Catalytic vs electrocatalytic CO2 reduction to added-value products

Catalytic vs electrocatalytic reduction of CO_2 to added-value products

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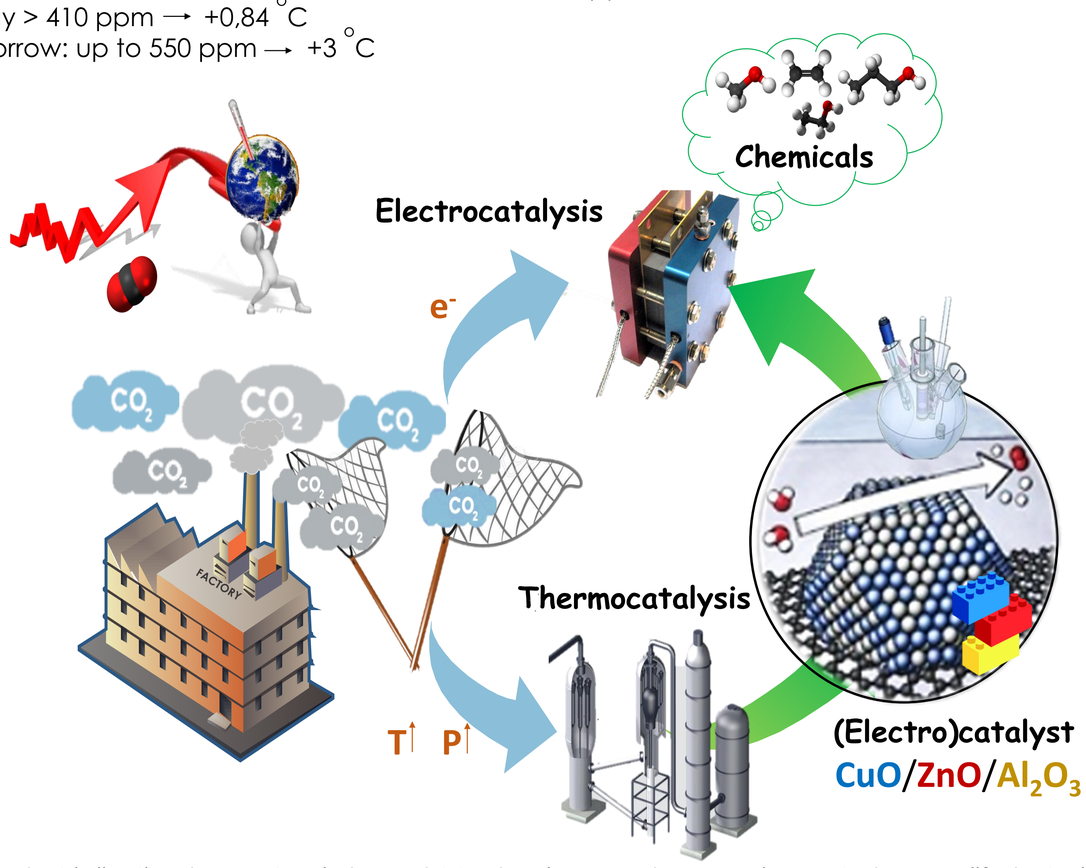
Overview

CO_2 concentration before industrial revolution = 270 ppm
Today > 410 ppm → +0,84 °C
Tomorrow: up to 550 ppm → +3 °C



The industrialization has not only brought technology and convenience to human life but also the increase in the concentration of CO_2 in the atmosphere over 400 ppm causing the raising of global temperature [1].
Nowadays, exploiting CO_2 as a raw material to synthesize high added-value products via electrochemical reduction reaction is a sustainable interesting process to capture and store energy renewable and CO_2 in the form of chemicals or fuels [2]. In such context, we are exploiting the basic knowledge of thermochemical catalysis to understand the synergies between these two processes and make faster progress in the development of an optimal electrocatalyst [3].

Methods and Materials

A **commercial** material composed of CuO, ZnO, Al_2O_3 and a small amount of magnesium oxide (CZA CC) was studied as catalyst in Thermocatalytic and Electrocatalytic tests (See Fig, 1 and 2)

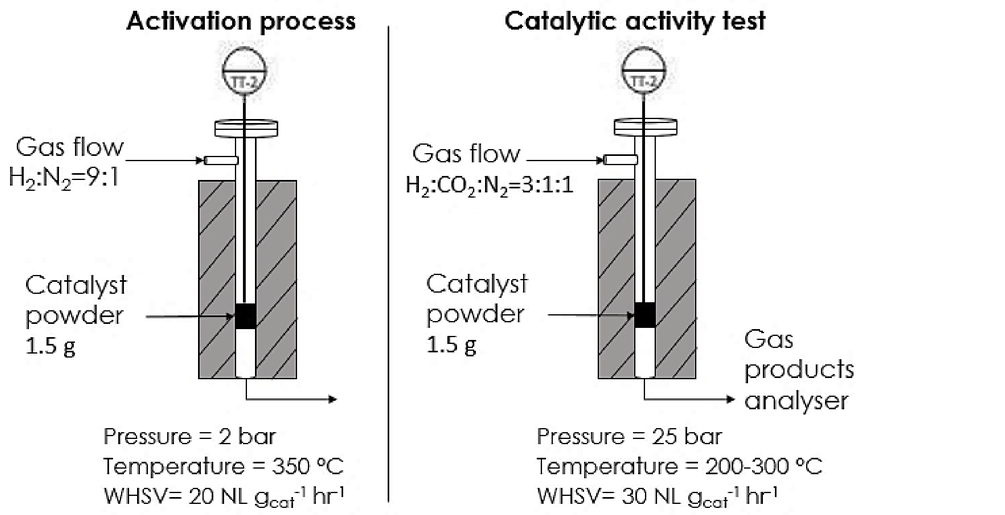


Fig. 1 Thermocatalytic Experimental Setup

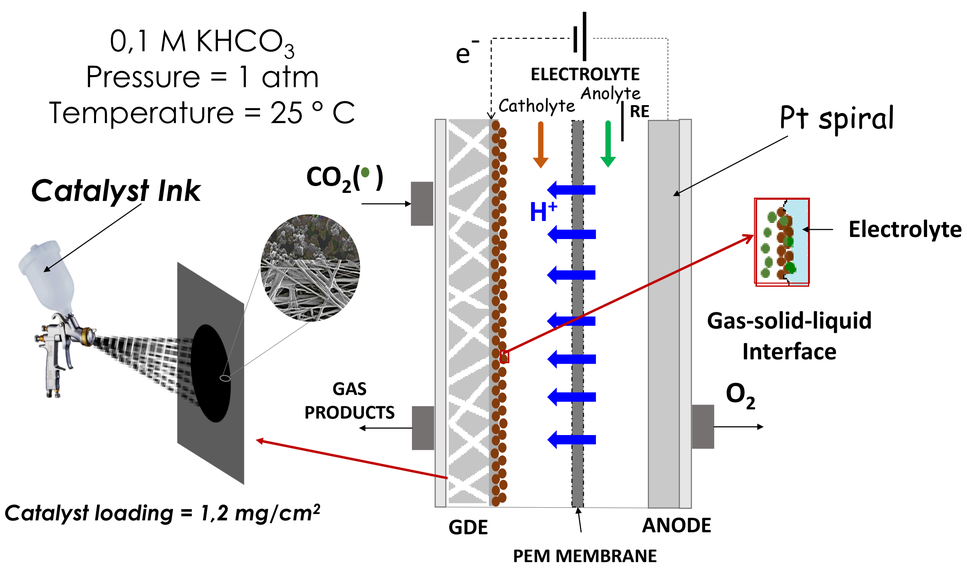
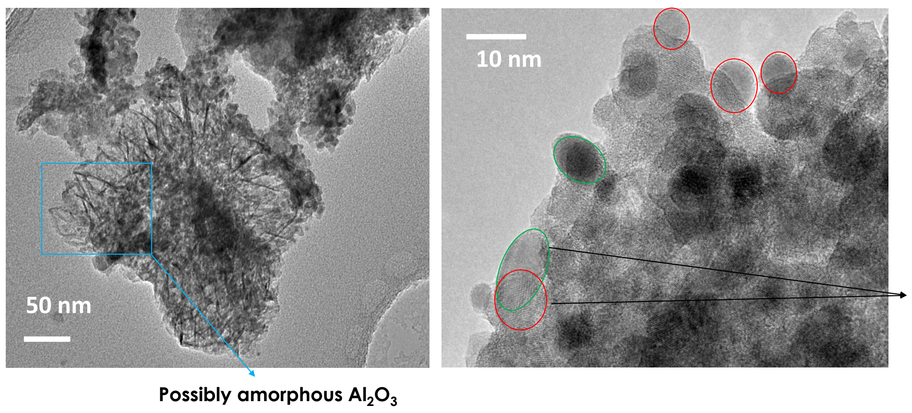


Fig. 2 Electrocatalytic Experimental Setup

Investigation Highlights

Fig. 3 *TEM images: CZA morphology*



There are **two distinct** morphologies:
1. **Spherical** (5-10 nm diameter)
2. **Elliptical** (10-15nm major axis)

Table 1 *Physicochemical properties*

Catalyst	Mass percentage, wt%	BET surface area, $m^2\ g^{-1}$	Total pore Volume, $cm^3\ g^{-1}$	Mesopore volume, $cm^3\ g^{-1}$
CZA CC	CuO 63,5 % ZnO 25 % Al_2O_3 10 % MgO 1,5 %	92	0,182	0,164

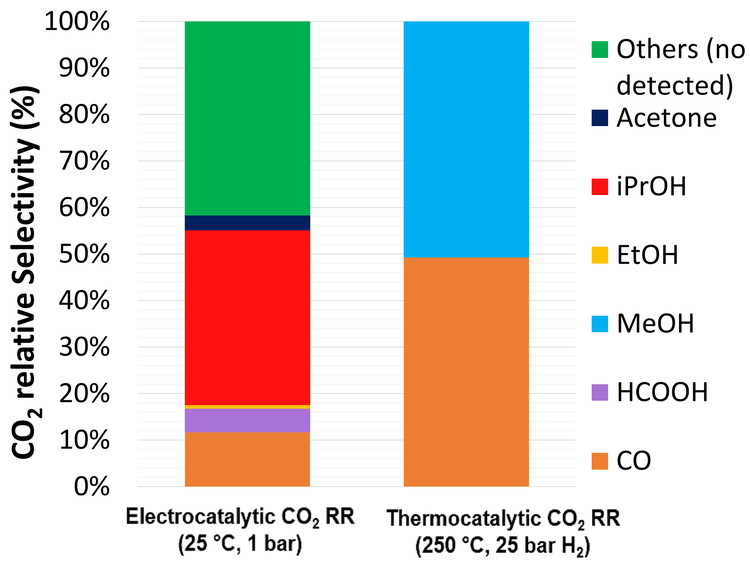


Fig. 4 CO_2 relative selectivity for different products in Thermocatalytic and Electrocatalytic process.

- CZA CC can produce ≥C_2 products at ambient T, via CO_2 electroreduction.
- CZA can also produce methanol at higher T and P, via CO_2 hydrogenation.
- The selectivity ratio of oxygenates/CO is about 8 times higher in the Electrocatalytic test than in the Thermocatalytic one.

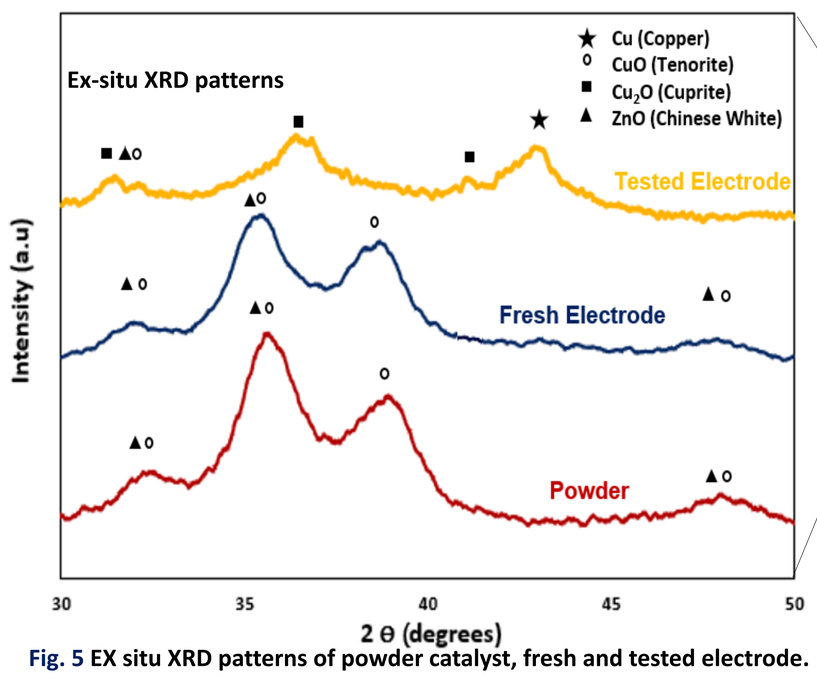


Fig. 5 EX situ XRD patterns of powder catalyst, fresh and tested electrode.

- The powder catalyst and fresh electrode are quite similar.
- The fresh and Tested electrodes evidenced the reduction from Cu^{+2} to Cu^{+1} and Cu^0 during the **Electrochemical reaction**.
- Exhausted catalyst (**not shown**) from **Thermocatalytic reaction** evidenced a complete reduction from Cu^{+2} to Cu^0 .

Recent studies have shown that the interface between Cu^{1+} and Cu^0 contributes to the dimerization of CO adsorbed on the electrode surface to generate products ≥ C_2.

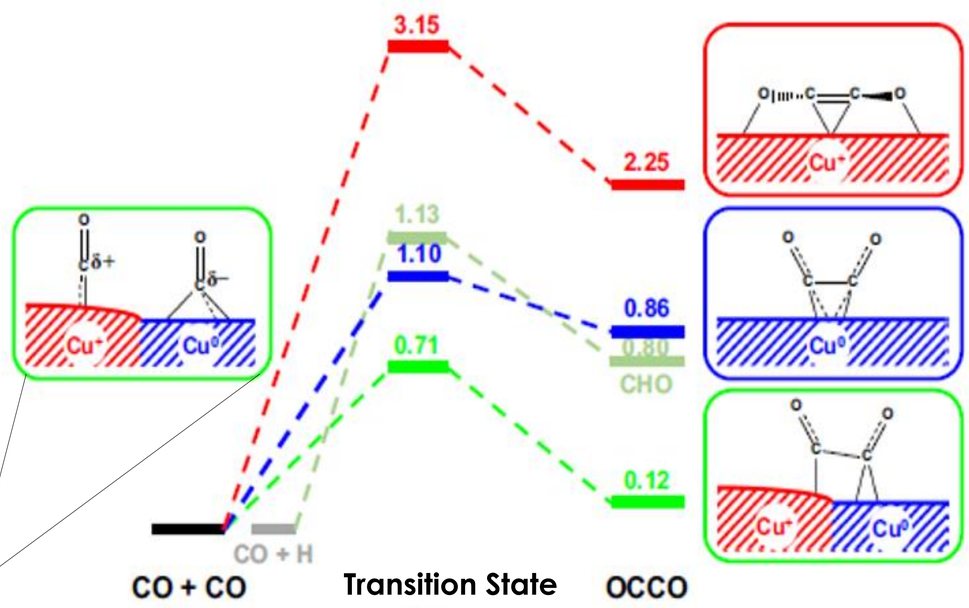


Fig. 6 Free energy profiles of CO dimerization for CO hydrogenation to form surface CHO species taken from reference [4].

Ongoing Work

We are developing a benchmarking protocol to study the activity, stability and Faradaic efficiency of synthesized materials with the same components. The activity of these material will be tested in a home-made prototype of electrochemical reactor created by using 3D printing process and technology.

References

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Acknowledgements

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program under grant agreement 768583– RECODE (Recycling carbon dioxide in the cement industry to produce added-value additives: a step towards a CO_2 circular economy) project. (https://www.recodeh2020.eu/).
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