

**Acquiring real kinetics of reactions in inhibitory atmosphere containing product
gases using micro fluidized bed**

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Abstract:

The study proposed an isotopes-tagging method for investigation of reactions under the atmosphere of product gas. To illustrate this method, the calcination kinetics of calcium carbonate $\text{Ca}^{13}\text{CO}_3$ in CO_2 atmospheres were investigated by monitoring $^{13}\text{CO}_2$ produced using a micro fluidized bed reaction analyzer (MFBRA). The results demonstrated that the presence of CO_2 in the reaction atmosphere increases the apparent activation energy. The increase in the apparent activation energy is, however, significantly overestimated by the TGA because of the excessive suppression by stagnated product gas inside the sample crucible. Comparatively, the results from the MFBRA are due primarily to the thermal

equilibrium limitation, because the gas diffusion in the MFBRA is essentially eliminated. It is thus concluded that the MFBRA is quite capable of acquiring the real kinetics of reactions in such inhibitory atmospheres.

atmosphere.

Key words: micro fluidized bed, gas-solids reaction, kinetics, isotopes tagging, inhibitory atmosphere.

1. Introduction

Gas-solid reactions exist widely in the fields of chemistry, chemical engineering, metallurgy, environment, energy conversion, materials science and engineering, etc.¹ Accurately understanding the reaction kinetics and behavior has always been important for scientific research and technology development.

There are some gas-solid reactions taking place in inhibitory atmospheres containing product gases. For example, as an important gas-solid reaction encountered in some processes such as cement manufacturing, flue gas desulfurization, and chemical looping combustion, decomposition of calcium carbonate (CaCO_3) is actually accomplished in CO_2 -containing atmospheres. As an advanced combustion technology, the calcium looping (CaL) process is based on cyclic CaO carbonation (i.e. CaO reacts with CO_2 to form CaCO_3) and calcium carbonate calcination (i.e. CaCO_3 decomposes to produce CaO and CO_2 in the presence of CO_2) reactions^{2,3}. In principle, the kinetics of calcination are affected by the presence of CO_2 in the atmosphere, which is, however, not yet fully understood although a few research have

been reported⁴⁻⁸. Khinast et al.⁹ studied the limestone calcination behavior under different CO₂/N₂ mixtures by a exponentially with increasing CO₂ partial pressure. Garcia-Labiano et al.¹⁰ reported that increasing CO₂ partial pressure decreased the calcination rate, which was more pronounced at higher CO₂ concentrations. However, it is worth noting that as reported by several researchers¹¹⁻¹⁵, the TGA, due to its stronger inhibition of diffusion and lower heat and mass transfer rates, may provide inaccurate information for those reactions occurring in the atmosphere of product gas. For example, under the 100% CO₂ environment, the apparent activation energy was obtained as unreasonably high as over 2000 kJ/mol, with the reaction to complete in several minutes¹⁶, which does not match the reaction times reported in the literature for fluidized bed chemical looping experiments. Thus, a new approach is needed to acquire the correct kinetics of reactions inhibited by the product gas containing atmosphere, such as CaCO₃ decomposition in the presence of CO₂.

The micro fluidized bed reaction reactor (MFBRA) is a novel thermal analyzer, which was first proposed by Xu¹⁷ in 2005, and has become commercially available after extensive research and developments¹⁸⁻²⁰. In an MFBRA, a fluidized bed of millimeter diameters is employed as an isothermal differential reactor for the characterization of gas-solid reactions²¹. In comparison to TGA, MFBRA is advantageously featured by (1) high rates of heat and mass transfer, (2) capability of online instantaneously pulse feeding and super-fast heating of powder reactant to bed temperature, (3) negligible external diffusion inhibition, and (4) fast on-line measurement.^{19, 20} Until now, it has been successfully applied to study the mechanisms and kinetics of a variety of gas-solid reactions, including pyrolysis²²⁻²⁴, gasification^{14, 25, 26},

combustion^{27, 28} of coal, biomass, oil shale and chars, calcination^{11, 20} and reduction²⁹⁻³² of various materials as well as catalytic gas-solid reactions^{33, 34}, etc. These applications have demonstrated that MFBRA is effective, reliable, and adaptable to various gas-solids reactions. Recently, new progress has been made to extend MFBRA's capability in thermal analysis, e.g. by integrating a micro-balance (i.e. FB-TGA) to be able to monitor the change of sample mass and gas products^{35, 36}, by heating the fluidized bed with an induction heater (i.e. IHFB-TGA)³⁶⁻³⁸. These novel reactor configurations greatly enhanced the reliability of micro fluidized bed reactors for complex feedstocks because of the use of larger amount of sample particles.

Using both MFBRA and TGA, Jiang et al.¹¹ characterized the calcination reaction of magnesite powder in nitrogen and air atmospheres. They found that the activation energy and reaction completion time obtained with TGA were significantly higher than those with MFBRA. It was believed that the difference might be attributable to the inhibition on the reaction by the produced CO₂ gas surrounding the sample particles, which would be remarkably higher inside the TGA crucible than in MFBRA. This is, however, not yet validated by direct experiments. When attempts were made to verify this through MFBRA experiments using fluidizing gas containing CO₂, difficulties arose as how to distinguish between a small amount of product gas CO₂ and a large amount of fluidized gas CO₂ because the MFBRA determines the reaction kinetics data based on the measured time-series of product gas species.

To identify the CO₂ gases produced by CaCO₃ calcination and introduced by the fluidizing

gas, we introduced the isotope-tagging method, which has been used in the investigation of heterogenous catalytic reactions^{39, 40}, to the gas-solid reaction using MFBRA. In this paper, the raw reactants are selected deliberately so that the isotopes contained in the gas products are different from those contained in the same gas component in the fluidizing gas. To consider a specific example to illustrate this method, calcinations of calcium carbonate in atmospheres of varying CO₂ content were conducted using Ca¹³CO₃, rather than CaCO₃, as a reactant in this study. When Ca¹³CO₃ was decomposed in MFBRA under atmospheres with different CO₂ concentrations, the ¹³CO₂ produced from calcination reaction was easily recognizable and analyzable because its isotope was different from CO₂ of fluidizing gas (i.e. ¹²CO₂). This study, for the first time, demonstrates a successful investigation of a gas-solid reaction in atmospheres containing product gas by the isotopes-tagging method. With this novel experimental method, the advantages of MFBRA for characterizations of gas-solid reactions are further demonstrated.

2. Experimental section

2.1 Experimental materials and methods

Analytical grade CaCO₃ (Sinopharm Chemical Reagent Company, China) and Ca¹³CO₃ (Sigma Aldrich, America) were used as raw materials for the experiments (Note that if not specified, the carbon in CaCO₃ and CO₂ in this paper defaults to ¹²C). The samples were dried at 120 °C for 24h in an oven before the experiments. The mean particle size is about 80 μm for Ca¹³CO₃ and 50 μm for CaCO₃ as measured by Beckman Coulter LS 13 320 Particle Size

Analyzer (America). Although the particle sizes were slightly different between CaCO_3 and $\text{Ca}^{13}\text{CO}_3$, the difference in terms of decomposition behavior between them is negligible. Therefore, the CaCO_3 sample can be replaced by $\text{Ca}^{13}\text{CO}_3$ sample for tests in MFBRA.

The decomposition of $\text{Ca}^{13}\text{CO}_3$ experiments was carried out at atmospheric pressure in the MFBRA. Figure 1 shows a general schematic process diagram of the MFBRA, which was acquired from China Energy Clean Innovation Corporation. The MFBRA mainly consists of four parts: (1) an electric furnace, (2) a sample pulse feeding system, (3) a micro fluidized bed reactor often made of quartz glass with a diameter of 20 mm, and (4) an online process mass spectrometry (MS). Prior to each experiment, the quartz sand (3 g, particle size of 150~270 μm) was loaded in the MFB reactor as the bed material. The MFB reactor was heated to the preset temperature in the range of 700-1100°C with an interval of 50°C. When the preset temperature was reached, the fluidizing gas mixture having CO_2 concentration from 0% to 100% CO_2 in N_2 , was introduced into the MFB reactor. The CO_2 and N_2 gases were measured and controlled by electronic mass flow controllers. The total fluidizing gas flow rate was about 300 mL/min (under the standard temperature and pressure). When the stable fluidization was attained, the test sample of approximately 15 mg was rapidly injected into the MFB reactor by a pressurized gas pulse. During the experiments, both the quartz sand and sample particles were under the stable fluidization state. The generated gas product $^{13}\text{CO}_2$ was analyzed and recorded online by the MS (Ametek, Dycorsystem 2000).

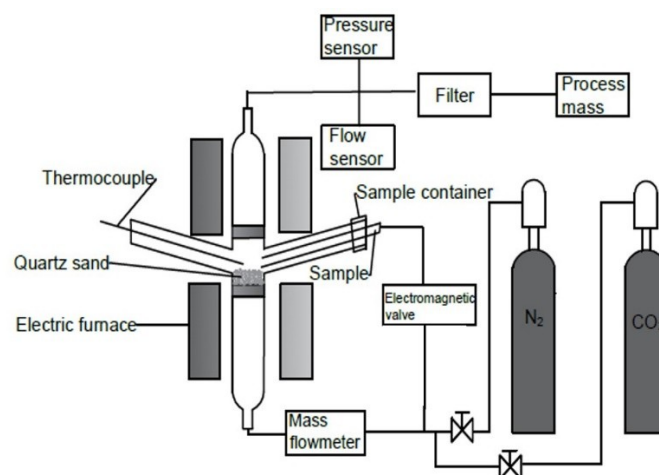


Figure 1. A schematic diagram of MFBRA.

In order to show that CO_2 and $^{13}\text{CO}_2$ can be distinguished by the MS, the decomposition experiments of $\text{Ca}^{13}\text{CO}_3$ mixed with CaCO_3 were carried out at 700°C in the atmosphere of N_2 in the MFBRA. As shown in Figure 2, it is obvious that both CO_2 and $^{13}\text{CO}_2$ can be separately detected by MS, indicating that the use of isotope-tagging approach to differentiate the product gas is feasible.

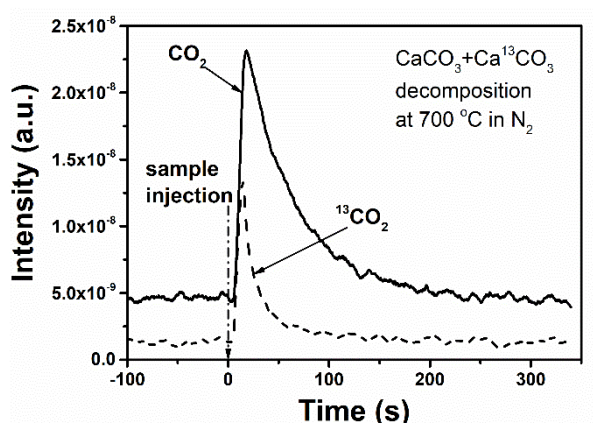


Figure 2. CO_2 and $^{13}\text{CO}_2$ release curves from decomposition of CaCO_3 and $\text{Ca}^{13}\text{CO}_3$ mixture in MFBRA at 700°C in the atmosphere of N_2 .

For comparison purpose, non-isothermal calcination tests of CaCO_3 were also performed in a TGA (TG-DTA8121, Rigaku, Japan) by raising the temperature from room temperature to

1100 °C at heating rates of 3, 5, 7, 10, 15, 20 and 40 °C/min in the atmospheres of CO₂/N₂ with volumetric CO₂ contents of 0%, 1%, 10%, 30%, 60% and 100%, respectively. During the TGA tests, the sample amount, the crucible (Al₂O₃) height and flow rate of gas through the cell chamber were 10.5±0.5 mg, 2.5 mm and 200 mL/min, respectively. A test was judged to be complete when the sample weight became constant.

2.2 Data Analysis Methods

For the TGA tests, the conversion x was calculated based on the mass loss data as shown below

$$x = \frac{w_0 - w_i}{w_0 - w_{ash}} \quad x = \frac{w_0 - w_i}{w_0 - w_{ash}} \quad (1)$$

where w_0 is the initial sample mass, w_i is the sample mass at time t_i , and w_{ash} is the remaining mass of the sample after completion of the calcination test.

For non-isothermal reactions, the so-called combination heating rate method is typically employed for determination of reaction kinetics. The method considers all the thermal analysis curves obtained at various heating rates to obtain averaged kinetic parameters. Among many such methods proposed in the literature⁴¹⁻⁴³, the Flynn-Wall-Ozawa (FWO) method⁴¹ has been widely used, which can be described as follows

$$\lg \beta = \lg [AE/RT] - 2.315 - 0.4567 E/RT$$

$$\lg \beta = \lg [AE/RT(x)] - 2.315 - 0.4567 E/RT. \quad (2)$$

where β is the heating rate; A is the pre-exponential factor, s⁻¹; E is the activation energy,

J/mol; T is the reaction temperature, K; and $G(x)$ is the integral reaction model function. As shown in Eq. (2), the FWO equation yields an activation energy E for each given conversion x under which $G(x)$ is a constant. Therefore, for each value of x , $\lg \beta$ can be plotted against $1/T$ to yield a straight line that has a slope of $0.4567E/R$, based on which the value of activation energy, E , can be calculated. Then, the apparent activation energy of the reaction can be determined through extrapolating the correlation curve of E vs. x to $x=0$. The FWO approach, as a typical model free method, obtains the activation energy without need of pre-selecting a reaction model, but the pre-exponential factor cannot be estimated directly. Therefore, the Coats-Redfern approach⁴² was adopted to determine the reaction mechanism model that can best describe the reaction. The Coats-Redfern equation can be expressed as follows

$$\ln(G(x)/T^2) = \ln(AR/\beta E) - E/RT \quad \ln[G(x)/T^2] = \ln(AR/\beta E) - E/RT \quad (3)$$

The activation energies at different heating rates can be calculated by substituting different a mechanism model function into the Eq. (3) that yields the best linear fitting between $\ln [G(x)/T^2]$ and $1/T$. The apparent activation energy can be obtained through extrapolating the activation energies obtained at different heating rates to the zero-heating rate (i.e. $\beta \rightarrow 0$). Then, the function $G(x)$, which yields an apparent activation energy that is closest to that obtained from the FWO equation, can be considered as the most appropriate reaction mechanism. As a result, the pre-exponential factor A can be determined based on the reaction mechanism function model.

Due to small amount of sample and fast heating rate, the bed temperature change caused by sample injection is negligible, and the reaction in the MFBRA can be reasonably

considered to be isothermal. Under isothermal conditions, the reaction rate can be described in the form of

$$dx/dt = k(T)f(x) = A \exp(-E/RT)f(x). \quad (4)$$

Taking natural logarithm on both sides of Eq. (4) obtains

$$\ln(dx/dt) = -E/RT + \ln A + \ln f(x). \quad (5)$$

where $k(T)$ and $f(x)$ represent reaction rate constant defined by the Arrhenius Equation (

$k(T) = A \exp(-E/RT)$ and reaction mechanism function,

respectively. Since temperature T is constant under isothermal conditions, so does the reaction rate constant $k(T)$, which allows the mechanism function $f(x)$ to be separated.

Therefore, the apparent activation energy can be determined by plotting $\ln(dx/dt)$ versus $1/T$ at any given conversion x (under which the mechanism function $f(x)$ is a constant).

Under isothermal conditions, the mechanism model function is simply deduced to the following equation

$$G(x) = k(T) \times t. \quad (6)$$

Based on Eq. (6), the reaction rate constant $k(T)$ can be obtained for each temperature from the linear regression of $G(x)$ versus t . Then, the activation energy E and pre-exponential factor A can be obtained based on Arrhenius Equation. Again, the $G(x)$ that best fits the experimental data is taken as the reaction function model.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Non-Isothermal Tests in TGA

The experiments of CaCO_3 decomposition were first performed in TGA with programmed heating in the atmosphere of N_2/CO_2 with different CO_2 concentrations varying from 0% to 100%. Figure 3 shows the results of conversion as a function of temperature in TGA at different heating rates in N_2 with 0% CO_2 and 100% CO_2 . As shown in the figure, the temperature corresponding to the same conversion gradually increase with increasing heating rate. The effect of heating rate is more pronounced for 0% CO_2 than for 100% CO_2 . The reason is that the inhibition effect of CO_2 on the CaCO_3 decomposition becomes more and more dominant with the increase of CO_2 concentration.

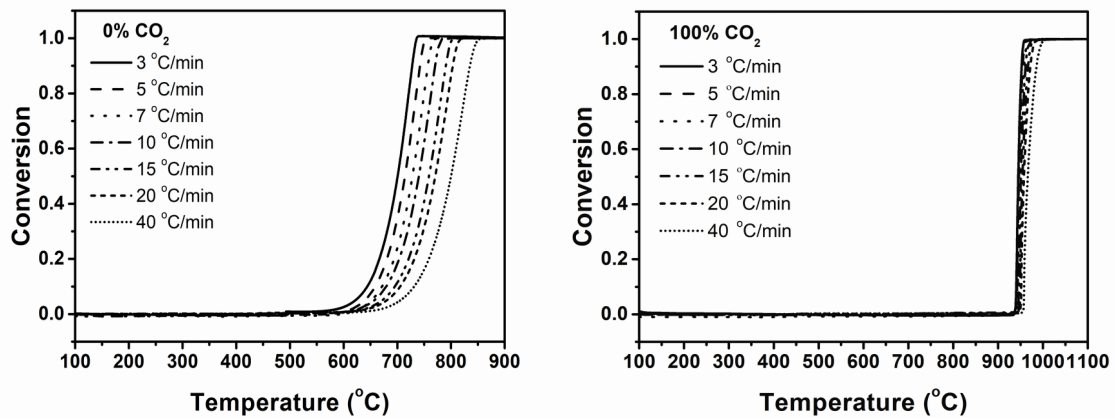


Figure 3. Variation of conversion with temperature measured in TGA at different heating rates in the atmospheres of 0% (left) and 100% CO_2 (right).

For a constant conversion value of x , $\lg \beta \sim 1/T$ is a straight line, as shown in Figure 4. The correlation coefficients of all fitting lines are above 0.99, suggesting that linear regressions are quite satisfactory. The values of activation energy derived from the slopes of the fitting lines in Figure 4 are plotted in Figure 5 as a function of the conversion x . The lines in Figure 5 are polynomial fits between the apparent activation energy E and the conversion x with correlation coefficients R^2 greater than 0.996. Extrapolating the fitted curves to conversion

$x=0$ obtains $E_{x \rightarrow 0}$ of 240.6 kJ/mol in 0% of CO_2 and 2047.2 kJ/mol in 100% CO_2 . These results are comparable with those reported in the literature^{16, 44}. According to the FWO approach, the $E_{x \rightarrow 0}$ represents the apparent activation energy to initiate the CaCO_3 decomposition to produce the products of CaO and CO_2 .

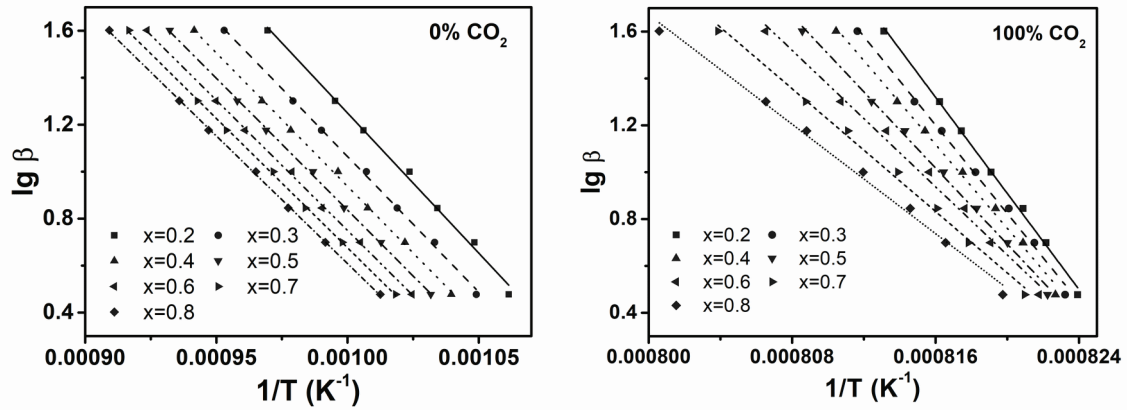


Figure 4. Relationship of $\lg\beta$ with $1/T$ for calcination of CaCO_3 power from tests in TGA in the atmosphere of N_2 with 0% CO_2 and 100% CO_2 .

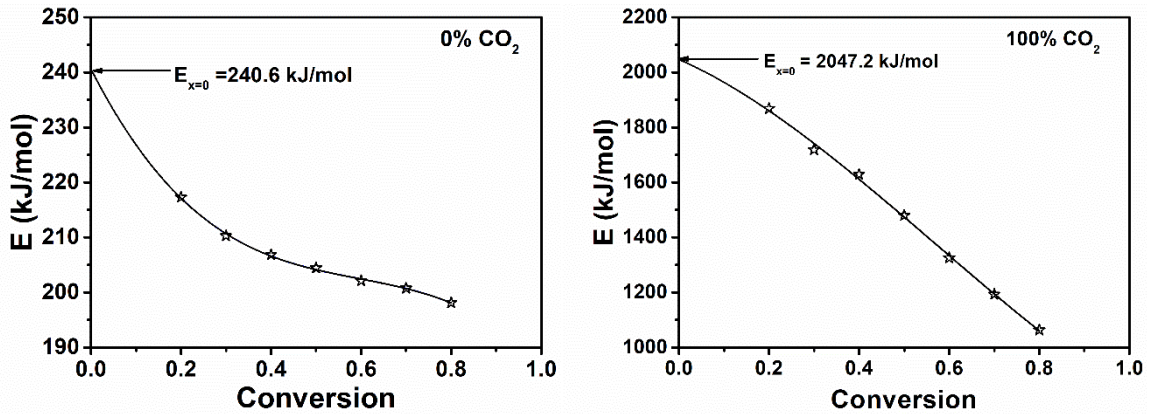


Figure 5 Correlation of activation energy E and conversion derived from the data in Figure 5 in the atmosphere of N_2 with 0% CO_2 and 100% CO_2 .

Based on the same approach, the activation energies of the CaCO_3 decomposition under the atmospheres containing 1%, 10%, 30% and 60% CO_2 are estimated. The variation of the apparent activation energy E with CO_2 concentration is shown in Figure 6. It is observed that the activation energy increases exponentially with increasing CO_2 concentration, and the

relationship can be best presented by an empirical correlation as following

$$E = 817.22 e^{\frac{-C_{CO_2}}{2.31}} - 1144.03 e^{\frac{-C_{CO_2}}{48.31}} + 2200.79$$

(7)

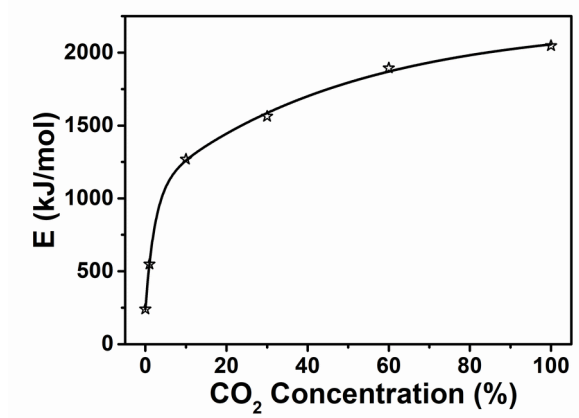


Figure 6. Relationship of the activation energy E with CO_2 concentration for $CaCO_3$ decomposition in TGA.

To identify the reaction mechanism, the four reaction function models that are normally applicable to gas-solid reactions⁴⁵ were submitted into Eq. (3) of the Coats-Redfern equation. The estimated activation energies for the heating rates of 5, 7 and 10 °C/min are summarized in Table 1. Based on these data, $E_{\beta \rightarrow 0}$ can be obtained by extrapolation. From Table 1, it is seen that the all four mechanism function models fit the experimental mathematically well, but the resulting activation energies are significantly different. Therefore, the best reaction model needs to be identified by comparing E value at $\beta \rightarrow 0$ with that calculated by the FWO equation. Under N_2 environment, the activation energy is obtained as 240.6 kJ/mol by the FWO method, which is clearly best matched by the shrinking core model (cylinder) $G(x) = 1 - (1-x)^{1/2}$ with an activation energy of 235.1 kJ/mol. Under 100% CO_2 environment the nucleation and growth control model ($n=1.5$) $G(x) = [-\ln(1-x)]^{2/3}$ yields an activation energy of

2081.6 kJ/mol, approximately the same as that obtained from FWO method (2047.2 kJ/mol). Therefore, the shrinking core model and the nucleation and growth control model can be considered to be the suitable mechanism function models in the atmospheres containing 0% and 100% CO₂, respectively. Consequently, based on the Coats-Redfern equation the pre-exponential factors in the atmospheres of 0% CO₂ and 100% CO₂ can be determined as 1.4×10^8 and $2.3 \times 10^{81} \text{ s}^{-1}$, respectively.

Table1 Fitting results using the Coats-Redfern formula for literature-reported mechanism models based on TGA data in N₂ and CO₂.

	G(x) expressions	$\beta \rightarrow 0 \text{ } ^\circ\text{C/min}$	$\beta = 5 \text{ } ^\circ\text{C/min}$		$\beta = 7 \text{ } ^\circ\text{C/min}$		$\beta = 10 \text{ } ^\circ\text{C/min}$	
		E (kJ/mol)	E (kJ/mol)	r	E (kJ/mol)	r	E (kJ/mol)	r
0% CO ₂	$[-\ln(1-x)]^{1/2}$	132.5	126.7	0.994	126.3	0.993	122.6	0.994
	$[-\ln(1-x)]^{2/3}$	182.4	174.4	0.994	173.9	0.994	169.1	0.994
	$1-(1-x)^{1/2}$	235.1	225.2	1	224.6	1	218.6	1
	$1-(1-x)^{1/3}$	249.8	239.3	0.999	238.7	0.998	232.3	0.999
100% CO ₂	$[-\ln(1-x)]^{1/2}$	1556.2	1292.6	0.990	1183.9	0.990	1132.9	0.991
	$[-\ln(1-x)]^{2/3}$	2081.6	1730.3	0.990	1585.3	0.990	1517.4	0.991
	$1-(1-x)^{1/2}$	2640.1	2188.2	0.974	2004.8	0.973	1915.7	0.975
	$1-(1-x)^{1/3}$	2795.9	2320.2	0.976	2126.1	0.974	2032.9	0.976

3.2 Isothermal Tests in MFBRA

Figure 7 depicts variations of the measured Ca¹³CO₃ conversion with time in MFBRA at

different temperatures in the atmosphere of 100% CO₂. Compared with the data measured in TGA at 40 °C/min (end temperature 1100°C), which is included in Figure 7 for the purpose of comparison, it shows that the conversion increases fast with time in the initial stage of decomposition and then gradually increases until the decomposition is completed in MFBRA. This reveals the great difference between TGA and MFBRA in characterizing reactions.

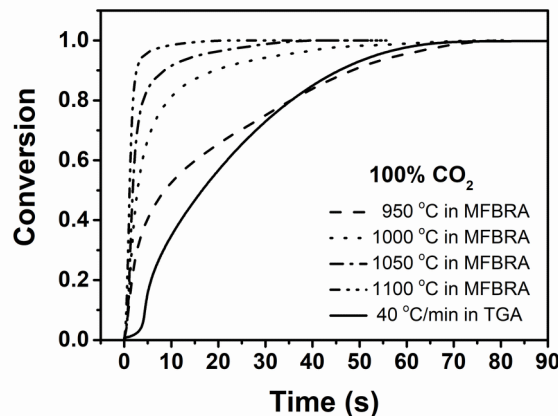


Figure 7. Variation of conversion with time for Ca¹³CO₃ decomposition at different preset temperatures in 100% CO₂ in MFBRA and in TGA at 40 °C/min (end temperature 1100°C).

The variation of reaction rate with conversion is shown in Figure 8. At a given temperature, the reaction rate increases rapidly soon after the reaction is initiated, and reaches a maximum as the conversion further increases to around 0.2 to 0.4 depending on reaction temperature. As the reaction advances further the reaction rate starts to decline continuously. As the reaction temperature increases, the conversion corresponding to the maximum reaction rate also increases. At 900°C, the maximum reaction rate in N₂ reaches 0.3, while in 100% CO₂ at even a higher temperature (950°C), this value is only about 0.13. This again proves that CO₂ inhibits the decomposition reaction seriously.

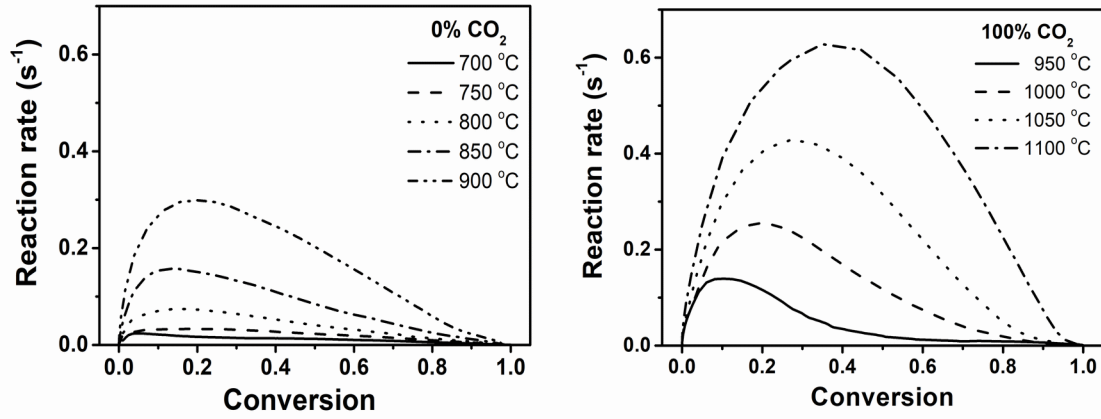


Figure 8. Reaction rate (dx/dt) varying with conversion for $\text{Ca}^{13}\text{CO}_3$ decomposition at different temperatures in the atmosphere of N_2 and CO_2 in MFBRA.

For conversions of 0.2, 0.3, 0.4, 0.5, 0.6, 0.7 and 0.8, the data of $\ln(dx/dt)$ are plotted against $1/T$ in Figure 9. The correlation coefficients for all of the straight lines are above 0.99, indicating satisfactory regressions. According to Eq. (5), the activation energy values can be determined by the slopes of these straight lines, and the results are listed in Table 2. Based on these data, the average values of activation energy are calculated as 127.7 kJ/mol in N_2 without CO_2 , and 271.5 kJ/mol in 100% CO_2 atmosphere, respectively.

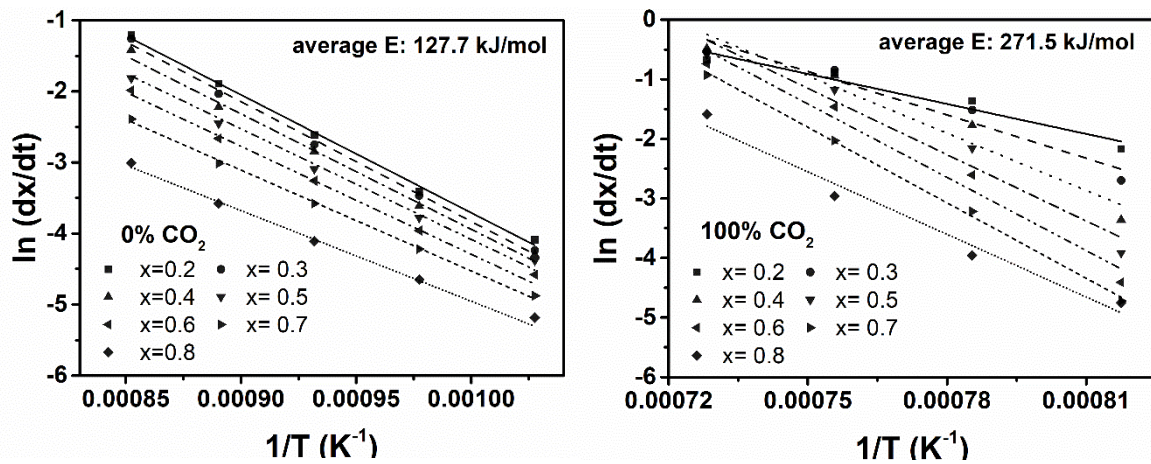


Figure 9. Fitting curves of $\ln(dx/dt)$ versus $1/T$ for $\text{Ca}^{13}\text{CO}_3$ decomposition under the atmosphere of N_2 and CO_2 in MFBRA.

Table 2 the activation energy values determined by the slopes of the straight lines in Figure 10 according to Eq. (5) at different conversions.

Conversion	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.8	Average E (kJ/mol)
E (kJ/mol)								
0% CO ₂	138.0	140.1	135.3	129.5	126.4	118.2	106.2	127.7
100% CO ₂	139.4	202.0	266.5	308.4	341.3	351.5	291.6	271.5

Similarly, the activation energies of Ca¹³CO₃ decomposition in the atmospheres of 1%, 10%, 30% and 60% CO₂ are also calculated. The variation of apparent activation energy with CO₂ concentration is presented in Figure 10. The relationship between the activation energy and increasing CO₂ concentration can be best presented by an empirical correlation as following

$$E = -39.1 e^{\frac{-C_{CO_2}}{1.5}} + 235.29 e^{\frac{C_{CO_2}}{271.5}} - 68.6 \quad E = -39.07 e^{\frac{-C_{CO_2}}{1.46}} + 235.29 e^{\frac{C_{CO_2}}{271.48}} - 68.55 \quad (8)$$

To determine the reaction mechanism, the four possible mechanism models of CaCO₃ calcination reported in the literature⁴⁵ are used to fit the experimental data obtained from MFBRA. The calculated activation energy and pre-exponential factors corresponding to these four reaction models are shown in Table 3. It shows that the shrinking core model (sphere) $G(x) = 1 - (1-x)^{1/3}$ is the most suitable mechanism function model in the atmosphere of N₂ and CO₂ as it provides the highest fitting correlation in CO₂ environment and satisfactory regression in N₂.

Table 3 Activation energy of Ca¹³CO₃ calcination reaction obtained with four reaction models using MFBRA-measured data in N₂ and CO₂ atmospheres.

G(x)	0% CO ₂			100% CO ₂		
	E (kJ/mol)	lg A (s ⁻¹)	R ²	E (kJ/mol)	lg A (s ⁻¹)	R ²
$[-\ln(1-x)]^{1/2}$	131.2	5.14	0.980	341.0	12.98	0.819
$[-\ln(1-x)]^{2/3}$	130.9	5.24	0.985	332.2	12.71	0.873
$1-(1-x)^{1/2}$	134.7	5.08	0.983	186.4	6.69	0.996
$1-(1-x)^{1/3}$	128.4	4.63	0.969	274.1	9.97	0.930

3.3 Comparison between TGA and MFBRA

3.3.1 The activation energy

For the purpose of comparison, the relationship of activation energy with CO₂ concentration obtained from TGA and MFBRA tests are plotted in the Figure 10. It is apparent that for both MFBRA and TGA tests the apparent activation energy increases with increasing CO₂ concentration, but the increase in the activation energy is noticeably faster for TGA than for MFBRA. In terms of the ratio of the activation energy obtained from TGA to that obtained from MFBRA, it changes from 1.9 in N₂ to 3.7 when there is only 1% CO₂ in the atmosphere. Further increasing CO₂ in the atmosphere, the ratio of E_{TGA}/E_{MFBRA} increases up to as high as 5 to 8. The results indicate that as CO₂ concentration in atmosphere increases, the product gas diffusion from TGA sample to surrounding atmosphere is suppressed more seriously. At 100% CO₂, the activation energy obtained by TGA is 2047.2 kJ/mol, a value that is apparently too high to be considered reasonable. In comparison, the MFBRA provides the reaction activation energy of 271.5 kJ/mol, more in line with the expectations. For MFBRA, however, the moderate increase in the activation energy with increasing CO₂ concentration is mainly due to the thermal equilibrium impact, which is confirmed in the next section.

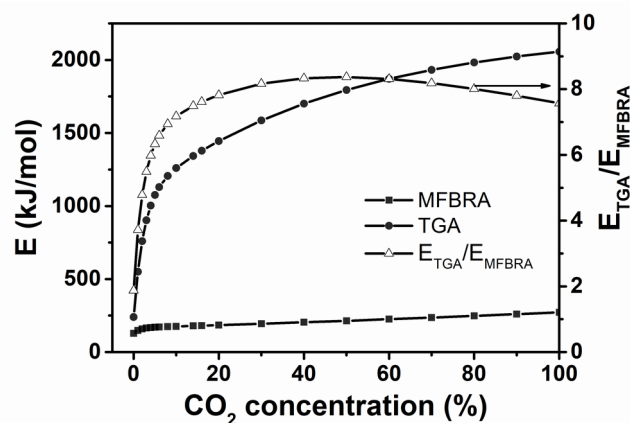


Figure 10. Relationship of activation energy with CO₂ concentration for CaCO₃ decomposition in MFBRA and in TGA.

3.3.2 The initial decomposition temperature

The initial temperatures of CaCO₃ decomposition with different CO₂ concentrations were obtained by both TGA and MFBRA, and the results are shown in Figure 11. During the experiments, the heating rate was 20 °C/min for TGA and MFBRA. For better understanding the influence of CO₂ atmospheres on CaCO₃ decomposition, the process simulations by Aspen Plus were also conducted, in which the RGibbs model was employed as the reactor to simulate decomposition process. For Aspen Plus simulations, the molar ratio of feeding gas and calcium carbonate was 9. The CO₂ concentrations in feeding gas with a mixture of N₂ and CO₂ were determined as 0 vol.%, 1 vol.%, 10 vol.%, 30 vol.%, 60 vol.% and 100 vol.%, respectively. All these parameter settings were consistent with those used in the experiments. The simulation results are also provided in Figure 11.

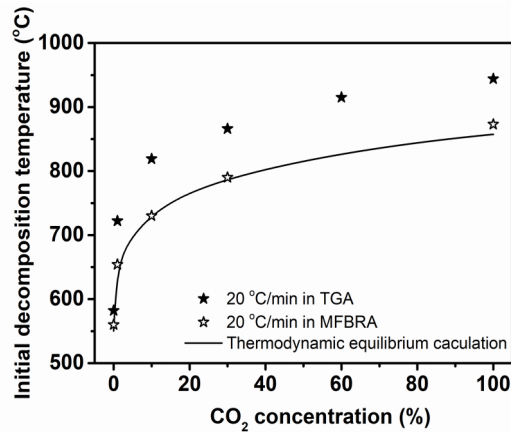


Figure 11. The initial temperature of CaCO_3 decomposition with different N_2/CO_2 mixtures at the heating rate of 20 °C/min in TGA, MFBRA and in the condition of thermodynamic equilibrium.

Figure 11 shows clearly that the initial temperature of CaCO_3 decomposition becomes higher and higher and increases exponentially with the increase of CO_2 concentration. For TGA, the initial decomposition temperature is about 580 °C under pure N_2 atmosphere, and increases sharply to 720 °C in the presence of only 1% CO_2 and to 935 °C under 100% CO_2 . In comparison, the initial temperatures of CaCO_3 decomposition obtained by MFBRA are always lower than those obtained by TGA. The difference between MFBRA and TGA is about 30 °C at 0% CO_2 , and increases to approximately 100 °C at $\geq 10\%$ CO_2 . Between MFBRA and thermal equilibrium calculations, the initial temperatures of CaCO_3 decomposition are very close, indicating that MFBRA is indeed approaching to the real reaction kinetics in the product gas strongly inhibited atmospheres. Therefore, for characterizing gas-solid reactions MFBRA is clearly superior than TGA because of its effective suppression of gas diffusion.

3.3.3 Reaction mechanism model

To further compare the data obtained in MFBRA and TGA, all results measured in N_2 with different CO_2 concentration are listed in Table 4. It shows that for both the TGA and MFBRA

the activation energy increases exponentially with increasing CO₂ concentration, but the reaction models and pre-exponential factors are very different.

Table 4 Kinetic parameters of CaCO₃ and Ca¹³CO₃ calcination measured using TGA and MFBRA in N₂ with different CO₂ concentrations.

CO ₂ concentration	TGA			MFBRA		
	E (kJ/mol)	A (s ⁻¹)	G(x)	E (kJ/mol)	A (s ⁻¹)	G(x)
0%	240.6	1.4×10 ⁸	1-(1-x) ^{1/2}	127.7	4.3×10 ⁴	1-(1-x) ^{1/3}
1%	548.4	2.5×10 ²²	[-ln(1-x)] ^{2/3}	148.0	7.5×10 ⁵	1-(1-x) ^{1/2}
10%	1268.8	1.8×10 ⁵⁶	[-ln(1-x)] ^{2/3}	175.4	9.7×10 ⁶	1-(1-x) ^{1/2}
30%	1563.1	5.3×10 ⁶⁶	[-ln(1-x)] ^{2/3}	194.4	1.8×10 ⁷	1-(1-x) ^{1/2}
60%	1894.2	5.1×10 ⁷⁸	[-ln(1-x)] ^{2/3}	224.8	2.5×10 ⁸	1-(1-x) ^{1/2}
100%	2047.2	2.3×10 ⁸¹	[-ln(1-x)] ^{2/3}	271.5	9.4×10 ⁹	1-(1-x) ^{1/3}

3.3.4 The reaction rate

Figure 12 shows the variation of reaction rate and temperature with conversion for non-isothermal decomposition of CaCO₃ in TGA and MFBRA in N₂. The initial decomposition temperature in MFBRA is lower than that in TGA. This is the same as the result shown in Figure11. At the same reaction temperature, the conversion in MFBRA is higher than that in TGA. For example, at 700 °C, the conversion is about 0.04 in TGA, while it is 0.22 in MFBRA. At lower temperatures, the reaction rate is higher for MFBRA than for TGA. When the temperature increases from 700 °C to 800 °C, the conversion increases to 0.47 in TGA and to 0.81 in MFBRA. This means that at higher temperatures the conversion approaches to complete. Therefore, at the same temperature, the reaction rate in MFBRA becomes lower than that in TGA, which is the result of reduced reactant concentration.

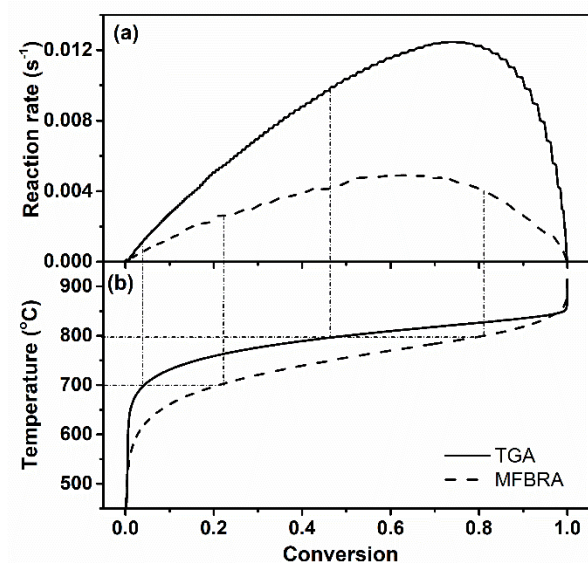


Figure 12. Variations of (a) reaction rate and (b) temperature with conversion at the same heating rate of 40 °C/min in TGA and in MFBRA in N₂.

Under the same conversion, the reaction rate in MFBRA is higher than that in TGA under the 100% CO₂ environment, as shown in Figure 13. In MFBRA, the reaction rate increases quickly and reaches a maximum at a conversion of about 0.2, then decreased rapidly, while in TGA, the reaction rate changes slowly, and the conversion corresponding to the maximum reaction rate is about 0.5. This again reveals that TGA may mispresent the reaction mechanism because the strong inhibition of external diffusion on reaction, especially when the reaction is carried out in atmosphere of the product gas. On the other hand, MFBRA operates in an environment with gas diffusion essentially eliminated, gas-solid mixing extensively and mass and heat transfer sufficiently high, consequently, the true reaction mechanism can be discovered. Therefore, to obtain intrinsic kinetic parameters of gas-solid reactions, especially in the inhibitory atmosphere of the product gas, MFBRA is certainly advantageous over TGA.

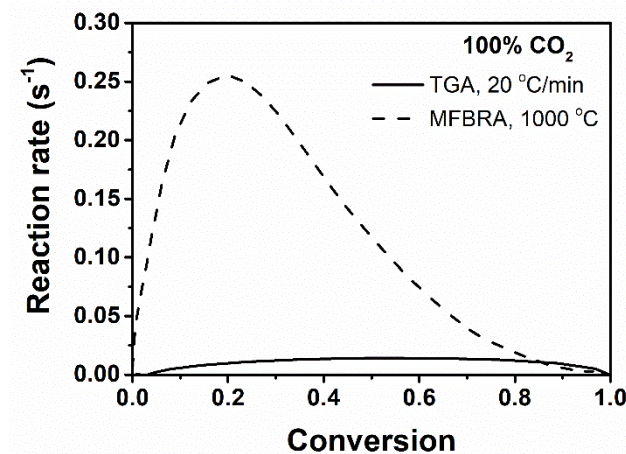


Figure 13. Comparison of reaction rates (a) at the same heating rate of 40 °C/min in N₂ and (b) at a heating rate of 20 °C/min in TGA and at 1000 °C in MFBRA in CO₂.

4. Conclusion

In this study, an isotopes-tagging method was used to permit experiments of reaction kinetics under the inhibitory atmosphere of reaction product gas. The methodology is exemplarily demonstrated by calcination reaction of calcium carbonate under the CO₂ containing atmospheres, in which Ca¹³CO₃ was deliberately selected as reactant so that ¹³CO₂ produced from calcination reaction becomes easily recognizable because their isotopes are different than those of ¹²CO₂ from the atmosphere. The experimental results from both TGA and MFBRA demonstrate that the presence of CO₂ in reaction atmosphere has a significant impact on the reaction kinetic parameters such as onset calcination temperature, activation energy and pre-exponential factor. The apparent activation energy increases exponentially with increasing CO₂ concentration, but TGA significantly underestimates the reaction rate and overestimates the activation energy due to strong diffusional inhibition by the product gas surrounding the sample crucible. The ratio of the activation energy obtained from TGA to that

obtained from MFBRA is 1.9 in N_2 , and increase to 3.7 to 8 when CO_2 concentration is increased from 1% to 100%. The initial temperatures of $CaCO_3$ decomposition obtained by MFBRA are lower than those obtained by TGA, but very close to the thermal equilibrium predictions. It can be reasonably concluded that for characterizing gas-solid reactions MFBRA is certainly advantageous over TGA, and is quite capable of acquiring real kinetics of reactions carried out in atmosphere of the product gas.

The isotope tagging method is a powerful technology for investigating complex reactions. This study applies it successfully in characterization of a typical reaction that is greatly inhibited by the environment containing the reaction product gas. In the future, it is anticipated that this technology can be continuously developed and applied for investigations of similar reactions.

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