



Alexander Fridman

PLASMA CHEMISTRY

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Plasma Chemistry

Alexander Fridman

Drexel University



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PLASMA CHEMISTRY

This unique book provides a fundamental introduction to all aspects of modern plasma chemistry. The book describes mechanisms and kinetics of chemical processes in plasma, plasma statistics, thermodynamics, fluid mechanics, and electrodynamics, as well as all major electric discharges applied in plasma chemistry. The book considers most of the major applications of plasma chemistry, from electronics to thermal coatings, from treatment of polymers to fuel conversion and hydrogen production, and from plasma metallurgy to plasma medicine. The book can be helpful to engineers, scientists, and students interested in plasma physics, plasma chemistry, plasma engineering, and combustion, as well as in chemical physics, lasers, energy systems, and environmental control. The book contains an extensive database on plasma kinetics and thermodynamics, as well as many convenient numerical formulas for practical calculations related to specific plasma-chemical processes and applications. The book contains a large number of problems and concept questions that are helpful in university courses related to plasma, lasers, combustion, chemical kinetics, statistics and thermodynamics, and high-temperature and high-energy fluid mechanics.

Alexander Fridman is Nyheim Chair Professor of Drexel University and Director of Drexel Plasma Institute. His research focuses on plasma approaches to material treatment, fuel conversion, hydrogen production, biology, medicine, and environmental control. Professor Fridman has more than 35 years of plasma research experience in national laboratories and universities in Russia, France, and the United States. He has published 6 books and 450 papers, chaired several international plasma conferences, and received numerous awards, including the Stanley Kaplan Distinguished Professorship in Chemical Kinetics and Energy Systems, the George Soros Distinguished Professorship in Physics, and the State Prize of the USSR for discovery of selective stimulation of chemical processes in non-thermal plasma.

To my wife Irene

Foreword

Although the public understanding of plasmas may be limited to plasma TVs, low-temperature plasma processes are beginning to enter into a higher level of consciousness due to the importance of plasma in many aspects of technological developments. The use of plasma for industrial purposes began more than 100 years ago with plasma sources used to produce light. Since then, plasma processes have emerged in transforming wide-ranging technologies, including microelectronics, gas lasers, polymers and novel materials, protective coatings, and water purification, and finally found their ubiquitous place in our homes. Plasma systems or plasma-treated materials are now commonly used and can be found in air-cleaning systems; food containers; fruit, meat, and vegetable treatment; fabrics; and medical devices.

In recent years, new application areas of plasma chemistry and plasma processing have been established, such as plasma nanotechnology with the continuous growth of the “dusty plasmas” domain, plasma production and modification of nanotubes, plasma aerodynamics, and plasma ignition and stabilization of flames. With the recent emphasis on alternative energy and environmental concerns, plasma chemistry has revolutionized hydrogen production, biomass conversion, and fuel-cell technology. In the same manner, the use of non-thermal plasmas in biology and medicine will likely “explode” in the coming years for various applications. Plasma is expected to soon be widely used in surgery, decontamination and sterilization of surfaces and devices, and air and water streams, as well as in tissue engineering and direct treatment of skin diseases.

In many of these applications, comprehension of detailed mechanisms, knowledge of the reaction kinetics, and understanding of the production of radicals or excited species are vital for optimization of plasma reactors and plasma processes. A growing number of universities recognize the importance of plasma technology and are preparing future professionals who are cognizant of the latest achievements in practice. Drexel University (more specifically, Drexel Plasma Institute), where the author of the book serves as the Nyheim Chair Professor, is one of the world’s leading centers focused on plasma chemistry and engineering. Drexel University today makes a significant contribution to the successful development of both plasma research and plasma education and works closely with the International Plasma Chemistry Society to coordinate international activities in research, education, and outreach.

As a result of the increased interest in low-pressure plasma science, researchers and engineers are faced with the problem of evaluating the broad and varied literature from a common basis of fundamental plasma chemistry. The book that you hold in your hands meets this challenge! This book represents the first comprehensive contribution that presents the fundamentals of plasma chemistry and the scientific basis of most modern applications of plasma technologies. This book is written by my distinguished colleague and friend,

Foreword

Alexander Fridman, who has made outstanding contributions in the development of modern plasma science and engineering, especially in plasma kinetics of excited and charged particles, in the development of novel non-thermal atmospheric-pressure discharges, in fuel conversion and hydrogen production, in plasma sterilization and disinfection, and, more recently, in breakthrough developments in plasma medicine. *Plasma Chemistry* is of unique value to scientists, engineers, and students in the domains of plasma physics, chemistry, and engineering. It is my great pleasure to recommend this excellent work to practitioners, students, and scientists who are interested in the fundamentals and applications of plasma chemistry.

Jean-Michel Pouvesle,
President of the International Plasma Chemistry Society
Director of GREMI, University of Orleans, France
June, 2007

Preface

Plasma chemistry is an area of research that has consumed and inspired more than 35 years of the author's professional activities. During this period, plasma chemistry has become a rapidly growing area of scientific endeavor that holds great promise for practical applications for industrial and medical fields. Plasma has become a ubiquitous element that pervades many aspects of our lives. For example, the public is well aware of plasma TV, fluorescent lamps, and plasma thrusters, as well as popular-culture concepts such as plasma guns and plasma shields from *Star Trek*. Not many are aware, however, that computers, cell phones, and other modern electronic devices are manufactured using plasma-enabled chemical processing equipment; that most of the synthetic fibers used in clothing, photomaterials, and advanced packaging materials are plasma treated; that a significant amount of potable water in the world is purified using ozone-plasma technology; and that many different tools and special surfaces are plasma coated to protect and provide them with new extraordinary properties. The developments in plasma chemistry are enabling tremendous growth in a variety of applications for manufacturing, environmental remediation, and therapeutic and preventive medicine.

The motivation for this book is to provide engineers and scientists with a foundational understanding of the physical and chemical phenomena associated with both thermal and non-thermal discharge plasmas. Students pursuing degrees in electrical, chemical, mechanical, environmental, and materials engineering will find that the applications in plasma and plasma chemistry will have many important bearings in their own disciplinary areas. Therefore, the objectives and challenges of this book are to present the broad extent of basic and applied knowledge on modern plasma chemistry in a comprehensive manner for students, as well as for senior scientists and engineers.

This book also includes detailed problems and inquiries to enhance the conceptual understanding of the diverse plasma chemistry-related topics ranging from nonequilibrium processes to quantum chemistry in a manner that is readily amenable to interactive learning for students and practitioners of the topic. The problems and concept questions have been developed based on the sequence of plasma courses taught by the author at Drexel University. The book also contains extensive data tables and numerical and empirical formulas to help engineers, scientists, and practitioners in calculations of plasma-chemical systems and plasma-chemical processes. The book consists of 12 chapters; the first 4 chapters focus on the fundamental aspects of plasma chemistry, including elementary processes, physical and chemical kinetics of charged and excited plasma particles, and basic physics of gas discharges. The following 8 chapters deal with specific applications of plasma chemistry on practical implementation in areas such as electronics manufacturing, energy systems, fuel conversion, surface treatment, remediation of contaminated air and water, treatment of diseases, and destruction of pathogens.

Preface

The author gratefully acknowledges the support of his family; and support of plasma research by John and Chris Nyheim and the Stanley Kaplan family; support of the Drexel Plasma Institute (DPI) through leaders of Drexel University: Provost Steve Director, Vice Provost Ken Blank, and Dean Selcuk Guceri. The author is grateful to Professor Mun Choi, Dean of the University of Connecticut, for useful recommendations and help in working on the text. The author greatly appreciates the research support provided to DPI by the National Science Foundation, U.S. Department of Energy, U.S. Department of Defense (specifically DARPA, TARDEC Army Research Lab, and Air Force OSR), NASA, and USDA, as well as the support of our long-term industrial sponsors, Chevron, Kodak, Air Products, Georgia Pacific, Applied Materials, and Ceramtec.

For stimulating discussions on the topic of plasma chemistry and immeasurable assistance in development of the book, the author gratefully acknowledges Dr. James Hervonen from the Army Research Lab, as well as all his colleagues and friends from DPI, especially Professors A. Brooks, N. Cernansky, Y. Cho, B. Farouk, G. Friedman, A. Gutsol, R. Knight, T. Miller, G. Palmese, W. Sun, V. Vasilets, and Ph.D. students M. Cooper, G. Fridman, M. Gallagher, S. Gangoli, and D. Staack. Special thanks are addressed to Kirill Gutsol for assistance with numerous illustrations.

Contents

Foreword	page xxxix
Preface	xli
I Introduction to Theoretical and Applied Plasma Chemistry	I
1.1. Plasma as the Fourth State of Matter	1
1.2. Plasma in Nature and in the Laboratory	2
1.3. Plasma Temperatures: Thermal and Non-Thermal Plasmas	4
1.4. Plasma Sources for Plasma Chemistry: Gas Discharges	5
1.5. Fundamentals of Plasma Chemistry: Major Components of Chemically Active Plasma and Mechanisms of Plasma-Chemical Processes	8
1.6. Applied Plasma Chemistry	9
1.7. Plasma as a High-Tech Magic Wand of Modern Technology	10
2 Elementary Plasma-Chemical Reactions	12
2.1. Ionization Processes	12
2.1.1. Elementary Charged Particles in Plasma	12
2.1.2. Elastic and Inelastic Collisions and Their Fundamental Parameters	13
2.1.3. Classification of Ionization Processes	14
2.1.4. Elastic Scattering and Energy Transfer in Collisions of Charged Particles: Coulomb Collisions	15
2.1.5. Direct Ionization by Electron Impact: Thomson Formula	16
2.1.6. Specific Features of Ionization of Molecules by Electron Impact: Frank-Condon Principle and Dissociative Ionization	17
2.1.7. Stepwise Ionization by Electron Impact	18
2.1.8. Ionization by High-Energy Electrons and Electron Beams: Bethe-Bloch Formula	20
2.1.9. Photo-Ionization Processes	20
2.1.10. Ionization in Collisions of Heavy Particles: Adiabatic Principle and Massey Parameter	21
2.1.11. Penning Ionization Effect and Associative Ionization	21
2.2. Elementary Plasma-Chemical Reactions of Positive Ions	22
2.2.1. Different Mechanisms of Electron-Ion Recombination in Plasma	22

Contents

2.2.2. Dissociative Electron–Ion Recombination and Possible Preliminary Stage of Ion Conversion	23
2.2.3. Three-Body and Radiative Electron–Ion Recombination Mechanisms	25
2.2.4. Ion–Molecular Reactions, Ion–Molecular Polarization Collisions, and the Langevin Rate Coefficient	26
2.2.5. Ion–Atomic Charge Transfer Processes and Resonant Charge Transfer	28
2.2.6. Non-Resonant Charge Transfer Processes and Ion–Molecular Chemical Reactions of Positive and Negative Ions	29
2.3. Elementary Plasma-Chemical Reactions Involving Negative Ions	31
2.3.1. Dissociative Electron Attachment to Molecules as a Major Mechanism of Negative Ion Formation in Electronegative Molecular Gases	31
2.3.2. Three-Body Electron Attachment and Other Mechanisms of Formation of Negative Ions	33
2.3.3. Destruction of Negative Ions: Associative Detachment, Electron Impact Detachment, and Detachment in Collisions with Excited Particles	35
2.3.4. Recombination of Negative and Positive Ions	37
2.3.5. Ion–Ion Recombination in Binary Collisions	38
2.3.6. Three-Body Ion–Ion Recombination: Thomson’s Theory and Langevin Model	39
2.4. Electron Emission and Heterogeneous Ionization Processes	42
2.4.1. Thermionic Emission: Sommerfeld Formula and Schottky Effect	42
2.4.2. Field Emission of Electrons in Strong Electric Fields: Fowler–Nordheim Formula and Thermionic Field Emission	43
2.4.3. Secondary Electron Emission	45
2.4.4. Photo-Ionization of Aerosols: Monochromatic Radiation	46
2.4.5. Photo-Ionization of Aerosols: Continuous-Spectrum Radiation	49
2.4.6. Thermal Ionization of Aerosols: Einbinder Formula	51
2.4.7. Space Distribution of Electrons and Electric Field Around a Thermally Ionized Macro-Particle	52
2.4.8. Electric Conductivity of Thermally Ionized Aerosols	53
2.5. Excitation and Dissociation of Neutral Particles in Ionized Gases	54
2.5.1. Vibrational Excitation of Molecules by Electron Impact	54
2.5.2. Rate Coefficients of Vibrational Excitation by Electron Impact: Semi-Empirical Fridman Approximation	56
2.5.3. Rotational Excitation of Molecules by Electron Impact	58
2.5.4. Electronic Excitation of Atoms and Molecules by Electron Impact	59
2.5.5. Dissociation of Molecules by Direct Electron Impact	61
2.5.6. Distribution of Electron Energy in Non-Thermal Discharges Between Different Channels of Excitation and Ionization	63

Contents

2.6. Elementary Relaxation Processes of Energy Transfer Involving Vibrationally, Rotationally, and Electronically Excited Molecules	67
2.6.1. Vibrational–Translational (VT) Relaxation: Slow Adiabatic Elementary Process	67
2.6.2. Landau–Teller Formula for VT-Relaxation Rate Coefficients	69
2.6.3. Fast Non-Adiabatic Mechanisms of VT Relaxation	71
2.6.4. Vibrational Energy Transfer Between Molecules: Resonant VV Relaxation	72
2.6.5. Non-Resonant VV Exchange: Relaxation of Anharmonic Oscillators and Intermolecular VV Relaxation	74
2.6.6. Rotational Relaxation Processes: Parker Formula	76
2.6.7. Relaxation of Electronically Excited Atoms and Molecules	76
2.7. Elementary Chemical Reactions of Excited Molecules:	
Fridman-Macheret α -Model	79
2.7.1. Rate Coefficient of Reactions of Excited Molecules	79
2.7.2. Efficiency α of Vibrational Energy in Overcoming Activation Energy of Chemical Reactions: Numerical Values and Classification Table	81
2.7.3. Fridman-Macheret α -Model	81
2.7.4. Efficiency of Vibrational Energy in Elementary Reactions Proceeding Through Intermediate Complexes: Synthesis of Lithium Hydride	83
2.7.5. Dissociation of Molecules in Non-Equilibrium Conditions with Essential Contribution of Translational Energy: Non-Equilibrium Dissociation Factor Z	86
2.7.6. Semi-Empirical Models of Non-Equilibrium Dissociation of Molecules Determined by Vibrational and Translational Temperatures	87
Problems and Concept Questions	89
3 Plasma-Chemical Kinetics, Thermodynamics, and Electrodynamics	92
3.1. Plasma Statistics and Thermodynamics, Chemical and Ionization Equilibrium, and the Saha Equation	92
3.1.1. Statistical Distributions: Boltzmann Distribution Function	92
3.1.2. Equilibrium Statistical Distribution of Diatomic Molecules over Vibrational–Rotational States	93
3.1.3. Saha Equation for Ionization Equilibrium in Thermal Plasma	94
3.1.4. Dissociation Equilibrium in Molecular Gases	94
3.1.5. Complete Thermodynamic Equilibrium (CTE) and Local Thermodynamic Equilibrium (LTE) in Plasma	95
3.1.6. Thermodynamic Functions of Quasi-Equilibrium Thermal Plasma Systems	95
3.1.7. Non-Equilibrium Statistics of Thermal and Non-Thermal Plasmas	97
3.1.8. Non-Equilibrium Statistics of Vibrationally Excited Molecules: Treanor Distribution	99
3.2. Electron Energy Distribution Functions (EEDFs) in Non-Thermal Plasma	100
3.2.1. Fokker-Planck Kinetic Equation for Determination of EEDF	100

Contents

3.2.2. Druyvesteyn Distribution, Margenau Distributions, and Other Specific EEDF	101
3.2.3. Effect of Electron–Molecular and Electron–Electron Collisions on EEDF	103
3.2.4. Relation Between Electron Temperature and the Reduced Electric Field	104
3.2.5. Isotropic and Anisotropic Parts of the Electron Distribution Functions: EEDF and Plasma Conductivity	104
3.3. Diffusion, Electric/Thermal Conductivity, and Radiation in Plasma	106
3.3.1. Electron Mobility, Plasma Conductivity, and Joule Heating	106
3.3.2. Plasma Conductivity in Crossed Electric and Magnetic Fields	107
3.3.3. Ion Energy and Ion Drift in Electric Field	109
3.3.4. Free Diffusion of Electrons and Ions; Continuity Equation; and Einstein Relation Between Diffusion Coefficient, Mobility, and Mean Energy	109
3.3.5. Ambipolar Diffusion and Debye Radius	110
3.3.6. Thermal Conductivity in Plasma	111
3.3.7. Non-Equilibrium Thermal Conductivity and Treanor Effect in Vibrational Energy Transfer	112
3.3.8. Plasma Emission and Absorption of Radiation in Continuous Spectrum and Unsold-Kramers Formula	112
3.3.9. Radiation Transfer in Plasma: Optically Thin and Optically Thick Plasmas	113
3.4. Kinetics of Vibrationally and Electronically Excited Molecules in Plasma: Effect of Hot Atoms	114
3.4.1. Fokker-Plank Kinetic Equation for Non-Equilibrium Vibrational Distribution Functions	114
3.4.2. VT and VV Fluxes of Excited Molecules in Energy Space	115
3.4.3. Non-Equilibrium Vibrational Distribution Functions: Regime of Strong Excitation	117
3.4.4. Non-Equilibrium Vibrational Distribution Functions: Regime of Weak Excitation	119
3.4.5. Kinetics of Population of Electronically Excited States in Plasma	120
3.4.6. Non-Equilibrium Translational Energy Distribution Functions of Heavy Neutrals: Effect of “Hot” Atoms in Fast VT-Relaxation Processes	122
3.4.7. Generation of “Hot” Atoms in Chemical Reactions	123
3.5. Vibrational Kinetics of Gas Mixtures, Chemical Reactions, and Relaxation Processes	124
3.5.1. Kinetic Equation and Vibrational Distributions in Gas Mixtures: Treanor Isotopic Effect in Vibrational Kinetics	124
3.5.2. Reverse Isotopic Effect in Plasma-Chemical Kinetics	126
3.5.3. Macrokinetics of Chemical Reactions of Vibrationally Excited Molecules	129
3.5.4. Vibrational Energy Losses Due to VT Relaxation	131
3.5.5. Vibrational Energy Losses Due to Non-Resonance VV Exchange	132
3.6. Energy Balance and Energy Efficiency of Plasma-Chemical Processes	132

Contents

3.6.1.	Energy Efficiency of Quasi-Equilibrium and Non-Equilibrium Plasma-Chemical Processes	132
3.6.2.	Energy Efficiency of Plasma-Chemical Processes Stimulated by Vibrational Excitation of Molecules	133
3.6.3.	Energy Efficiency of Plasma-Chemical Processes Stimulated by Electronic Excitation and Dissociative Attachment	134
3.6.4.	Energy Balance and Energy Efficiency of Plasma-Chemical Processes Stimulated by Vibrational Excitation of Molecules	134
3.6.5.	Components of Total Energy Efficiency: Excitation, Relaxation, and Chemical Factors	136
3.6.6.	Energy Efficiency of Quasi-Equilibrium Plasma-Chemical Systems: Absolute, Ideal, and Super-Ideal Quenching	137
3.6.7.	Mass and Energy Transfer Equations in Multi-Component Quasi-Equilibrium Plasma-Chemical Systems	137
3.6.8.	Transfer Phenomena Influence on Energy Efficiency of Plasma-Chemical Processes	139
3.7.	Elements of Plasma Electrodynamics	140
3.7.1.	Ideal and Non-Ideal Plasmas	140
3.7.2.	Plasma Polarization: Debye Shielding of Electric Field in Plasma	141
3.7.3.	Plasmas and Sheaths: Physics of DC Sheaths	142
3.7.4.	High-Voltage Sheaths: Matrix and Child Law Sheath Models	144
3.7.5.	Electrostatic Plasma Oscillations: Langmuir or Plasma Frequency	145
3.7.6.	Penetration of Slow-Changing Fields into Plasma: Skin Effect in Plasma	146
3.7.7.	Magneto-Hydrodynamics: "Diffusion" of Magnetic Field and Magnetic Field Frozen in Plasma	146
3.7.8.	Magnetic Pressure: Plasma Equilibrium in Magnetic Field and Pinch Effect	147
3.7.9.	Two-Fluid Magneto-Hydrodynamics: Generalized Ohm's Law	149
3.7.10.	Plasma Diffusion Across Magnetic Field	149
3.7.11.	Magneto-Hydrodynamic Behavior of Plasma: Alfven Velocity and Magnetic Reynolds Number	150
3.7.12.	High-Frequency Plasma Conductivity and Dielectric Permittivity	151
3.7.13.	Propagation of Electromagnetic Waves in Plasma	153
3.7.14.	Plasma Absorption and Reflection of Electromagnetic Waves: Bouguer Law: Critical Electron Density	154
	Problems and Concept Questions	155
4	Electric Discharges in Plasma Chemistry	157
4.1.	Fundamentals of Electric Breakdown, Streamer Processes, and Steady-State Regimes of Non-Equilibrium Electrical Discharges	157
4.1.1.	Townsend Mechanism of Electric Breakdown and Paschen Curves	157
4.1.2.	Spark Breakdown Mechanism: Streamer Concept	159

Contents

4.1.3.	Meek Criterion of Streamer Formation: Streamer Propagation Models	163
4.1.4.	Streamers and Microdischarges	164
4.1.5.	Interaction of Streamers and Microdischarges	166
4.1.6.	Monte Carlo Modeling of Interaction of Streamers and Microdischarges	167
4.1.7.	Self-Organized Pattern of DBD Microdischarges due to Streamer Interaction	168
4.1.8.	Steady-State Regimes of Non-Equilibrium Electric Discharges and General Regimes Controlled by Volume and Surface Recombination Processes	170
4.1.9.	Discharge Regime Controlled by Electron-Ion Recombination	171
4.1.10.	Discharge Regime Controlled by Electron Attachment	172
4.1.11.	Non-Thermal Discharge Regime Controlled by Charged-Particle Diffusion to the Walls: The Engel-Steenbeck Relation	172
4.2.	Glow Discharges	175
4.2.1.	General Structure and Configurations of Glow Discharges	175
4.2.2.	Current-Voltage Characteristics of DC Discharges	177
4.2.3.	Dark Discharge and Transition from Townsend Dark to Glow Discharge	178
4.2.4.	Current-Voltage Characteristics of Cathode Layer: Normal Glow Discharge	179
4.2.5.	Abnormal, Subnormal, and Obstructed Regimes of Glow Discharges	181
4.2.6.	Positive Column of Glow Discharge	182
4.2.7.	Hollow Cathode Glow Discharge	183
4.2.8.	Other Specific Glow Discharge Plasma Sources	184
4.2.9.	Energy Efficiency Peculiarities of Glow Discharge Application for Plasma-Chemical Processes	186
4.3.	Arc Discharges	187
4.3.1.	Classification and Current-Voltage Characteristics of Arc Discharges	187
4.3.2.	Cathode and Anode Layers of Arc Discharges	189
4.3.3.	Cathode Spots in Arc Discharges	191
4.3.4.	Positive Column of High-Pressure Arcs: Elenbaas-Heller Equation	193
4.3.5.	Steenbeck-Raizer "Channel" Model of Positive Column	194
4.3.6.	Steenbeck-Raizer Arc "Channel" Modeling of Plasma Temperature, Specific Power, and Electric Field in Positive Column	196
4.3.7.	Configurations of Arc Discharges Applied in Plasma Chemistry and Plasma Processing	197
4.3.8.	Gliding Arc Discharge	200
4.3.9.	Equilibrium Phase of Gliding Arc, Its Critical Parameters, and Fast Equilibrium-to-Non-Equilibrium Transition	204
4.3.10.	Gliding Arc Stability Analysis and Transitional and Non-Equilibrium Phases of the Discharge	205

Contents

4.3.1.1. Special Configurations of Gliding Arc Discharges: Gliding Arc Stabilized in Reverse Vortex (Tornado) Flow	207
4.4. Radiofrequency and Microwave Discharges in Plasma Chemistry	209
4.4.1. Generation of Thermal Plasma in Radiofrequency Discharges	209
4.4.2. Thermal Plasma Generation in Microwave and Optical Discharges	211
4.4.3. Non-Thermal Radiofrequency Discharges: Capacitive and Inductive Coupling of Plasma	215
4.4.4. Non-Thermal RF-CCP Discharges in Moderate Pressure Regimes	216
4.4.5. Low-Pressure Capacitively Coupled RF Discharges	219
4.4.6. RF Magnetron Discharges	222
4.4.7. Non-Thermal Inductively Coupled RF Discharges in Cylindrical Coil	224
4.4.8. Planar-Coil and Other Configurations of Non-Thermal Inductively Coupled RF Discharges	226
4.4.9. Non-Thermal Low-Pressure Microwave and Other Wave-Heated Discharges	229
4.4.10. Non-Equilibrium Plasma-Chemical Microwave Discharges of Moderate Pressure	231
4.5. Non-Thermal Atmospheric Pressure Discharges	233
4.5.1. Corona Discharges	233
4.5.2. Pulsed Corona Discharges	234
4.5.3. Dielectric Barrier Discharges	237
4.5.4. Special Modifications of DBD: Surface, Packed-Bed, and Ferroelectric Discharges	239
4.5.5. Spark Discharges	240
4.5.6. Atmospheric Pressure Glow Mode of DBD	241
4.5.7. APGs: Resistive Barrier Discharge	242
4.5.8. One-Atmosphere Uniform Glow Discharge Plasma as Another Modification of APG	243
4.5.9. Electronically Stabilized APG Discharges	244
4.5.10. Atmospheric-Pressure Plasma Jets	245
4.6. Microdischarges	247
4.6.1. General Features of Microdischarges	247
4.6.2. Micro-Glow Discharge	248
4.6.3. Micro-Hollow-Cathode Discharge	251
4.6.4. Arrays of Microdischarges: Microdischarge Self-Organization and Structures	252
4.6.5. Kilohertz-Frequency-Range Microdischarges	254
4.6.6. RF Microdischarges	255
4.6.7. Microwave Microdischarges	257
Problems and Concept Questions	257
5 Inorganic Gas-Phase Plasma Decomposition Processes	259
5.1. CO ₂ : Dissociation in Plasma, Thermal, and Non-Thermal Mechanisms	259
5.1.1. Fundamental and Applied Aspects of the CO ₂ Plasma Chemistry	259

Contents

5.1.2. Major Experimental Results on CO ₂ : Dissociation in Different Plasma Systems and Energy Efficiency of the Process	260
5.1.3. Mechanisms of CO ₂ Decomposition in Quasi-Equilibrium Thermal Plasma	262
5.1.4. CO ₂ Dissociation in Plasma, Stimulated by Vibrational Excitation of Molecules	263
5.1.5. CO ₂ Dissociation in Plasma by Means of Electronic Excitation of Molecules	265
5.1.6. CO ₂ Dissociation in Plasma by Means of Dissociative Attachment of Electrons	267
5.2. Physical Kinetics of CO ₂ Dissociation, Stimulated by Vibrational Excitation of the Molecules in Non-Equilibrium Plasma	268
5.2.1. Asymmetric and Symmetric CO ₂ Vibrational Modes	268
5.2.2. Contribution of Asymmetric and Symmetric CO ₂ Vibrational Modes into Plasma-Chemical Dissociation Process	269
5.2.3. Transition of Highly Vibrationally Excited CO ₂ Molecules into the Vibrational Quasi Continuum	271
5.2.4. One-Temperature Approximation of CO ₂ Dissociation Kinetics in Non-Thermal Plasma	273
5.2.5. Two-Temperature Approximation of CO ₂ Dissociation Kinetics in Non-Thermal Plasma	274
5.2.6. Elementary Reaction Rates of CO ₂ Decomposition, Stimulated in Plasma by Vibrational Excitation of the Molecules	275
5.3. Vibrational Kinetics and Energy Balance of Plasma-Chemical CO ₂ Dissociation	276
5.3.1. Two-Temperature Approach to Vibrational Kinetics and Energy Balance of CO ₂ Dissociation in Non-Equilibrium Plasma: Major Energy Balance and Dynamic Equations	276
5.3.2. Two-Temperature Approach to Vibrational Kinetics and Energy Balance of CO ₂ Dissociation in Non-Equilibrium Plasma: Additional Vibrational Kinetic Relations	277
5.3.3. Results of CO ₂ Dissociation Modeling in the Two-Temperature Approach to Vibrational Kinetics	279
5.3.4. One-Temperature Approach to Vibrational Kinetics and Energy Balance of CO ₂ Dissociation in Non-Equilibrium Plasma: Major Equations	280
5.3.5. Threshold Values of Vibrational Temperature, Specific Energy Input, and Ionization Degree for Effective Stimulation of CO ₂ Dissociation by Vibrational Excitation of the Molecules	281
5.3.6. Characteristic Time Scales of CO ₂ Dissociation in Plasma Stimulated by Vibrational Excitation of the Molecules: VT-Relaxation Time	282
5.3.7. Flow Velocity and Compressibility Effects on Vibrational Relaxation Kinetics During Plasma-Chemical CO ₂ Dissociation: Maximum Linear Preheating Temperature	283
5.3.8. CO ₂ Dissociation in Active and Passive Discharge Zones: Discharge (τ_{ev}) and After-Glow (τ_p) Residence Time	284