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Fe-based Heterogeneous Catalysts for the Fischer-Tropsch Reaction: Sonochemical Synthesis

and Bench-Scale Experimental Tests

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Abstract

The sonochemical synthesis of nanostructured materials owes its origins to the extreme conditions

created during acoustic cavitation, i.e., the formation of localized hot spots in the core of collapsing bubbles

in a liquid irradiated with high intensity ultrasound (US). In particular, in the present work a sonochemical

synthesis has been investigated for the production of three different iron-based samples supported on SiO₂

and loaded with different metals and promoters (10 %wt of Fe; 30 %wt of Fe, 2 %wt of K and

3.75 %wt of Cu) active in the Fischer-Tropsch (FT) process. Sonochemically synthesized heterogeneous

catalysts were characterized by BET, XRPD, TPR, ICP, CHN, TEM, SEM and then tested in a fixed bed FT-

bench-scale rig fed with a mixture of H₂ and CO at a H₂/CO molar ratio equal to 2, at activation temperatures

of 350- 400 °C and reaction temperatures of 250- 260 °C. The experimental results showed that the

ultrasonic samples are effective catalysts for the FT process. Notably, increasing the activation temperature

increased CO conversion, while product selectivity did not diminish. All the sonochemically prepared

samples presented in this work provided better catalytic results compared to the corresponding traditional FT

impregnated catalysts.

Keywords: Fischer Tropsch, Iron based catalysts, Ultrasound, Syngas, Sonochemical synthesis.

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