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Dissociative electron attachment to carbonyl fluoride, F_2CO

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ABSTRACT

Low energy electron attachment to gas phase carbonyl fluoride, F_2CO, has been performed by means of a crossed electron-molecular beam experiment in an electron energy range from 0 to 30 eV with an energy resolution of ~0.5 eV. The most intense signal is observed at 19 amu due to F^- and two other anionic species with lower intensities at 38 and 47 amu assigned to F_2^- and COF^-, respectively. Anion efficiency curves of the three anions have been measured. Product anions (F^- and COF^-) are observed mainly in the low energy region arising from simple bond breaking, while F_2^- is being produced from two bond cleavages with further structural and electronic rearrangement. Quantum chemical calculations on the electronic properties of F_2CO have been performed in order to complement the experimental results.

1. Introduction

Further to the global effort in reducing emissions under the Kyoto protocol, carbonyl fluoride, F_2CO, has been suggested as a suitable candidate for replacement feed gas to the traditional highly global warming SF_6 and other perfluorocarbons used in the plasma semiconductor industry. F_2CO has been extensively used as a cleaning agent in chemical vapour deposition equipment, as well.

Carbonyl fluoride has been the subject of a few experimental studies on photoelectron [1–3] and VUV photoabsorption [4] spectroscopies while the only published electron impact vibrational excitation result is the relatively high resolution data of Kato et al. [5]. Recently we have reported on the first complete Electron Energy Loss Spectroscopy (EELS) data of carbonyl fluoride from 5.0 to 18.0 eV [6]. Meanwhile theoretical studies of the ultraviolet (UV) and photoelectron spectrum of carbonyl fluoride by multi-reference configuration interaction methods have been reported [7] and molecular-adapted quantum defect orbital (MQDO) procedures used for calculating the spectral intensities of Rydberg transitions.

Brundle et al. [1] studies on the photoelectron spectra of hydrocarbons with fluorine substitution have shown that ionisation from π orbitals are not affected under substitution, but shifted from σ orbitals to higher energies. This σ orbital stabilisation is known as the perfluoro-effect and is observed clearly in the comparison of the photoelectron spectra of F_2CO and H_2CO.

As far as we are aware no dissociative electron attachment studies to carbonyl fluoride have been reported. In the present work we investigate the negative ion formation from F_2CO at low electron energies (0–30 eV) by recording the ion yield curves with an electron energy resolution of ~500 meV. No parent anion has been observed. The by far dominant signal can be assigned to F^- formation. It is shown that three DEA products are formed at electron energies near 2–3 eV (Table 1).

2. Experimental and computational details

Electron attachment to F_2CO was investigated by using a tuneable electron source assembled directly at the entrance of a quadrupole mass spectrometer (QMS) (Hiden Analytical Ltd. HAL 301 s/2). Briefly, a ~500 meV (FWHM), electron beam is produced in a commercial electron gun with typical currents of ~500 nA that crosses the effusive molecular beam emerging through a capillary. Negative ions formed in the interaction region are extracted by weak electric fields (3.0 V), focused by a set of einzel lens, mass analyzed by means of a quadrupole mass filter and detected in a channel electron multiplier operated in pulse counting mode. The electron energy scale as well as the electron energy resolution is calibrated using the well known negative ion yields of O^- from CO, near 9.5 eV [8], and from CO_2, near 4.4 and 8.1 eV [9].

The time span from ion formation to its detection is in the order of microseconds. Negative ion yields are obtained as a function of

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Table 1
Peak positions for the fragment anions of F_2CO.

Mass (dalton)	Anionic species assignment	Peak position in eV[a]	
47	COF^-	2.00	2.62
38	$F_2{}^-$	–	2.40
19	F^-	0.75	2.15

[a] Value obtained through Gaussian fitting profiles.

Table 2
Calculated geometry of carbonyl fluoride with bond lengths in Å and angles in (°).

	Anion		Ground state B3LYP/aug-cc-pVTZ
	C_{2v}	C_S	C_{2v}
C–O	1.225	1.219	1.171
C–F	1.371	1.470	1.319
∠F–C–O	126.38	117.18	126.16
∠F–C–F	–	108.00	–

the electron energy. The typical base pressure in the main chamber was 2.0×10^{-5} Pa and upon gas admission (F_2CO) increased to a pressure of 1.3×10^{-4} Pa. The gas sample was supplied from Daikin Co. and used as delivered. The stated purity was 99.9%.

To complement the experimental results, we carried out quantum chemical calculations on the electronic properties of F_2CO. We optimized the molecular geometries of F_2CO by using the B3LYP [10] density functional and the aug-cc-pVTZ basis set [11]. On this level of theory F_2CO has a dipole moment of 1.03 Debye. This value is close to that reported from a microwave experiment (0.91) [12] and also from MP2 calculations (0.95) [13]. Moreover the calculated geometrical parameters (Table 2; $r_{CF} = 1.319$, $r_{CO} = 1.171$, $\angle_{FCF} = 108°$) differ only insignificantly from the experimentally derived values ($r_{CF} = 1.312$, $r_{CO} = 1.174$, $\angle_{FCF} = 108°$) [11]. While the ground state of F_2CO is planar with C_{2v} symmetry, the equilibrium conformation of the anion is C_s-pyramidal. The transient negative ion (TNI) formed by vertical electron attachment to the equilibrium geometry of the neutral molecule is thermodynamically unstable. However, the adiabatic electron attachment is slightly exothermic and the anion in the optimal pyramidal structure has a small positive electron affinity of 0.21 eV. Outer-valence Greens' function calculations [14] were used to model the vertical electron attachment to the LUMO of the neutral molecule.

3. Results and discussion

Fig. 1 shows the electron energy dependence of the ion yield for the three negative ions of F_2CO measured with an electron energy resolution of ~500 meV (FWHM). The most dominant fragment anion is F^- (19 amu), followed by $F_2{}^-$ (38 amu) and COF^- (47 amu). The negative ion resonances have been fitted with Gaussian profile curves in order to resolve the features to obtain the maximum values (Table 1). The present electron energy resolution of ~500 meV (FWHM) can explain the absence of a parent anion signal. However autodetachment or fragmentation in a time window shorter than the experimental detection times may also be responsible for the lack of such anion. The considerable change in geometry from the neutral to the anion might explain the instability of the F_2CO with respect to autodetachment and furthermore, the localization of the extra charge over the fluorine atoms (Fig. 2(b)) may result in rapid fragmentation of the parent negative ion.

Fig. 2(a and b) shows the optimized geometries from aug-cc-pvTZ calculations for the ground state of the neutral and the negative ion, respectively, along with their highest occupied molecular orbitals (HOMOs). The geometry of the negative ion reveals noticeable changes in respect to the neutral. The HOMO in F_2CO^- also reveals the excess electron localized in the fluorines with nodes along the C–F bonds. Fig. 2(c) shows the lowest unoccupied molecular orbital (LUMO). The vertical attachment energy of F_2CO calculated by the OVGV method is 1.21 eV.

3.1. Ion yield curves

Capture of a free electron by a polyatomic neutral molecule, ABC, yields negative ion formation generating a transient negative ion (TNI), $(ABC)^{\#-}$, that may decompose into either reaction (1a) $AB + C^-$ or (1b) $AC + B^-$. The TNI is seen as a quasi-bound state embedded in the autodetachment continuum and is therefore unstable towards the loss of the extra charge. The autodetachment lifetime varies, depending on the nature of the target molecule and on the electron energy, from a few fs as is the case of $N_2{}^-$ [15] and up to several tens of μs for $C_{60}{}^-$ [16]. F_2CO is a polyatomic molecule that belongs to a group where autodetachment may occur in a time window shorter than the detection time, resulting in the absence of

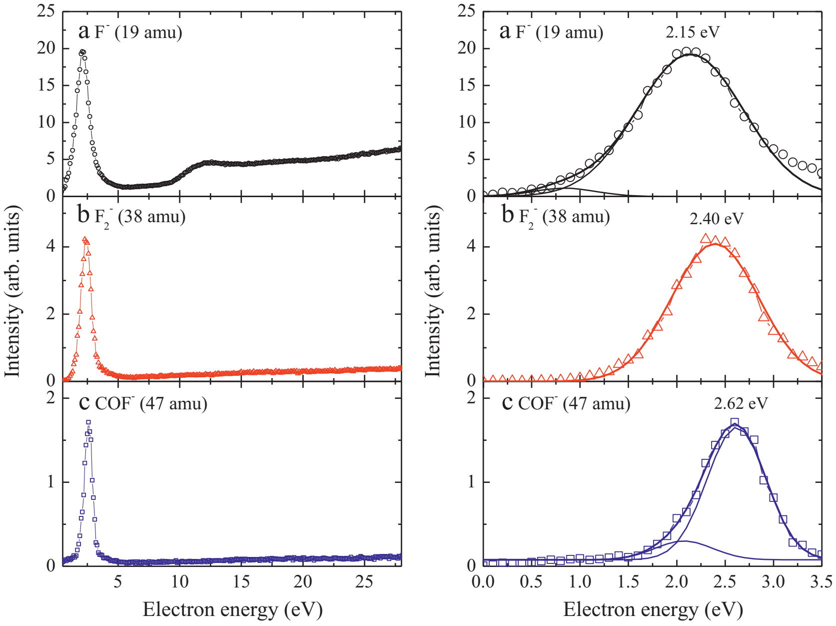

Fig. 1. Anion efficiency curves of the three product anions formed by DEA to F_2CO.