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Publication Date

1983-10-01

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October 1983

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Vibrational Excitation And Deexcitation Rates of Molecules Adsorbed on Metal Surfaces

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Abstract

The rates for vibrational excitation and deexcitation of adsorbed molecules on metal surfaces are studied. The desorption of the adsorbed molecules is shown to compete with the excitation process resulting "vibrationally cold" desorbing molecules. Simple rate equations together with the available experimental data are used to estimate the rates for vibrational excitation and deexcitation of NO molecules on Pt (111) surfaces as a function of the crystal temperature. The application of this approach for other systems is discussed.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The interaction between gas phase molecules and solid surfaces are of fundamental importance for the understanding of catalytic and other chemical processes occurring on solid surfaces. In recent years the dynamical aspects of such interactions were studied both experimentally [1] and theoretically [2] for many molecule-solid surface systems. Molecular beam-surface scattering experiments were used to study the translational energy distribution of the scattered molecules [1], as well as, their internal energy distribution between the rotational [3] and vibrational [4] modes as a function of surface temperature. Energy transfer between vibrationally excited molecules and metal surfaces was studied during a collision with the surface [5]. The decay rate of vibrationally excited molecules adsorbed on a metal surfaces was studied theoretically [6] and experimentally [7] by Persson *et al.* who employed an electrodynamic model in which electron-hole pairs are formed by energy transfer from the vibrationally excited molecule to the surface. This model was used to interpret measurements of the linewidth of excited C-H and C-D bonds in methoxide adsorbed on the Cu (100) surface using IR reflectance-absorbance spectroscopy. They concluded that for this system a deexcitation rate of $3 \times 10^{12} \text{ sec}^{-1}$ describes the experimental data [7]. A different study by Zhdanov *et al.* [8] presents a review of the possible mechanisms for vibrational deexcitation on metal surfaces. In this work it is shown that if multiphonon interactions dominate, then the deexcitation rates are expected to be very slow (less than 10^7 sec^{-1}). Such interactions usually incorporate a few phonons to dissipate the vibrational energy of the adsorbed molecule. When the vibrational energy is assumed to be channeled to the excitation of plasmon states in the metal, deexcitation rates

as high as 10^9 - 10^{11} sec^{-1} are predicted [9]. Similar conclusions were presented by Brus [10], who applied classical electrodynamic theory to study the same problem. In all these studies it is predicted that the relaxation rate via electronic states in the metal should be temperature independent [9].

Most common experiments conducted to date, examine the vibrational relaxation rate due to collisions with solid surfaces by measuring the average probability to transfer the vibrational energy [8]. Direct measurement of the IR emission decay time of an excited CO_2 molecule due to collisions with different solid walls, as a function of the wall temperature, were reported recently [11]. In all these studies the relaxation of the vibrational energy is addressed, none however discusses the related process of vibrational excitation.

In this work we will examine the magnitude of vibrational excitation and deexcitation rates of molecules adsorbed on metal surface, using a simple kinetic model. The competing processes that control the flux of vibrationally excited molecules which desorb from the surface are the vibrational excitation and deexcitation on the surface as well as the desorption rate of the adsorbed ground state molecules. The kinetic model together with experimental results available for the NO/Pt (111) system [4a], are used to estimate the vibrational excitation and deexcitation rates of NO adsorbed on the metal. The significance of these rates for the understanding of the mechanism of such energy transfer processes in this system is discussed.

II. KINETIC MODEL

Consider two types of adsorbed molecules on a metal surface; molecules in their ground vibrational state, N_a^0 , and the same molecule in its first vibrationally excited state, N_a^1 . For simplicity, we shall not consider in the following, adparticles which are vibrationally excited to states higher than $v=1$, although such molecules were detected experimentally [4d]. In the kinetic model that will be described, we shall consider an experiment in which a supersonic beam of molecules in their ground vibrational state and at translational energy much smaller than the vibrational spacing, are impinging on the metal surface. The flux of molecules that adsorb on the surface is given by

$$f(T) = f_0 S(T) . \quad (1)$$

where T is the surface temperature and $S(T)$ is the sticking probability (which is estimated in Ref. [4a]). The adsorbed molecules may react on the surface to yield vibrationally excited species in addition to their probability to desorb to the gas phase where they are detected. The concentration (on the surface) of the ground and vibrationally excited adsorbates will be given by

$$\frac{dN_a^0(t;T)}{dt} = f(T) - k_{ex}(T)N_a^0(t;T) + k_{dex}(T)N_a^1(t;T) - k_d^0(T)N_a^0(t;T) \quad (2a)$$

and

$$\frac{dN_a^1(t;T)}{dt} = k_{ex}(T)N_a^0(t;T) - k_{dex}(T)N_a^1(t;T) - k_d^1(T)N_a^1(t;T) . \quad (2b)$$

In Eqs. (2) k_d^0 and k_d^1 represent the desorption rate of the ground and the vibrationally excited molecules respectively, while, k_{ex} and k_{dex} represent the vibrational excitation and deexcitation rates respectively. We have assumed, in writing Eqs. (2), first order kinetics for the excitation and

deexcitation processes.

It is easy to solve Eqs. (2), using the Laplace transform method, to obtain the time dependent concentration of the ground state and excited adsorbed molecules (for a given surface temperature)

$$N_a^0(t; T) = f(T) \left[\frac{a_1}{b_1} + \frac{a_2}{b_2} - \left(\frac{a_1}{b_1} \exp(-b_1 t) + \frac{a_2}{b_2} \exp(-b_2 t) \right) \right] \quad (3a)$$

and

$$\begin{aligned} N_a^1(t; T) = k_{ex} f(T) & \left[\frac{1}{K_1} \left(\frac{a_1}{b_1} + \frac{a_2}{b_2} \right) - \frac{a_1}{b_1(b_1 + K_1)} - \frac{a_2}{b_2(b_2 + K_1)} \right. \\ & + \frac{a_1}{b_1(b_1 + K_1)} \exp(-(b_1 + K_1)t) + \frac{a_2}{b_2(b_2 + K_1)} \exp(-(b_2 + K_1)t) \\ & \left. - \frac{1}{K_1} \left(\frac{a_1}{b_1} + \frac{a_2}{b_2} \right) \exp(-K_1 t) \right] \end{aligned} \quad (3b)$$

where

$$K_1 = k_d^1 + k_{ex} \quad K_2 = k_d^0 + k_{ex}$$

$$K_3 = K_1 + K_2 \quad K_4 = K_1 K_2 - k_{ex} k_{des}$$

$$b_1 = 2K_4 \left[K_3 + (K_3^2 - 4K_4)^{1/2} \right]^{-1}$$

$$b_2 = \frac{1}{2} \left[K_3 + (K_3^2 - 4K_4)^{1/2} \right]$$

$$a_1 = \frac{b_1 - K_1}{b_1 - b_2} \quad a_2 = \frac{K_1 - b_2}{b_1 - b_2}$$

In the solution of Eq. (3) we have assumed that the initial concentration ($T = 0$) of the molecules on the surface is zero, e.g. $N_a^0(0; T) = N_a^1(0; T) = 0$. Once the concentrations N_a^0 and N_a^1 are known, the flux of the desorbing molecules, which are the experimentally detected quantities, may be obtained

$$N_g^0(t;T) = k_d^0 N_a^0 \quad (4a)$$

$$N_g^1(t;T) = k_d^1 N_a^1 \quad (4b)$$

In many experimental set ups, steady state concentrations of the adsorbates are maintained. In such cases, Eqs. (3) may be rewritten in a simpler form,

$$N_a^0(T) = \frac{f(T)[k_{dex}(T) + k_d^1(T)]}{k_{dex}(T)k_d^0(T) + k_d^1(T)[k_{ex}(T) + k_d^0(T)]} \quad (5a)$$

$$N_a^1(T) = \frac{k_{ex}(T)N_a^0(T)}{k_{dex}(T) + k_d^1(T)} \quad (5b)$$

In order to use Eq. (4) to calculate the flux of ground and vibrationally excited state molecules desorbing from the surface, few comments are necessary. There are four rate constants that determine the kinetics on the surface: k_{ex} , k_{dex} , k_d^0 and k_d^1 . The desorption rate of ground state molecules can be measured using thermal desorption spectroscopy or modulated molecular beam experiments. In the following we shall assume that due to the relatively weak coupling between the molecule-surface bond and the internal vibrational modes of the adsorbate (large difference between the stretch frequencies), the desorption rates of the ground and vibrationally excited molecules are equal, e.g. $k_d^0 = k_d^1 = k_d$. Even though k_d is not always known very accurately and controversial values exist even for the best studied system, yet the range of this rate constant is known for many systems. The complete unknown quantities are therefore k_{ex} and k_{dex} . As mentioned in the introduction, the deexcitation process became recently a subject for both theoretical and experimental studies, in which an order of magnitude estimate of k_{dex} and its variation with the surface temperature is possible. For systems in which metallic surfaces were used the internal vibrational energy of the

adsorbed molecule exceeds the Debye frequency of the substrate phonons significantly. Thus, the interaction between vibrationally excited states of the adsorbate and the substrate is thought to be via plasmon states [8,9,10] or local electron-hole pair formation [6]. In such cases it is expected that k_{dex} will exhibit a weak temperature dependence [9]. Indeed, it was recently shown experimentally [11a] that the deexcitation rate of the (001) band of CO₂ when colliding with Ag surface, was invariant in the relatively narrow range of temperatures, 298 to 475 K.

The experimental results of Asscher *et al.* [3f,4a] indicate that nearly equilibrium conditions between the concentrations of the ground state and excited ad-molecules is maintained on the surface for a wide range of temperatures. This suggests that the ratio between the excitation and deexcitation rates may be approximated by,

$$\frac{k_{ex}}{k_{dex}} = \exp[- E_v / kT] . \quad (6)$$

where E_v is the vibrational energy spacing of the adsorbed molecule and k is Boltzmann constant. At low surface coverages ($\theta < 0.1$) neither k_{ex} nor k_{dex} are expected to depend on the coverage [7,11]. Hence, one may assume that Eq. (6) is valid also at high temperatures where the ratio between the fluxes N_g^1 and N_g^0 deviate from the Boltzmann distribution.

III. RESULTS and DISCUSSION

In this section we shall first discuss some general aspects of the kinetic model described above and point out some features which are common to many molecule-metal surface systems. Following this general discussion we shall describe the application of the kinetic model to the NO/Pt (111) system, for which experimental data is available, and obtain values for k_{dex} and k_{ex} .

To examine the extent of vibrational excitation of molecules on metal surfaces, as a function of some of the microscopic parameters involved in this process, we have performed model calculations in which the dependence of N_g^1 on the magnitude of k_{dex} and D_e were studied. It was assumed in these calculations that the molecular beam pulse has a rectangular step type shape, thus, during the pulse steady state conditions are maintained (Eq. (5b)). In order to evaluate the flux of the desorbing vibrationally excited molecules via Eq. (5b) one needs to know the magnitude of $k_{dex}(T)$ and $k_d(T)$ [$k_{ex}(T)$ is related to $k_{dex}(T)$ via Eq. (6)]. The functional form of a first order desorption rate is usually assumed to be,

$$k_d(T) = A(T) \exp\left(-\frac{D_e}{kT}\right) \quad (7)$$

where $A(T)$ is a preexponential factor and D_e the adsorbate-surface binding energy. Following Ref. 12, $A(T)$ may be related to the microscopic parameters of the system and has a form $A(T) = C/T$. To evaluate the constant C one has to know the stretching (Ω_0) and bending (frustrated rotation, Ω_r) frequencies associated with the molecule-surface bond [12]. In the following model calculations we have used $C = 1 \times 10^{18}$.

Recently it was shown experimentally [11a] that the deexcitation rate k_{dex} , is temperature independent for the CO_2/Ag system. In addition several model calculations [6-10] predicted that k_{dex} should be temperature independent if the vibrational energy is channeled into the electronic degrees of freedom of the metal. Moreover, the calculations by Persson *et al.* [6,7] predicted k_{dex} values of the order of 10^{12}sec^{-1} which agreed well with available experimental results. These calculations suggested that the quenching of vibrational energy is due to the excitation of

a local electron-hole pair in the metal. Hence, in the following we shall assume that k_{dex} is temperature independent.

The variation of N_g^1 as a function of T , k_{dex} and D_s is shown in Fig. 1. Note that a change in D_s results in a marked change of k_d and hence of the residence time of the molecule at the surface. Fig. 1a shows the calculated values of $N_g^1(T)$ for a given deexcitation rate ($k_{dex} = 1 \times 10^{12} \text{sec}^{-1}$) and a number of different D_s values. Similarly, in Fig. 1b we have plotted $N_g^1(T)$ for a fixed binding energy ($D_s = 25 \text{Kcal/mole}$) and a few k_{dex} values. It is evident from these results that there is a competition between the desorption and excitation processes. An increase of the desorption rate (decrease in the value of D_s , Fig. 1a) causes a substantial decrease in the formation of N_g^1 due to the short residence time of the adsorbate on the surface. A decrease of k_{dex} (and hence of k_{ex}) also reduces the formation of vibrationally excited molecules. A support to the primary conclusion which emerges from these results, namely that the extent of vibrational excitation of molecules on metal surfaces is rather limited in cases of weakly bounded molecules (physisorption) is provided indirectly by two experiments. Asscher *et al.* [4a] reported that by modifying a Pt (111) surface with a graphitic overlayer, in which the interaction between the NO and the modified surface decreases dramatically (D_s is about 2kcal/mole), no evidence for vibrationally excited NO was found. When the NO molecules were scattered from a clean Pt (111) at the same temperature, more than 2% of the adsorbed molecules were vibrationally excited. For a different system, e.g. NO/Ag (111), it was found that only a negligible amount of vibrationally excited NO molecules were formed, even at incident kinetic energies that exceeded the vibrational spacing of the NO molecules [16]. Again, the reason for the absence of vibrational excitation

in this system is due to the weak adsorbate-surface interaction (about 5 kcal/mole).

In the remaining of this section we shall examine in more detail the NO/Pt (111) system for which extensive vibrational excitation of the scattered NO molecules were reported [4a,4b]. The desorption rate, k_d , for this system was estimated using the expressions of Ref. 12. The stretching, Ω_0 , and the frustrated rotational, Ω_r , frequencies were taken to be 450cm^{-1} and 306cm^{-1} respectively, following Ref. 13. These frequencies yield a preexponential factor of $A(T) = 1.147 \times 10^{18} / T \text{sec}^{-1}$. The most reliable value of D_s for this system is due to a recent study by Serri *et al.* [15] who estimated the NO-Pt (111) binding energy to be 25 Kcal/mole. This value corresponds to the desorption of NO from a perfect Pt (111) terrace. The justification for using this value to interpret the results of Ref. 4a, is due to the high temperatures (e.g. fast desorption rates) at which these experiments were performed. Under these conditions the molecules on the surface desorb from terraces rather than from steps or defects as was argued to occur at lower temperatures [15]. In Ref. 3f and 14 the values of the ratio $R(T)$, between the flux of N_g^1 and N_g^0 , as well as the independently measured values of $N_g^1(T)$ are given respectively. We have used Eqs. (3) and (5) together with Eq. (6) to perform a numerical fit of the experimental data (the use of Eqs. (3) and (5) in this fit was in order to check the validity of the steady state assumption).

The resulting curves together with the experimental data are shown in Fig. 2. The values of the best fit of $N_g^1(T)$ (Fig. 2a) and of $R(T)$ (Fig. 2b) are $5 \times 10^{12} \text{sec}^{-1}$ and $5 \times 10^{11} \text{sec}^{-1}$ respectively. Despite the one order of magnitude discrepancy between these two rates, they both are in a good agreement with results obtained in other experimental studies. For

example, for the CO/Cu (100) system an estimate of $k_{dex} = 7.7 \times 10^{11} \text{sec}^{-1}$ was reported [11b] while for CO/Pt (111) the deexcitation was found to be $5 \times 10^{11} \text{sec}^{-1}$ [11c] as derived from IR linewidth measurements. Since it is experimentally less complicated to measure $N_g^1(T)$, thus having a smaller experimental uncertainty we believe that the higher value is more accurate. The magnitude of k_{dex} we have estimated for the NO/Pt (111) system implies that the vibrational damping mechanism is dominated by an electron-hole pair excitation [7]. These rate values suggest that multiphonon processes have a negligible contribution to the excitation/ deexcitation mechanism since for such a process at least 10 bulk Pt phonons are required and one would expect in this case much lower rates [8] (of the order of 10^6sec^{-1}). Recently, Haller and coworkers [4d] reported a high vibrational temperature of NO molecules scattered from an ill defined polycrystalline Pt foil at 1430 K. This value is higher than what is expected from a similar experiment on a Pt (111) single crystal face. However, this result [4d] is consistent with the above analysis if one considers the higher D_0 values associated with such a high step concentration surfaces [15]. The higher D_0 values result in a longer residence time, thus, enabling more efficient vibrational excitation.

IV. CONCLUSION

A kinetic analysis is presented in which the vibrational excitation and deexcitation of molecules on metal surfaces is discussed. It was shown that the desorption process compete effectively with the excitation process resulting in vibrational temperatures that are colder than the surface temperature. For the NO/Pt (111) system vibrational deexcitation and excitation rates were calculated. These rates were too high to associate the excitation and the deexcitation processes with phonon-

adsorbate interaction. The good agreement between results of this work and previous estimates of k_{des} for other systems, indicate that these processes are related to energy transfer between the adsorbate and the electronic states of the surface. Based on previous theoretical and experimental work we have assumed that the deexcitation rate is practically temperature independent. Consequently any temperature dependence of processes in which vibrationally excited molecules are formed is due to k_{ex} . The analysis of the NO/Pt (111) system indicates a Boltzmann type variation of $k_{ex}(T)$ with the crystal temperature. It is suggested that this temperature dependence of the excitation rate holds even at high T values where the experimental data deviate from the Boltzmann distribution. This deviation is therefore associated only with the competition between the desorption and excitation processes.

Finally, we have shown that molecular beam-surface scattering experiments that provide data about the evolution of vibrationally excited molecules, followed by an analysis similar to the one presented here, can provide an important tool to obtain information about the interaction between surfaces and the vibrational degrees of freedom of adsorbed molecules.

This work was supported by the Director, Office of Energy Research, Office of Basic Energy Sciences, Materials Sciences Division of the U.S. Department of Energy under contract DE-AC03-76SF00098.

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FIGURE CAPTIONS

- 1 (a) Variation of N_g^1 as a function of surface temperature and adsorbate-surface binding energy. The deexcitation rate used in these calculations was $1 \times 10^{12} \text{sec}^{-1}$. (b) Variation of N_g^1 as a function of surface temperature and deexcitation rate. The adsorbate-surface binding energy used in the calculations was 25kcal/mole .
- 2 (a) Numerical fit of the experimental $R(T)$ points. Solid line-calculated values (using Eqs. (3) and (5)), dashed line-experimental data and dotted line-Boltzman distribution. We have used in these calculations $D_s = 25 \text{Kcal/mole}$ and $k_{dex} = 5 \times 10^{11} \text{sec}^{-1}$. (b) Numerical fit of the experimental $N_g^1(T)$ points. Solid line-calculated values (using Eqs. (3) and (5)), dashed line-experimental data and dotted line-Boltzman distribution. We have used in these calculations $D_s = 25 \text{Kcal/mole}$ and $k_{dex} = 5 \times 10^{12} \text{sec}^{-1}$.

XBL 837-5976

Fig. 1

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Fig. 2

This report was done with support from the Department of Energy. Any conclusions or opinions expressed in this report represent solely those of the author(s) and not necessarily those of The Regents of the University of California, the Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory or the Department of Energy.

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