Investigation of the ammonia oxidation over copper with in situ NEXAFS spectroscopy: Influence of the copper oxides on the reaction products

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1. Introduction

Ammonia containing exhaust gas is still a problem in many chemical processes, *e.g.* in the ammonia slipstream treatment after deNO$_x$-SCR [1] or in the purification of reformats for fuel-cell applications [2]. Besides the decomposition of ammonia to nitrogen and hydrogen the selective catalytic oxidation to nitrogen and water

$$4NH_3 + 3O_2 \rightarrow 2N_2 + 6H_2O \qquad (1)$$

is consistent with a wide range of applications [3] and the subject of this investigation. In addition to reaction (1) the total oxidation

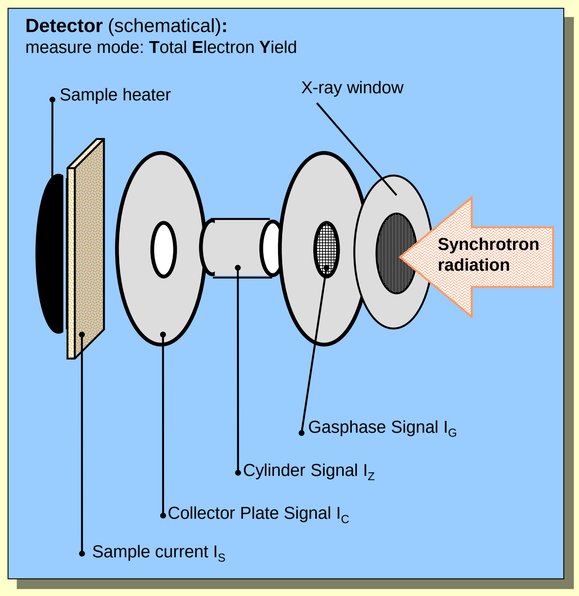
$$4NH_3 + 5O_2 \rightarrow 4NO + 6H_2O \qquad (2)$$

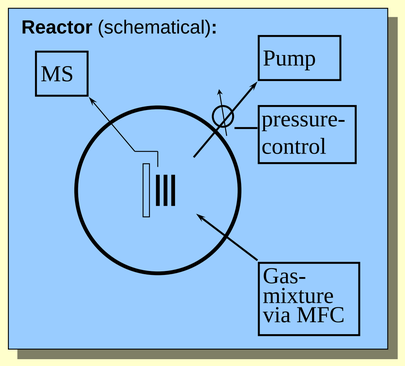
is possible in oxygen containing feed gas. Because of the production of hazardous nitric oxide this reaction path has to be totally suppressed. This is the most important selection criteria for a suitable catalyst.

2. Method

- **N**ear **E**dge **X**-Ray **A**bsorption **F**ine **S**tructure (NEXAFS) Spectroscopy in **soft energy range** ($h\upsilon$ = 350 - 550eV)
- provides **electronic structure** of involved species and by comparison with reference spectra **chemical state of the catalyst surface**
- **in situ:** reaction is observed via mass spectrometry
- **high pressure:** up to several mbars

➢ **aim: detect the catalytically active surface structure of the catalyst**





Beamlines at BESSY II:
- U49/1 and UE56/2 (Undulator)
- PM1 (bending magnet)

3a. Results @ p=0.4mbar and CuO

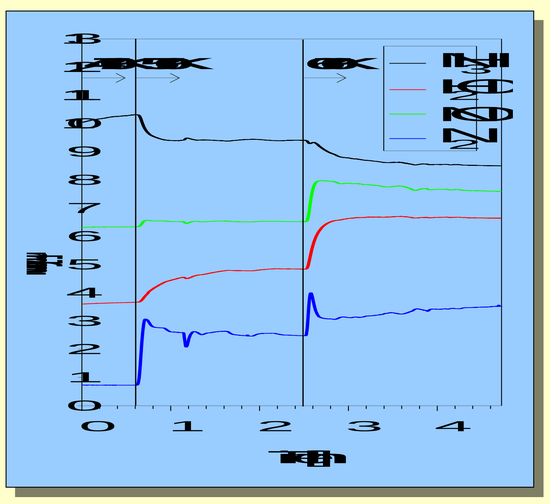
with NH_3:O_2 = 1:12 and increasing temperature

Fast Deactivation due to formation of **copper(I) nitride** (Ref. [4])

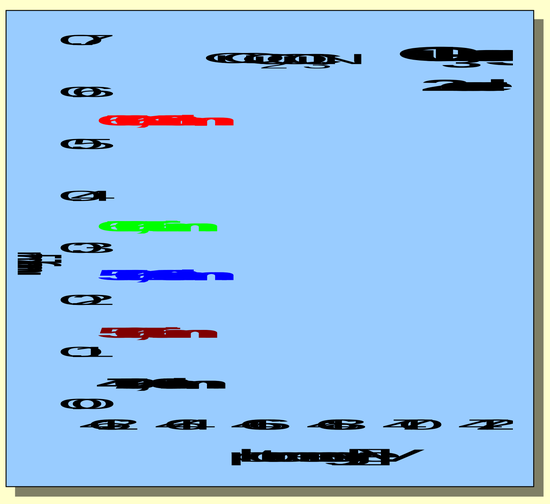
3b. Results @ p=1.2mbar and CuO

with NH_3:O_2 = 1:12 and increasing temperature

MS-Data



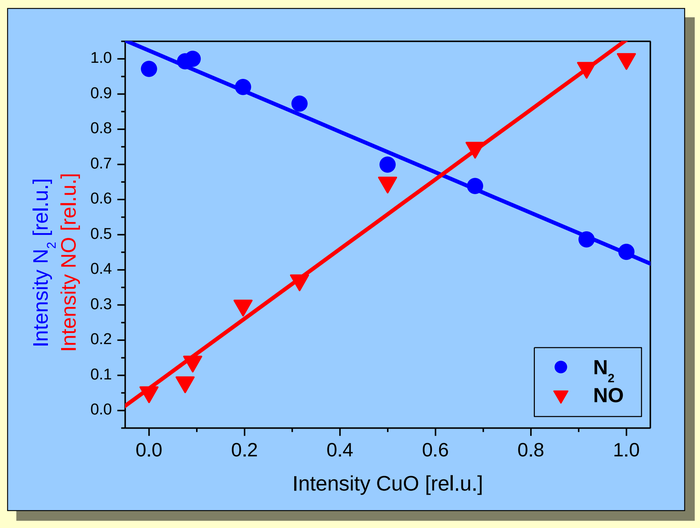
NEXAFS



No deactivation **no** copper(I) nitride **less N_2 production high NO amounts**

4. Conclusions

Correlation of the products with CuO surface intensity:



➢ **copper(II)oxide catalyzes the total oxidation of ammonia to NO**

➢ **partial oxidation to nitrogen is catalyzed by copper(I)oxide**

➢ **but: fast deactivation of Cu_2O due to copper(I)nitride formation**

High **NO** production with **CuO**

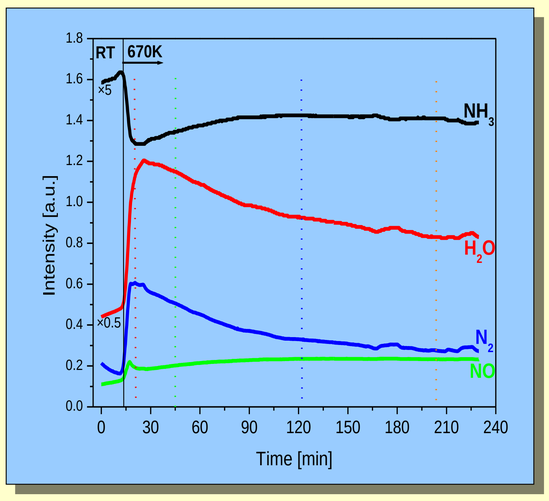
High **N_2** production with **Cu_2O**

Deactivation due to **copper(I) nitride** **no NO production high N_2 amounts**

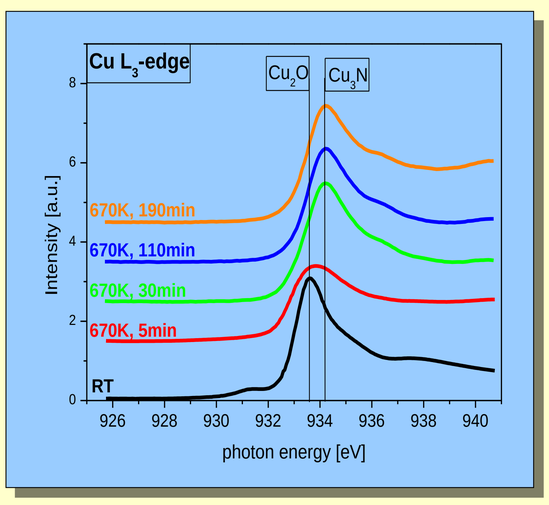
3c. Results @ p=1.2mbar and Cu_2O

with NH_3:O_2 = 1:12 and increasing temperature

MS-Data



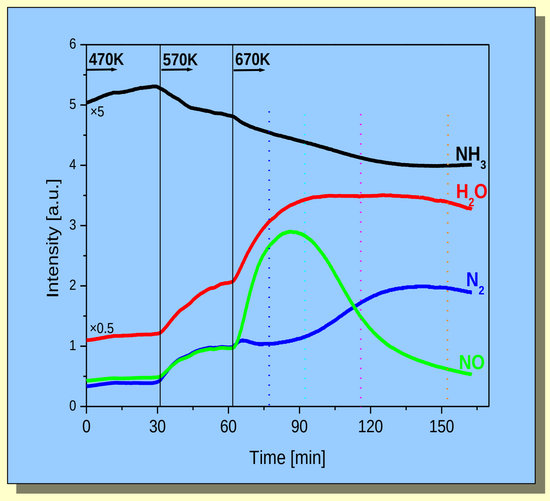
NEXAFS



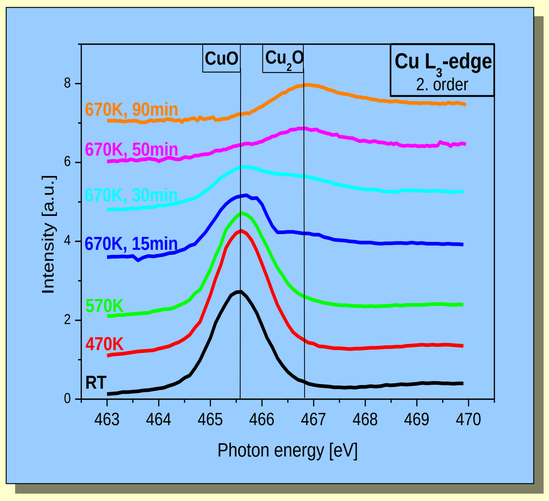
3d. Results @ p=0.8mbar and CuO

with NH_3:O_2 = 1:12 and increasing temperature

MS-Data



NEXAFS



References

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[3] T. Curtin, F. O'Regan, C. Deconinck, N. Knüttle, and B.K. Hodnett, Catal. Today **55** (2000) 189

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Acknowledgement

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