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Adsorption Site and Structure Determination of $C(2 \times 2) N_2/Ni(100)$ Using Angle-Resolved Photoemission Extended Fine Structure

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**ADSORPTION SITE AND STRUCTURE DETERMINATION OF c(2X2) N₂/Ni(100)
USING ANGLE-RESOLVED PHOTOEMISSION EXTENDED FINE STRUCTURE***

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Adsorption Site and Structure Determination of c(2x2) N₂/Ni(100) using Angle-Resolved Photoemission Extended Fine Structure

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Abstract

We have determined the atomic spatial structure of c(2x2) N₂/Ni(100) with Angle-Resolved Photoemission Extended Fine Structure (ARPEFS) using the nitrogen 1s core level. The chemically shifted N 1s peak intensities were summed together to obtain ARPEFS curves for both nitrogen atoms in the molecule. We used a new, highly-optimized program based on the Rehr-Albers scattering matrix formalism to find the adsorption site and to quantitatively determine the bond-lengths. The nitrogen molecule stands upright at an atop site, with a N-Ni bond length of 2.25(1) Å, a N-N bond length of 1.10(7) Å, and a first layer Ni-Ni spacing of 1.76(4) Å. The shake-up peak shows an identical ARPEFS diffraction pattern, confirming its intrinsic nature and supporting a previous use of this feature to decompose the peak into contributions from the chemically

inequivalent nitrogen atoms. Comparison to a previously published theoretical treatment of N-N-Ni and experimental structures of analogous adsorbate systems demonstrates the importance of adsorbate-adsorbate interactions in weakly chemisorbed systems.

1. Introduction

Angle-Resolved Photoemission Extended Fine Structure (ARPEFS) is a well established technique for determining the spatial structure of atomic and molecular adsorbates on metal surfaces¹⁻³. One of the advantages of the technique is its elemental selectivity due to the unique binding energies of core electrons. We have used ARPEFS to determine the adsorption site and bond lengths of C(2x2) molecular nitrogen on Ni(100).

This system has been the subject of several investigations, as it represents an analogue to the prototypical CO adsorbate on transition-metal surfaces. Stöhr and Jaeger determined that N₂ stands up normal to the surface on Ni(100)⁴. Grunze and Dowben established that molecular nitrogen forms a C(2x2) LEED pattern on Ni(100)⁵. Subsequent TPD studies indicated that only one adsorption site was occupied by N₂ at saturated coverages (≈ 0.5 monolayer) for well ordered overlayers, even those with somewhat diffuse LEED patterns⁶. Nilsson and Mårtensson found two sharp peaks in the photoemission spectrum of the N 1s core-level corresponding to the two chemically inequivalent nitrogen atoms in the molecular adsorbate⁷. They also investigated the broad satellite peak 6 eV below the main peaks and concluded that it was a shake-up peak associated with final-state molecular excitations. Their analysis of the shake-up satellite was based on the implicit assumption that the satellite peak showed identical scattering characteristics as the main peak. This assumption has not been previously established.

In this paper we report an experimental determination of the adsorption site, the the N-N and N-Ni bond lengths, and the first Ni-Ni layer spacing. We also show that the shake-up peak associated with the nitrogen 1s core level displays an identical diffraction pattern as the main peak. We found that it is not necessary to resolve the chemically shifted peaks to determine the adsorbate structure.

2. Experiment

The experiments were performed using the high resolution Spherical Grating Monochromator (SGM) on beam line 6-1 at the Stanford Synchrotron Radiation Laboratory (SSRL). Photon energies from 480-700 eV were utilized. The UHV vacuum chamber was equipped with a 5 cm hemispherical electron energy analyzer, a liquid helium cooled sample manipulator, a LEED/Auger system, and an ion-sputtering gun. The bulk nickel substrate was cleaned by sputtering, annealing, and roasting in oxygen. The final surface cleaning was done by dosing O₂ at 3×10^{-9} torr for 20 seconds with the sample at 450° C. Sample cleanliness was monitored by XPS and sample order was checked by LEED. The nickel crystal was oriented by laser autocollimation, angular scanned photoemission along [110], and LEED. The C(2x2) N₂ overlayer was prepared by back-filling the chamber to 1×10^{-8} torr while cooling the sample from 140 K to 75 K at a rate of ~.12 K/s. The order of the overlayer was checked with LEED on trial preparations. LEED was not done on the overlayers used to take the ARPEFS curves, to avoid damage from electron bombardment. NEXAFS was used to confirm that the molecules were indeed standing up on the surface. The sample was free of measurable contamination, but we observed an accumulation of oxygen on the surface at a rate of approximately 3% monolayer/hour. Thus, we cleaned the surface and prepared a new overlayer after 1.5 hours with a single overlayer. The synchrotron radiation was incident on the sample at 25° between the electric vector and the sample normal and the photo-emission direction was 5° off the normal to the nickel(100) surface towards the [110] direction. The UHV chamber pressure was $<3 \times 10^{-10}$ torr. The sample temperature was 75 K as measured by a thermocouple spot-welded near the sample.

3. Surface Structure Determination

Figure 1 shows a typical photoemission spectrum and its deconvolution into three peaks. Nilsson and Mårtensson showed that the two lower binding energy peaks are due to the two chemically inequivalent nitrogen atoms⁷. The lowest binding energy peak is due to the nitrogen atom furthest from the nickel substrate. We call this nitrogen the "outer nitrogen" and the corresponding peak, "peak 1." The next lowest binding energy peak is due to the nitrogen atom closest to the nickel surface. We call this nitrogen the "inner nitrogen" and the corresponding peak, "peak 2." Nilsson and Mårtensson measured the splitting between these peaks to be 1.33 eV. They also determined that the broad satellite peak approximately 6 eV below the two has contributions from both higher kinetic energy peaks using normal and off-normal emission. The peak intensities were extracted by fitting all three peaks with Voigt functions and normalized to the background the in the standard method¹. We obtained the total ARPEFS diffraction curve by summing the intensities of peaks 1 and 2.

We have performed full Multiple Scattering Spherical Wave (MSSW) calculations using the formalism of Rehr and Albers⁸ to determine the best match of adsorption site and bond lengths to the experimental ARPEFS χ -curve. The program, developed entirely within our group, is highly optimized for obtaining a best fit to experimental data including multiple emitters⁹. It uses second order matrices (6x6) and up to 8th order scattering, which produce a convergent calculation at these energies and inter-atomic distances. The best fit was defined by the conventional R-factor analysis¹. We show the experimental χ -curve and the best fit for each of the three adsorption sites in figure 2. To obtain these fits we allowed the N-N and N-Ni distances and the spacing between the first two nickel layers to vary. We also allowed the inner potential, the Debye temperatures of the near surface layers, and the tilt of the N-N molecule to vary. Clearly the atop site is the best fit, with an R-factor of 0.34. The N-Ni bond length is found to be 2.25 Å and the N-N bond length is found to be the gas-phase nitrogen value of 1.10 Å. Interestingly, the spacing between the

first two nickel layers is found to be the bulk nickel value of 1.76 Å, in contrast to the contracted clean-metal layer spacing of 1.60 Å¹⁰. A surface debye temperature of 220 K and an inner potential of 15.1 eV were found to give the best fit.

To examine the sensitivity to the layer spacings and establish error bars we calculated the R-factor for various interlayer spacings and inner potentials. It has been shown that the inner potential may affect the derived layer spacings and must be included in the R-factor analysis¹¹. The uncertainty is reported as one standard deviation, i.e. a confidence level of 0.68, and is written in parentheses following the last significant digit. Figures 3 and 4 show the R-factor contours for the N-Ni layer spacing and inner potential and the first layer Ni-Ni spacing, respectively. The R-factor result for the nitrogen-nitrogen bond length is shown in figure 5, with the inner potential was held constant at 15.1 eV. Extraction of the error bars from the R-factor analysis has been discussed previously¹². We conclude from these analyses that the error in the N-Ni layer spacing is 0.01 Å, the Ni-Ni layer spacing is 0.04 Å, and the N-N bond length is 0.07 Å.

4. The Satellite Peak

An interesting feature of the photoemission spectra is the broad, intense peak at 6 eV below the main peaks. Nilsson and Mårtensson assigned this peak as an intrinsic satellite feature, and shows that it contains contributions from both of the main peaks by spectrum subtraction, making use of the variation in peak intensities with emission angle⁷. In figure 6 we compare the χ -curve of the sum of peaks 1 and 2 to the χ -curve of peak 3. These two curves are each plotted against the k-value of the corresponding (sum) peak. The peak 3 chi-curve follows the summed main peak chi-curves very closely, showing that it displays an identical ARPEFS diffraction pattern as the main peaks, including identical amplitudes. We infer that the 6 eV peak arises from intrinsic satellite structures, each having the same intensity ratio as its main peak.

5. Discussion

In this work we have shown that the nitrogen adsorbs on an atop site with a nitrogen-nickel bond length of 2.25 Å, with approximately the gas phase nitrogen-nitrogen bond length and bulk nickel-nickel layer spacing. We now examine the bonding characteristics in the context of theoretical predictions and in comparison to related adsorbate systems. The bonding is qualitatively described by the molecular nitrogen donating electrons to the nickel from its HOMO $3\sigma_g$ orbital and accepting electrons into the LUMO $1\pi_g^*$ orbital from the nickel 3d orbitals¹³. There is a repulsive interaction between the $3\sigma_g$ occupied level and the metal electrons. The electron accepted into the $1\pi_g^*$ is thought to stabilize the $3\sigma_g$ interaction by creating a partial positive charge on the metal atom. The induced dipole is then attractive to the $3\sigma_g$ electrons. The relative importance of molecular bonding and mutually induced dipole interactions remains to be clarified. This model also ignores adsorbate-adsorbate interactions, which may occur both directly and through the substrate.

There have been several ab-initio calculations published for the N-N-Ni system examining the bonding characteristics of the molecular nitrogen-metal system¹⁴⁻¹⁶. The investigations of Freund, et. al., found a minimum total energy at a N-Ni bond length of 1.64 Å for a $3d^{10}$ configuration nickel atom and 1.96 Å for a $3d^9 4s$ configuration. They found that the $3d^{10}$ configuration led to a better match to the calculated core-level splitting between the two inequivalent nitrogen atoms. These calculations clearly overestimate the molecule-metal interaction strengths for the saturated overlayer. The large discrepancy between our measured N-Ni bond lengths of 2.25 Å and the theoretical predictions of 1.96 Å underscores the importance of including the effects of other interactions with the surface layer metal atoms and other neighboring molecules. This is not surprising considering that Varma and Dowben have shown that there are strong lateral interactions between nitrogen molecules in the ordered $c(2 \times 2)$ overlayer⁶.

It is useful to compare our results to the structure of the related systems, c(2x2) CO/Ni(100) and low-coverage NH₃/Ni(100). The CO molecule adsorbs on Ni(100) in an atop site with a C-Ni layer spacing of 1.80 Å¹⁷. The first-layer Ni-Ni spacing was assumed to be the bulk value in that analysis. The heat of adsorption of CO on Ni(100) is 122(2) kJ/mole at low coverage and drops to 100(2) kJ/mole at high coverage¹⁷. The heat of adsorption of N₂/Ni(100) is much lower, 45(4) kJ/mole to 25(2) kJ/mole⁵, which is consistent with the longer N-Ni bond length. The bonding scheme for CO to Ni(100) is expected to be analogous to N₂. The relatively large N-Ni bond length is consistent with the molecular orbital interaction picture. The CO molecule has a stronger covalent interaction with the metal surface due to the concentration of the 2π* antibonding orbital on the carbon and the greater oxygen character of the 5σ donor orbital. This enhances the orbital overlap relative to the N₂ MO's and results in a stronger bond with shorter bond length.

The NH₃/Ni(100) also adsorbs on an atop site with an N-Ni spacing of 2.01 Å and an Ni-Ni layer spacing of 1.81 Å¹⁸. The spacing for that system was determined at low coverage. The bonding scheme of the ammonia is understood to be a σ donation to the metal and a large electrostatic interaction between the ammonia dipole and the metal atoms¹⁹. Considering the electrostatic interactions, the larger N-Ni spacing for N₂ is expected, as there is no molecular dipole and the N₂ molecule has a low polarizability relative to the ammonia, 1.74 x 10⁻²⁴ vs. 2.26 x 10⁻²⁴ cm³, respectively²⁰. The expansion of the initially contracted clean metal surface has not been investigated theoretically for either the NH₃ or the N₂ adsorbate systems. We note that the more strongly interacting ammonia adsorbate leads to a greater expansion of the surface nickel layer than the molecular nitrogen from the clean metal 1st layer Ni-Ni spacing of 1.60 Å.

It is clear that the interaction of the molecular nitrogen overlayer with the surface is very weak. There is neither a strong covalent interaction nor an electrostatic one. The weak-chemisorption picture analogous to CO is supported by the analysis of the core-level

photoemission satellites^{7,15} and valence level UPS²¹. The weak interaction with the metal substrate emphasizes the importance of lateral interactions among adsorbates. A quantitative theoretical treatment will need to include adsorbate-adsorbate interactions and possibly sub-surface nickel layers.

6. Conclusion

We have measured the nitrogen 1s ARPEFS oscillations from $c(2 \times 2)$ N₂/Ni(100). We find that the nitrogen molecule adsorbs in an atop site with the N-N bond normal to the surface with a N-N length of 1.10(7) Å. The N-Ni bond length is 2.25(1) Å and the first Ni-Ni layer spacing is 1.76(4) Å. The satellite peak intensity shows the same chi curve as the sum of the two main peaks, confirming that the component satellite peaks are intrinsic, and with the same intensity ratio as the main peaks. Comparison with theoretical treatments of the N-N-Ni system and experimental structures of analogous adsorbate systems suggests that a quantitative theoretical treatment of weakly adsorbed systems must include lateral interactions between adsorbates.

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Figure 1.

Figure 2.

(a)

(b)

Figure 3.

Figure 4.

Figure 5.

Figure 6.

Figure Captions

Figure 1.

Typical XPS spectrum of c(2x2) N₂/Ni(100) for this work. The circles are the data points, the dashed lines are the deconvolved fit to the data, and the solid line is the total fit. See the text for explanation of "outer" and "inner" nitrogen peaks.

Figure 2.

Experimental ARPEFS curve and best fit calculation for each adsorption site. The experimental curve is derived from the sum of the intensities from the two main peaks in the XPS spectrum. Clearly the atop adsorption site gives the best fit with an R-factor of 0.34.

Figure 3.

(a) R-factor vs. inner potential and N-Ni layer spacing. The minimum is at a layer spacing of 2.255 Å. (b) R-factor vs. N-Ni layer spacing with inner potential fixed at 15.1 eV.

Figure 4.

R-factor vs. inner potential and spacing between the first and second nickel layers.

Figure 5.

R-factor vs. nitrogen-nitrogen bond length. The inner potential is fixed at 15.1 eV

Figure 6.

Comparison of ARPEFS chi-curves for the main peaks and the satellite peak. The curves have been Fourier smoothed to a 13 Å cutoff to facilitate comparison.

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