport Contrast	22
D. Temperature	24
E. Recent Developments	24
1. Gas-Phase MR	24
2. Fast Data Acquisition	25
III. Imaging Individual Catalyst Pellets	32
A. Structure-Transport Relationships	32
B. Catalyst Preparation	34
C. Liquid Redistribution During Reaction	35
D. Coke Deposition	37
IV. Hydrodynamics in Reactors	38
A. Single-Phase Flow	39
1. High Spatial Resolution of Fluid Flow in Fixed-Bed Reactors	39
2. Imaging Unsteady-State Flows in Fixed-Bed Reactors	43
B. Two-Phase Flow in Fixed-Bed Reactors	45
1. Holdup and Wetting in Trickle Flow	45
2. The Trickle Flow to Pulse Flow Transition	50
C. Two-Phase Flow in Ceramic Monoliths	52
D. Fluidized Beds	57
V. Imaging of Reactions <i>In Situ</i>	59
A. Single-Phase Reactions in Fixed Beds	60
1. An Esterification Reaction	60
2. Probing Selectivity with ^{13}C Imaging	65
B. Two-Phase Flow and Reaction in Fixed Beds	68
VI. Future Directions	70

Acknowledgment	71
References	71

Atomic-Scale Imaging of Supported Metal Nanocluster Catalysts in the Working State

P. L. Hansen, S. Helveg and A. K. Datye

I. Introduction	77
II. Transmission Electron Microscopy (Limitations of Conventional TEM in the Characterization of Catalysts).	79
III. Approaches to Characterization of Catalysts in Reactive Atmospheres	80
A. Differentially Pumped TEM Instruments	80
B. Thin-Window Cells	84
VI. Examples of HRTEM Characterization of Catalysts in Reactive Atmospheres	84
A. The Complex Nanostructure of an Ammonia Synthesis Catalyst	84
B. Gas-Induced Shape Changes in Cu/ZnO-Containing Methanol Synthesis Catalysts	86
C. Atomic-scale Monitoring of Carbon Nanofiber Growth in Steam Reforming Catalysts.	89
V. Outlook	91
Acknowledgments	93
References	93

Model Catalyst Surfaces Investigated by Scanning Tunneling Microscopy

J.V. Lauritsen and F. Besenbacher

I. Introduction	97
II. Scanning Tunneling Microscopy.	100
A. STM Design Considerations	101
B. Theory of the STM	102
1. Tersoff-Hamann STM Theory	103
2. Simulation of STM Images.	105
III. New Au/Ni Surface Alloy Catalyst for Steam Reforming.	106
IV. Designing New Nickel Catalysts by Step Blocking.	110
V. Investigations of an HDS Model Catalyst with STM	113
A. Hydrotreating Catalyst Structure and Reactivity.	113
B. HDS Model Catalyst	115
1. HDS Model Catalyst: MoS ₂ Nanoclusters Supported on Au (1 1 1)	116
2. Preparation of MoS ₂ Nanoclusters	117
C. Atomic-Scale Structure of MoS ₂ Nanoclusters	119
1. Fundamental Characterization	119
2. Morphology and Edge Structure.	120
D. The Chemistry of Single-Layer MoS ₂ Nanoclusters.	124
1. Thiophene on Fully Sulfided MoS ₂ Nanoclusters	124
2. Reactions of Hydrogen-Activated MoS ₂ Nanoclusters.	125
3. Reaction of Thiophene on Hydrogen-Activated MoS ₂ Nanoclusters	127

4. Energetics and Reaction Pathways: Metallic Edge States as Active Sites	129
5. Atomic-Scale Structure of the Cobalt-Promoted Catalyst.	133
6. Metallic Brim States as Active Sites in Hydrotreating Catalysts	135
VI. Toward more Realistic Model Systems and Imaging of Surfaces during Reaction	135
A. Time-Resolved STM Investigations	135
B. Imaging of Surfaces during Reaction	138
C. Atomic Force Microscopy of Insulating Materials	141
VII. Synopsis and Perspective	141
Acknowledgments	142
References	143

Characterization of Solid Catalysts in the Functioning State by Nuclear Magnetic Resonance Spectroscopy

M. Hunger and W. Wang

I. Introduction	150
II. Principles of Solid-State NMR Spectroscopy	151
A. Solid-State Interactions of Nuclear Spins	151
B. Solid-State NMR Techniques	154
C. Techniques for Signal Enhancement and Discrimination in Solid-State NMR Spectroscopy	156
D. Solid-State NMR Spectroscopy at Elevated Temperatures	158
1. Effect of Temperature on Signal-to-Noise Ratio	158
2. Temperature Calibration.	159
III. Experimental Techniques for MAS NMR Spectroscopy of Working Catalysts.	160
A. Batch Conditions	161
B. Flow Conditions.	165
C. Limitations and Advantages of Solid-State NMR Spectroscopy for Investigations of Working Catalysts	170
1. General Aspects.	170
2. Comparison of Batch and Flow Techniques	171
IV. Study of Transition States of Acid-Catalyzed Reactions	172
A. Indirect Experimental Evidence of Reactive Carbenium Ions	172
1. Formation of Surface Alkoxy Species with Carbenium-Ion-Like Properties	173
2. Evidence for the Existence of Carbenium Ions by Trapping Experiments.	175
3. Isotope Scrambling.	177
4. Persistent Carbenium Ions in Zeolites Characterized by NMR Spectroscopy	179
B. Keto–Enol Isomerization on Acidic Zeolite HZSM-5 Evidenced by H/D Exchange	180
V. Activation of Saturated Hydrocarbons on Solid Catalysts.	182
A. Catalytic Transformation of Methane into Aromatics Under Non-Oxidative Conditions.	182
B. Activation and Aromatization of Propane on Solid Acid Catalysts	183
VI. Photocatalytic Reactions on Solid Catalysts.	185
A. Photocatalytic Conversion of Chlorine-Containing Organic Compounds on Titanium Oxide	186
B. Photocatalytic Conversion of Oxygenates on Titanium Oxide.	187

VII. Investigations of Chemical Behavior and Local Structure of Surface Sites in Zeolites and Microporous Silicoaluminophosphates	188
A. Chemical Behavior and Local Structure of Surface Sites in Zeolites	188
B. Chemical Behavior and Local Structure of Surface Sites in Microporous Silicoaluminophosphates	190
VIII. Synthesis of MTBE on Acidic Zeolites	194
A. Reversible Conversion of MTBE on Boron-Modified Pentasil under Batch Conditions	194
B. MTBE Synthesis on Zeolite H-Beta Under CF Conditions	195
IX. Alkylation of Aromatic Compounds on Acidic and Basic Zeolites	196
A. Alkylation of Toluene	196
B. Alkylation of Aniline	198
1. Alkylation of Aniline on Basic Zeolite CsOH/Cs,NaY	199
2. Alkylation of Aniline on Acidic Zeolite HY	200
C. Synthesis and Immobilization of Quarternary Ammonium Ions in Zeolites	203
X. MTHC Conversion on Acidic Zeolites	205
A. Reactivity of Surface Methoxy Species	207
1. Formation of Surface Methoxy Species during the Conversion of Methanol to DME on Acidic Zeolites	207
2. Preparation of Methoxy Species on Acidic Zeolites by the SF Technique	209
3. Role of Surface Methoxy Species in the Formation of DME	210
4. Formation of Higher Hydrocarbons by Surface Methoxy Species	211
B. Investigation of the MTO Process Under Steady-State Conditions	212
1. Characterization of the Hydrocarbon Pool	213
2. Simultaneous Characterization of the Formation of Hydrocarbon Pool Compounds on Acidic Zeolites by MAS NMR-UV/Vis Spectroscopy	215
XI. Conclusions and Outlook	216
Acknowledgments	217
References	217

Attenuated Total Reflection Infrared Spectroscopy of Solid Catalysts Functioning in the Presence of Liquid-Phase Reactants

T. Bürgi and A. Baiker

I. Introduction	228
II. Fundamentals of ATR Spectroscopy	229
A. Evanescent Field, Penetration Depth, and Effective Thickness	229
B. Electric Field Components in Bulk Rare (Optically Thin) Medium	230
C. Simulation of Spectra of Stratified Media	232
III. ATR Spectroscopy for <i>In situ</i> Investigations in Catalysis	234
A. Thin Metal Films	234
B. Powder Catalysts	238
IV. Cell Design	242
A. On-Line Process Control and Reaction Monitoring	242
B. Flow-Through Cell	245
C. High-Pressure View Cell	248
V. Potential and Limitations	251
VI. Specialized Techniques	259
A. Modulation Excitation Spectroscopy	259

B. Time-Resolved Spectroscopy	265
C. Single-Beam Signal Reference	266
VII. Combination with Other Techniques	268
VIII. Selected Applications	271
A. Elucidation of Adsorption Mode and Interaction of Co-adsorbed Species	271
B. Investigation of Phase Behavior in Multiphase Heterogeneous Catalytic Reaction . .	274
C. Investigation of Complex Reaction Network Occurring at Catalytic Solid–Liquid Interface	275
D. Catalyst Deactivation	278
IX. Other Methods for IR Spectroscopy of Catalytic Solid–Liquid Interfaces	278
X. Conclusions	279
Acknowledgments	281
References	281
INDEX	285

Magnetic Resonance Imaging of Catalysts and Catalytic Processes

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Magnetic resonance (MR), in the form of solid-state nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) spectroscopy, is well established as a research tool for investigations of the structures of solid catalysts and molecular species adsorbed on them. However, during the past decade there has been increasing interest in using magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) techniques to study, in particular, flow fields inside reactors. These studies have recently been extended to measurements of chemical conversion within model reactor systems. The real power of MR techniques is that by bringing together spectroscopy, diffusion, micro-imaging, and flow imaging, they provide a non-invasive, chemically specific measurement technique which can characterize a system over length scales ranging from the angstrom- to the centimeter scale. In this review, recent developments in MRI pulse sequences are summarized and applications to investigations of both hydrodynamics and catalytic conversion within catalysts and catalytic reactors are presented.

Materials: 2M2B; 2-methyl-2-butene; HZSM-5; zeolite with MFI framework (IUPAC nomenclature); NaCaA; zeolite with LTA framework (IUPAC nomenclature); NaX; zeolites with FAU framework (IUPAC nomenclature); Pd/Al₂O₃; alumina supported palladium catalyst; TAME; tert-amyl methyl ether or 2-methoxy-2-methylbutane; TAOH; tert-amyl alcohol or 2-methyl-butan-2-ol

Abbreviations: BET; Brunauer Emmett Teller; adsorption isotherm model; BLIPPED EPI; MR pulse sequence; CFD; computational fluid dynamics; CSI; chemical shift imaging; MR pulse sequence; DANTE; delays alternating with nutations for tailored excitation; MR pulse sequence; DANTE TOF; delays alternating with nutations for tailored excitation time of flight; MR pulse sequence; DEPT; distortionless enhancement by polarization transfer; MR pulse sequence; EPI; echo planar imaging; MR pulse sequence; FID; free induction decay; FLASH; fast low-angle shot; MR pulse sequence; FSE; fast spin echo; MR pulse sequence; GERVAIS; gradient echo rapid velocity and acceleration imaging sequence; MR pulse sequence derived from EPI; GRASE; gradient and spin echo; MR pulse sequence; MBEST-EPI; modulus blipped echo planar single-pulse technique; MR pulse sequence derived from EPI; MR; magnetic resonance; MRI; magnetic resonance imaging; NMR; nuclear magnetic resonance; Pe; dimensionless group characterizing flow; PEPI, π -EPI; MR pulse sequence derived from EPI; PFG; pulsed field gradient; MR pulse sequence; PGSE; pulsed gradient spin echo; MR pulse sequence; RARE; rapid acquisition with relaxation enhancement; MR pulse sequence; Re; Reynolds number; dimensionless group characterizing flow; REPI; radial EPI; MR pulse sequence derived from EPI; SEMI-RARE; single excitation multiple image rapid acquisition with relaxation enhancement; MR pulse sequence derived from RARE; SNAPSHOT; MR pulse sequence; SPRITE; single point ramped imaging with T_1 enhancement; MR pulse sequence; TMS; tetramethylsilane; TOF; time of flight; TSE; turbo spin echo; MR pulse sequence

Nomenclature: *Greek*, Δ ; observation time in transport measurement pulse sequence (s), Φ ; net phase offset (rad), γ ; gyromagnetic ratio ($\text{rad s}^{-1} \text{T}^{-1}$), δ ; time for which pulsed magnetic field gradient is applied (s), ϕ ; phase offset (rad), χ ; liquid holdup, χ_{dynamic} ; dynamic liquid holdup, χ_s ; surface wetting, θ ; pulse angle (rad), ρ ; spin density (m^{-3}), τ ; delay time (s), ω ; angular frequency (rad s^{-1}), ω_0 ; resonance or Larmor frequency (rad s^{-1}); *Roman*, B ; magnetic field (T), B_0 ; external magnetic field (T), G ; magnetic field gradient for imaging (T m^{-1}), M ; magnetization (A m^{-1}), M_0 ; equilibrium magnetization (A m^{-1}), P_s ; displacement propagator, S ; acquired signal intensity, T_1 ; spin-lattice relaxation time (s), T_2 ; spin-spin relaxation time (s), T_2^* ; time constant of the free induction decay in the presence of B_0 inhomogeneities (s), X ; conversion, a ; acceleration (m s^{-2}), e ; component of the stress tensor (s^{-1}), g ; magnetic field gradient employed in transport measurements (T m^{-1}), \mathbf{k} ; reciprocal space vector employed in imaging (m^{-1}), \mathbf{q} ; reciprocal space vector employed in transport measurements (m^{-1}), \mathbf{r} ; position vector (m), t ; time (s), t_d ; delay time in the spin-echo pulse sequence (s), v ; velocity (m s^{-1}), x, y, z ; Cartesian laboratory-frame coordinates, x', y', z' ; Cartesian rotating-frame coordinates

I. Introduction

Until the early 1990s, application of magnetic resonance (MR) to studies of *in situ* catalysis was almost exclusively the domain of the chemist employing increasingly sophisticated solid-state MR pulse sequences to investigate the mechanisms of catalytic processes. Such work has been reviewed extensively by many workers, including Packer (1), Dybowski *et al.* (2), Roe *et al.* (3), Baba and Ono (4), Fraissard (5), Haw (6), Ivanova (7), Parker (8), van der Klink (9), Hunger and Weitkamp (10), and Han *et al.* (11). These reports of *in situ* catalysis address the molecular-scale events occurring during the catalytic process and give valuable information regarding structure-function relationships in catalytic materials. To a lesser extent, spatially unresolved measurements of molecular diffusion have been made within catalysts by use of pulsed field gradient (PFG) techniques (e.g., Kärger and Freude (12)). The present review is an evaluation of the role of MR in investigations of *in situ* catalysis from a quite different perspective—that of imaging.

Traditionally the technique of the medical physicist, magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) has long been used to investigate the internal structure of the human body and the transport processes occurring within it; for example, MRI has been used to characterize drug transport within damaged tissue and blood flow within the circulatory system. It is therefore a natural extension of medical MRI to implement these techniques to study flow phenomena and chemical transformations within catalysts and catalytic reactors.

Figure 1 is a schematic illustration of the length scales probed by various MR techniques and the areas of catalysis that can therefore be addressed. Across these length scales, the ability of MR to quantify both structure and dynamics, non-invasively and with chemical specificity within optically opaque systems, offers great opportunities for increasing our understanding of catalysts and catalytic reactors. Existing MRI investigations tend to fall into two broad categories:

Microimaging studies of single catalyst pellets. In these investigations, spatial resolutions of $\sim 30\text{--}50\ \mu\text{m}$ are typically achieved, and steady- and unsteady-state

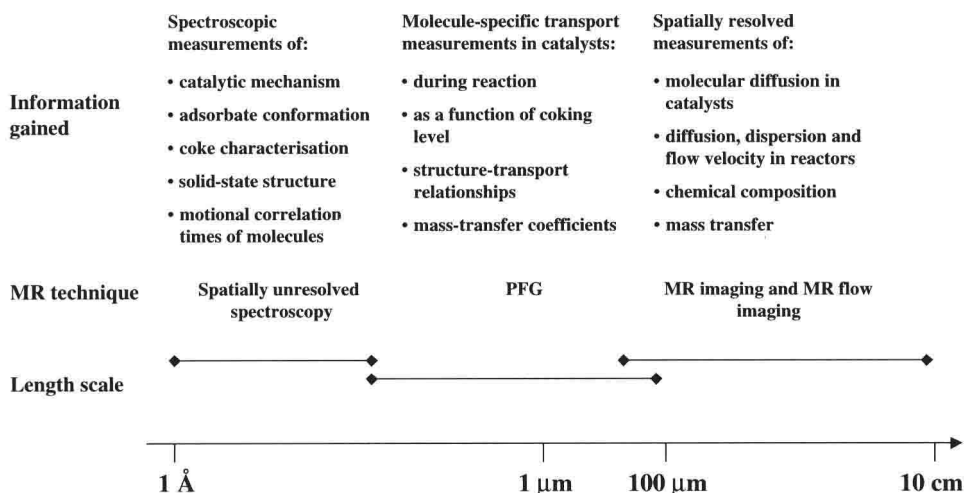


FIG. 1. The MR Toolkit: MR techniques yield information about chemical and physical processes over length scales of Å to cm. Imaging pulse sequences may be integrated with spectroscopy and molecular diffusion measurements providing maps of chemical composition and molecular transport phenomena at spatial resolutions of 30–500 μm.

liquid distributions within the individual pellets have been imaged. A variety of applications has been reported. For example, the characterization of processing–structure–function relationships in catalyst manufacture and, in particular, the effect of catalyst manufacturing processes on the micro- and meso-scale pore structure of the resulting catalyst pellet and hence the molecular transport processes occurring within the catalyst. The same methods also lend themselves to investigation of liquid transport processes during catalyst preparation, such as liquid and ion transport occurring during a catalyst preparation by ion exchange. With respect to the catalytic reaction process itself, liquid re-distribution as a result of temperature gradients caused by chemical reaction has been demonstrated. Coke deposition can also be followed.

Microimaging and flow imaging of reactors. MRI has found considerable success in imaging the internal phase distributions and liquid flow fields inside reactors, at spatial resolutions of 100–500 μm. The dimensions of systems studied are constrained to the dimensions of the bore of the superconducting magnet used. In vertical bore systems, standard magnet hardware allows reactor diameters of 2.5–6 cm to be investigated, with a similar field-of-view along the direction of the axis of the magnet. In the case of horizontal bore systems, medical imaging magnet technology provides magnet bores of ~30 cm in diameter, which provide a field-of-view of ~20 cm in vertical and horizontal directions. Although these constraints do not allow us to study the large fixed-bed catalytic processes used in plants in, say, the petroleum refining sector, we are able to investigate scaled-down reactors of dimensions typical of those used in industrial research and

development. Furthermore, with increasing interest in the design of micro-reactor technologies, many new reactor designs do actually fit inside the magnet at full scale.

The motivation to extend these measurements and, in particular, to integrate MR spectroscopy, transport measurements, and imaging techniques is strong. In principle, we should be able to study the behavior of a single catalyst pellet within a reactor while it is operating within the fixed bed and observe directly the effects of catalyst form (i.e., pellet size and shape) and reactant–solid contacting patterns within the reactor on overall catalyst activity, selectivity, and lifetime. MR offers the opportunity to bridge the length scales from the angstrom- to the centimeter scale by incorporating MR spectroscopy into imaging strategies, thereby spatially resolving spectral acquisition. Currently, such imaging experiments are in their infancy and yield spatial resolutions of the order of 50–600 μm , sufficient to show, for example, the spatial variation of conversion within a fixed-bed reactor. To use MR routinely in *in situ* studies of catalysis, new MR techniques will have to be developed and implemented to retain the inherent, quantitative nature of the MR measurement in catalyst and reactor systems, which are characterized by strong variations in magnetic susceptibility and fast nuclear spin relaxation time processes. In this regard, catalyst and reactor systems are very different from the human body in terms of the sample response to the radio frequency excitation and pulsed magnetic field gradients used in an MR experiment; consequently, medical MRI strategies do not translate directly into catalysis research. It is also worth reiterating the known limitations of MR techniques regarding systems that can be investigated. From a practical point of view, large ferromagnetic objects cannot be handled within and close to a superconducting magnet. However, units comprising aluminum and brass can be used within the magnet. With respect to the sample itself, the ability to characterize a given system is very material-specific. Ferromagnetic and paramagnetic particles act to distort the local magnetic fields and influence relaxation times within the sample, thereby making all investigations based upon quantitative analysis extremely challenging. However, each system should be considered on a case-by-case basis. For example, the strong influence of paramagnetic ions on signal intensity can be successfully exploited to follow the evolution of redox reactions with time.

The aim of this review is to introduce the language of MRI to the catalysis community and to describe the early achievements in this field. The structure of this article is as follows:

- (a) Section II introduces the principles of MRI methods and describes the MRI pulse sequences currently used in *in situ* studies of chemical reactors.
- (b) Sections III and IV review work done in imaging fluid distribution and transport at the length scale of catalyst pellet (Section III) and reactor (Section IV).
- (c) Section V brings together the work done in spatially resolving spectroscopic measurements within model reactor environments; these experiments allow us to follow reactions *in situ*.
- (d) Section VI provides a brief forward look on the future role of MRI in catalysis research.