Determination and evaluation of surface science techniques.

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Abstract

Surface science is the study of physical and chemical phenomena that occur at the interface of two phases, including solid–liquid interfaces, solid–gas interfaces, solid–vacuum interfaces, and liquid–gas interfaces. It includes the fields of surface chemistry and surface physics. Some related practical applications are classed as surface engineering. The science encompasses concepts such as heterogeneous catalysis, semiconductor device fabrication, fuel cells, self-assembled monolayers, and adhesives. Surface science is closely related to interface and colloid science. Interfacial chemistry and physics are common subjects for both. The methods are different. In addition, interface and colloid science studies macroscopic phenomena that occur in heterogeneous systems due to peculiarities of interfaces.

Keywords: Purification processes, Bioreactor design, Surface science, Fluid mechanics.

Introduction

Surface chemistry can be roughly defined as the study of chemical reactions at interfaces. It is closely related to surface engineering, which aims at modifying the chemical composition of a surface by incorporation of selected elements or functional groups that produce various desired effects or improvements in the properties of the surface or interface. Surface science is of particular importance to the fields of heterogeneous catalysis, electrochemistry, and geochemistry [1].

Catalysis

The adhesion of gas or liquid molecules to the surface is known as adsorption. This can bedue to either chemisorption or physisorption, and the strength of molecular adsorption to a catalyst surface is critically important to the catalyst's performance see Sabatier principle. However, it is difficult to study these phenomena in real catalyst particles, which have complex structures. Instead, well-defined single crystal surfaces of catalytically active materials such as platinum are often used as model catalysts. Multi-component materials systems are used to study interactions between catalytically active metal particles and supporting oxides; these are produced by growing ultra-thin films or particles on a single crystal surface. Relationships between the composition, structure, and chemical behavior of these surfaces are studied using ultra-high vacuum techniques, including adsorption and temperature-programmed desorption of molecules, scanning tunneling microscopy, low energy electron diffraction, and Auger electron spectroscopy. Results can be fed into chemical models or used toward the rational design of new catalysts. Reaction mechanisms can also be clarified due to the atomic-scale precision of surface science measurements [2].

Electrochemistry

Electrochemistry is the study of processes driven through an applied potential at a solid-liquid or liquid-liquid interface. The behavior of an electrode-electrolyte interface is affected by the distribution of ions in the liquid phase next to the interface forming the electrical double layer. Adsorption and desorption events can be studied at atomically flat single crystal surfaces as a function of applied potential, time, and solution conditions using spectroscopy, scanning probe microscopy and surface X-ray scattering. These studies link traditional electrochemical techniques such as cyclic voltammetry to direct observations of interfacial processes [3].

Geochemistry

Geologic phenomena such as iron cycling and soil contamination are controlled by the interfaces between minerals and their environment. The atomic-scale structure and chemical properties of mineral-solution interfaces are studied using in situ synchrotron X-ray techniques such as X-ray reflectivity, X-ray standing waves, and X-ray absorption spectroscopy as well as scanning probe microscopy. For example, studies of heavy metal or actinide adsorption onto mineral surfaces reveal molecular-scale details of adsorption, enabling more accurate predictions of how these contaminants travel through soils or disrupt natural dissolution-precipitation cycles [4].

Physics

Surface physics can be roughly defined as the study of physical interactions that occur at interfaces. It overlaps with surface chemistry. Some of the topics investigated in surface physics

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include friction, surface states, surface diffusion, surface reconstruction, surface phonons and Plasmon's, epitaxial, the emission and tunnelling of electrons, spintronics, and the self-assembly of nanostructures on surfaces. Techniques to investigate processes at surfaces include surface X-ray scattering, Scanning Probe Microscopy, surface enhanced Raman Spectroscopy and X-ray Photoelectron Spectroscopy [5].

Conclusion

Modern physical analysis methods include scanning-tunneling microscopy (STM) and a family of methods descended from it, including atomic force microscopy (AFM). These microscopies have considerably increased the ability and desire of surface scientists to measure the physical structure of many surfaces. For example, they make it possible to follow reactions at the solid–gas interface in real space, if those proceed on a time scale accessible by the instrument.

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