

Rational design of electrocatalysts from material science point of view

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DFT based description of the electrocatalytic processes such as hydrogen evolution,¹ oxygen reduction,² or electrolytic gas³ evolution suggests the possibility of the targeted synthesis of catalytic materials with optimized catalytic activity or selectivity. This approach represents in fact an implementation of the Sabatier principle linking the catalysts optimization of the catalytic activity with the adsorption of the catalytic process intermediate. The real catalysts design is, however, often hindered by the interdependence of two or more reaction steps when the intermediates tend to show the same linear scaling with the catalyst's reactivity which often is the only tunable parameter and thus the activity descriptor.

This drawback can be apparently addressed by modification of the active sites - small arrangements of atoms responsible for the actual catalytic activity. These sites are generally deemed to be stable and present on the catalyst's surface at all times.

A viability of these assumptions will be discussed for complex oxide and binary alloy catalysts on the basis of the information available from local structure characterization techniques. The X-ray absorption spectroscopy (XAS) data (both ex-situ and in-situ) in both XANES and EXAFS mode will be used to discuss the possibilities of targeted synthesis of oxygen evolution catalysts as well as the fundamentals of the catalytic activity of the alloys in Pt-Ru or Pt-Ni systems for oxygen reduction and CO oxidation, respectively.

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¹ J. Greeley, T. F. Jaramillo, J. Bonde, I. Chorkendorff, I., J.K. Norskov, *Nature Mater.* 5 (2006) 909.

² V. Stamenkovic, B. S. Mun, K. J. J. Mayrhofer, P. N. Ross, N. M. Markovic, J. Rossmeisl, J. Greeley, J. K. Norskov, *Angew. Chemie Int. Ed.* 45 (2006) 2897.

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