

Intensification of NO_x Conversion over Activated Coke by Ozone Oxidation for Sintering Flue Gas at Low Temperatures

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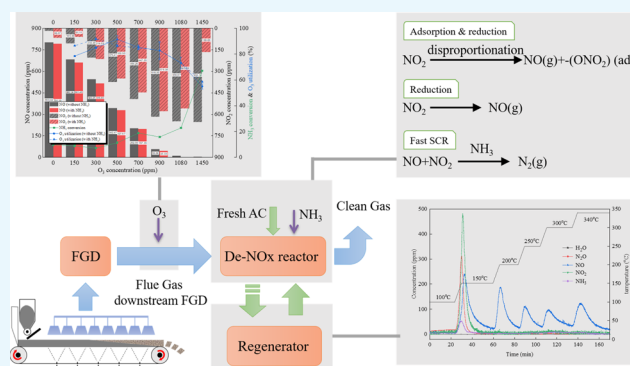
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ABSTRACT: Denitration (De-NO_x) over activated cokes (ACs) for sintering flue gas needs intensification. Gaseous reactions in a gas mixture containing NO, NO₂, and NH₃, with the effect of O₂ concentration and moisture, were taken into consideration in the study of NO_x conversion over ACs. Experimental studies on NO_x conversion with and without NH₃ over ACs were conducted using a fixed-bed reactor at 100 °C. The results demonstrated that moisture significantly affected NO_x removal over ACs, especially the NO₂ conversion. Under dry conditions, a disproportionation reaction of NO₂ over ACs dominated NO_x conversion with no NH₃, whereas apparent fast selective catalytic reduction (SCR) over the ACs was observed in the presence of NH₃. Regardless of the presence or absence of NH₃ in wet mixtures, NO₂ adsorption on ACs via the disproportionation route dominated the NO_x conversion. Increasing the NO₂/NO ratio in the simulated flue gas enhanced the NO_x conversion rate over ACs. -C(ONO₂) deposition on ACs generated by the disproportionation route inhibited NO_x conversion with time. O₃ oxidation was found to be efficient in increasing the NO₂/NO ratio and intensifying the NO_x conversion compared with commercially direct NH₃-SCR over ACs. Increasing the temperature and decreasing the gas hourly space velocity can promote NO_x conversion over ACs after O₃ oxidation. NO oxidized with O₃ coupled with NH₃ spray and continuous regeneration of ACs is a potential method for removing NO_x from sintering flue gas.



1. INTRODUCTION

SO₂, NO_x, and particulate matter are the dominant flue gas pollutants generated by coal combustion, which remains the leading primary energy supply process in China. After the successful application of pollution control technologies in coal-fired power plants, emissions from other industrial processes have been increasingly attracting attention.^{1–5} According to the latest China emission standard published in 2019, the emission limit of particulate matter, SO₂, and NO_x for the sintering flue gases is 10, 35, and 50 mg/Nm³, respectively.⁶ To meet the emission standard, activated cokes (ACs) have been widely recognized as a potential candidate for SO₂ and NO_x removal from sintering flue gases⁷ and the schematic diagram of the flue gas purification process using ACs is illustrated in Figure 1.

In this process, SO₂ can be captured and converted into sulfuric acid, which can be used in the steel manufacturing. The adsorption of SO₂ on ACs as well as the regeneration of ACs have been widely studied and the emission standard of SO₂ was achieved.^{8–12} NO_x removal by using ACs was carried out after the desulfurization of flue gas, and NH₃ has been commonly used as a reductant to react with NO_x to form gaseous nitrogen. ACs act as not only the adsorbent but also a

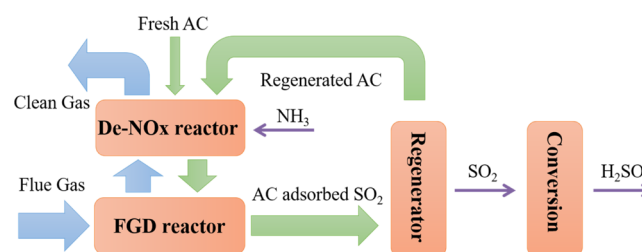


Figure 1. Recycling AC sintering flue gas pollutant controlling system.

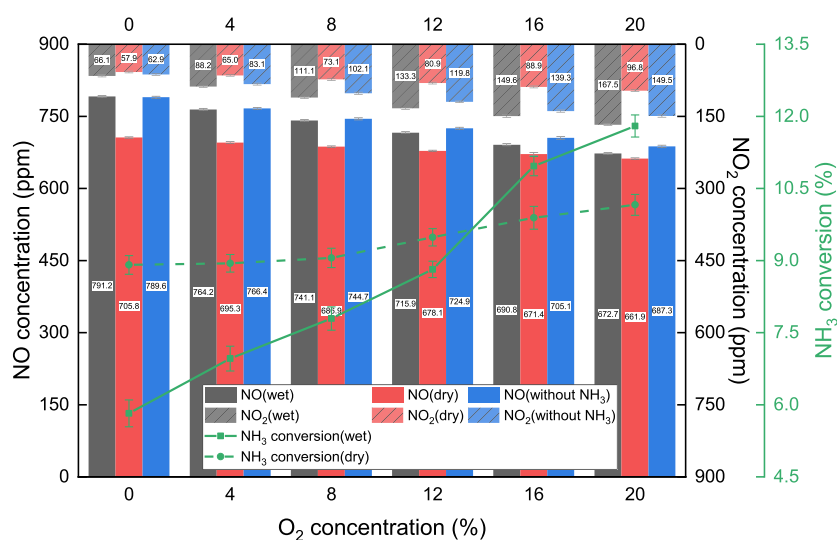
catalyst in the process of NO_x removal. The adsorption properties of NO and NO₂ on ACs have been studied in the absence of NH₃.^{13–17} Some researchers believed that NO was catalytically oxidized to NO₂ on the surface of ACs, and NO₂

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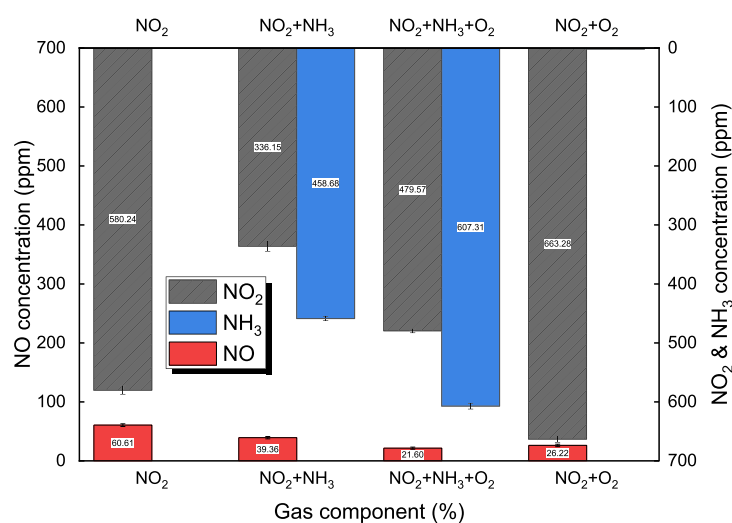
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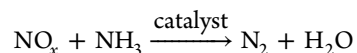
(a)



(b)

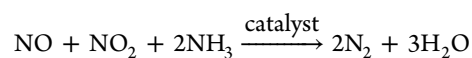
Figure 2. Characteristics of NO_x mixtures with the effect of O₂ and NH₃ (a) NO mixtures; (b) NO₂ mixtures.

was adsorbed and converted into HNO₃ in the presence of O₂ and moisture.^{13,18,19} When NH₃ was introduced into this process, ACs acted as a catalyst to convert NO_x into nitrogen via the following selective catalytic reduction (SCR) reaction.²⁰



Because the temperature for SO₂ adsorption at upstream must be controlled below 150 °C, the catalytic activity of ACs is limited for the NH₃-SCR reaction.^{21–23} Low-temperature NH₃-SCR itself has been a research hotspot all over the world.²⁴ Development of a highly active catalyst at low temperatures in the presence of moisture and SO₂ is of interest. Numerous studies have demonstrated that the doping of transition metals such as vanadium,^{21,25,26} iron,^{22,27,28} manganese,²⁹ and cerium^{30,31} on ACs could effectively improve their catalytic activity at low temperatures. Although

the NO_x removal efficiency could reach as high as 40%, the modified ACs still suffered from low-moisture resistance at low temperatures, which limits their application in NO_x removal. Besides, flue gas reheating by using a gas–gas heater fitted downstream of a flue-gas desulfurization (FGD) reactor has also been considered to improve the catalytic activity. In addition to improving the catalytic activity, previous works also demonstrated that the increase of the NO₂/NO molar ratio could enhance the NO_x conversion using NH₃ as a reductant (NH₃-SCR). When the NO₂/NO molar ratio = 1, the denitration (De-NO_x) rate was found to increase dramatically compared to the NO₂/NO molar ratio of 0.^{31–33} This fast SCR method consists of the following reaction



To increase the NO₂/NO molar ratio, lots of oxidizing reagents have been utilized for oxidizing NO to NO₂, such as ozone, hydrogen peroxide, chlorine hypochlorite, chlorine dioxide, etc.³⁴ As the typical oxidizing reagent, ozone attracts lots of attention both in investigations and applications.^{4,35–38} Among them, NO oxidized by ozone accompanied by a wet scrubber was the most popular technology. NO was oxidized to NO₂ or N₂O₅, which was more soluble in water than NO, and can be removed using the scrubber. Generally, N₂O₅ was preferred when accompanying with a wet scrubber. NO oxidation efficiency reached higher than 90% with O₃/NO ≪ 1 at 100 °C.^{35,36} No N₂O₅ formed when O₃/NO ≪ 1.³⁷ Increasing temperature also decreased N₂O₅ yield when O₃/NO > 1, due to the decomposition of N₂O₅ to NO₂.³⁷ NO₂ was the main oxidation product when O₃/NO ≪ 1 at low temperatures. NO₂ is more susceptible to be adsorbed than NO. When NO oxidation was accompanied by adsorption, most studies focused on NO₂ adsorption to the adsorbent.^{13,17}

Studies on the fast SCR method have used TiO₂ or AC-supported metal oxide as a catalyst. As for sintering flue gas De-NO_x over ACs, how the fast SCR reaction affects NO_x conversion was rarely studied. Besides, NO adsorption on ACs is always accompanied by oxidation of NO to NO₂.³⁹ Furthermore, sintering flue gas is characterized by high O₂ and moisture concentrations. How NO_x adsorption and NH₃-SCR reaction affect NO_x conversion on ACs in a sintering flue gas atmosphere was unknown. Ozone (O₃) was introduced into gas mixtures for increasing the NO₂/NO molar ratio in the experiment to study its effect on NO_x removal.³⁵ Feasibility of O₃ oxidation combined with NH₃ spray for NO_x removal over ACs after FGD was also discussed.

2. RESULTS

2.1. Gaseous Characteristics of NO_x and NH₃ with the Effect of O₂. Simulated gas flow used in the experiment is a mixture of gases from a cylinder. This would result in difference from the real flue gas. A clear understanding of the gaseous reaction among the gases is fundamental for following studies. Figure 2 illustrates the effect of O₂ and NH₃ on the composition of a gas mixture containing NO and NO₂. Experimental conditions for this study can be found in sets I and II of Table 2. As can be seen from Figure 3a, the NO₂

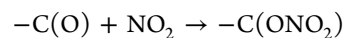
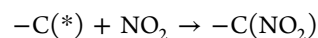
concentrations in dry gas mixtures were lower. NO₂ concentrations increased from 66.1 to 167.5 ppm in a wet gas mixture with the increase of the O₂ concentration, while the NO₂ concentration increased from 57.9 to 96.8 ppm under dry conditions. NH₃ conversion rate increased from 5.8 to 11.8% under wet conditions, which ranged from 8.9 to 10.2% under dry conditions. The conversion of NH₃ should include those being oxidized by NO_x or O₂, and the oxidized products might include N₂ and NO_x. According to the analysis of NH₃ conversion and NO oxidation in dry and wet mixtures, more NO_x was reduced to N₂ by NH₃ under dry conditions than that under humid conditions.

Figure 3b illustrates the change in composition of wet NO₂ balanced with N₂ by the addition of O₂ and/or NH₃. It can be found that NO was detected in all experiments, indicating that NO₂ was decomposed into NO and O₂ at an experimental temperature of 100 °C. Compared with pure NO₂ balanced with N₂, O₂ could inhibit the NO₂ decomposition as the NO concentration decreased from 60.61 to 26.22 ppm by adding 20% O₂ into the gas mixture. It can be seen from Figure 3b that the addition of NH₃ can effectively convert NO₂ into N₂. Only 336.15 ppm NO₂ and 39.36 ppm NO were detected at the outlet of the reactor, which means over 50% of the NO₂ was converted. However, the conversion decreased to less than 32% in the presence of 20% O₂, being indicative of the inhibition effect of O₂ or the oxidized atmosphere on the gaseous reaction between NH₃ and NO₂.

2.2. NO_x Conversion over ACs under Dry and Humid Conditions. Water vapor is believed to have a significant impact on NO_x conversion over ACs. Sintering flue gas features high moisture. NO_x conversion over the commercial ACs under dry and humid conditions was conducted, and the results are shown in Figure 4. Comparable NO and NO₂ concentrations were compounded in the humid or dry mixtures (set III from Table 2). With increasing experimental time, the NO₂ concentration at the outlet of the reactor decreased and leveled off at about 35 ppm under both humid and dry conditions. NO concentration from downstream of a fixed-bed reactor was 51 ppm lower than the NO concentration at the inlet under dry conditions, while 37 ppm higher than the inlet NO concentration in the presence of moisture. The drop of NO and NO₂ concentrations in the dry mixture is derived from the fast SCR reaction and NO₂ adsorption.

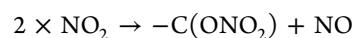
According to the results reported in the literature,^{15–17,40} there are two main routes for NO₂ adsorption on ACs:

- (i) NO₂ was adsorbed on –C(O) or –C(*) complexes as –C(ONO₂) or –C(NO₂).



This can be defined as the nondisproportionation route.

- (ii) A pair of adsorbed NO₂ (–C(NO₂)) on one active site or two adjacent active sites reacts through the disproportionation route



When NO₂ was adsorbed through the disproportionation route, the adsorption of 2 M NO₂ will release 1 M NO and leave 1 mol of –C(ONO₂) on the AC surface. Operation conditions, such as temperature, O₂ concentration, and

Table 1. Chemical Composition and Porous Texture of the Commercial Activated Coke

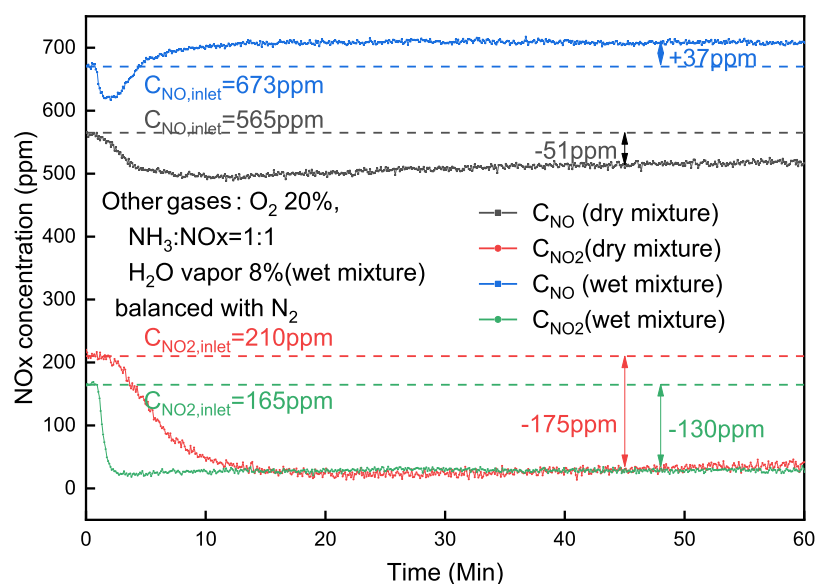
elemental analysis (wt %) ^a	C	H	O	N	S
	83.76	1.32	0.89	0.76	0.3
porous texture	S_{BET} (m ² /g)	V_{total} (cm ³ /g)	V_{mic} (cm ³ /g)	$V_{meso-macro}$ (cm ³ /g)	D (nm)
	192.26	0.109	0.054	0.055	2.28

^aAir-dry; S_{BET} : specific surface area; V_{total} : total pore volume; V_{mic} : micropore volume; $V_{meso-macro}$: mesopore and macropore volume; and D : average pore size.

concentration slightly increased with the increase of O₂ concentration from 0 to 20%, while the NO concentration decreased continuously. It indicates that part of NO was oxidized to NO₂ in the presence of O₂. However, no apparent difference in the NO concentration between the gas mixture with and without the addition of NH₃ was observed. Compared to wet conditions, both NO and NO₂ concen-

Table 2. Experimental Conditions

sets	carrier gas (500 mL/min)	descriptions
set I	i: N ₂ + (0, 4, 8, 12, 16, 20%) O ₂ + 900 ppm NO + 900 ppm NH ₃ ;	gaseous reaction at 100 °C
	ii: N ₂ + (0, 4, 8, 12, 16, 20%) O ₂ + 8% H ₂ O + 900 ppm NO + 900 ppm NH ₃ ;	
	iii: N ₂ + (0, 4, 8, 12, 16, 20%) O ₂ + 8% H ₂ O + 900 ppm NO	
set II	i: N ₂ + 8% H ₂ O + 700 ppm NO ₂ ; N ₂ + 8% H ₂ O + 700 ppm NO ₂ + 700 ppm NH ₃ ;	gaseous reaction at 100 °C
	ii: N ₂ + 20% O ₂ + 8% H ₂ O + 700 ppm NO ₂ + 700 ppm NH ₃ ;	
	iii: N ₂ + 20% O ₂ + 8% H ₂ O + 700 ppm NO ₂	
set III	i: N ₂ + 20% O ₂ + 8% H ₂ O + 900 ppm NO + 900 ppm (if present) NH ₃	NO _x conversion over 1 g ACs at 100 °C
	ii: N ₂ + 20% O ₂ + 750 ppm NO + 150 ppm NO ₂ + 900 ppm (if present) NH ₃	
set IV	i: N ₂ + 20% O ₂ + 450 ppm NO + 450 ppm NO ₂ + 900 ppm NH ₃	NO _x conversion over 1 g ACs at 100 °C
	ii: N ₂ + 20% O ₂ + 700 ppm NO ₂ + 900 ppm NH ₃	
set V	i: N ₂	regeneration of ACs (set IV-i)
set VI	i: N ₂ + 20% O ₂ + 8% H ₂ O + 900 ppm NO + (0, 150, 300, 500, 700, 900, 1080, 1450 ppm) O ₃	gaseous reaction at 100 °C
	ii: N ₂ + 20% O ₂ + 8% H ₂ O + 900 ppm NO + 900 ppm NH ₃ + (0, 150, 300, 500, 700, 900, 1080, 1450 ppm) O ₃	
set VII	i: N ₂ + 20% O ₂ + 8% H ₂ O + 900 ppm NO + 900 ppm NH ₃ + 500 ppm O ₃	NO _x conversion over ACs at 100, 180, 250 °C
set VIII	i: N ₂ + 20% O ₂ + 8% H ₂ O + 900 ppm NO + (0, 900, 1800 ppm) NH ₃ + 500 ppm O ₃	NO _x conversion over 4 g ACs at 100 °C

Figure 3. NO_x concentrations after ACs under dry and humid conditions.

moisture, play an important role in determining the fraction of NO_x conversion via nondisproportionation and disproportionation routes. The increase of the NO concentration and the drop in the NO₂ concentration under wet conditions implied that NO₂ adsorption over ACs was dominated by the disproportionation route in the presence of H₂O.

NO_x conversion over ACs with NH₃ supposed to be derived from the complex interaction between NO₂ adsorption through the two routes and the NH₃-SCR reaction. Transient reaction analyses were conducted under wet and dry conditions, respectively, to investigate the effect of those processes on NO_x conversion.

Figure 5 shows the change in concentrations of NO and NO₂ along with the reaction time under dry conditions. When experiment was conducted without the addition of NH₃, the NO₂ concentration sharply dropped to nearly zero at the initial state and then slowly increased to the initial NO₂ concentration in 294 min. A reverse trend was observed for the NO concentration, which rapidly increased to about 624 ppm that was higher than the initial NO concentration and

then slowly dropped to the level equal to the initial concentration. In comparison, the decrease in the concentration of NO₂ is about twice the increase in the concentration of NO, indicating that the increase of the NO concentration is mainly attributable to the NO₂ adsorption on ACs via the disproportionation route. When NH₃ was introduced to the mixture at 294 min, the NO concentration sharply dropped within 20 min and remained stable at about 36 ppm, which was much lower than the initial NO concentration. Meanwhile, the NO₂ concentration rapidly dropped to near zero and then slowly increased, which was still much lower than the initial NO₂ concentration after 356 min. It can be found from Figure 5 that the NO₂ conversion in the presence of NH₃ could be divided into two parts: the reduction of NO₂ and NO to N₂ via fast NH₃-SCR (blue area) and the adsorption of NO₂ through a nondisproportionation route (gray area). There was no significant increase of the NO concentration being found when NH₃ was introduced, which meant that the adsorption of NO₂ on ACs via a disproportionation route was limited in the presence of NH₃. However, as aforementioned, without the

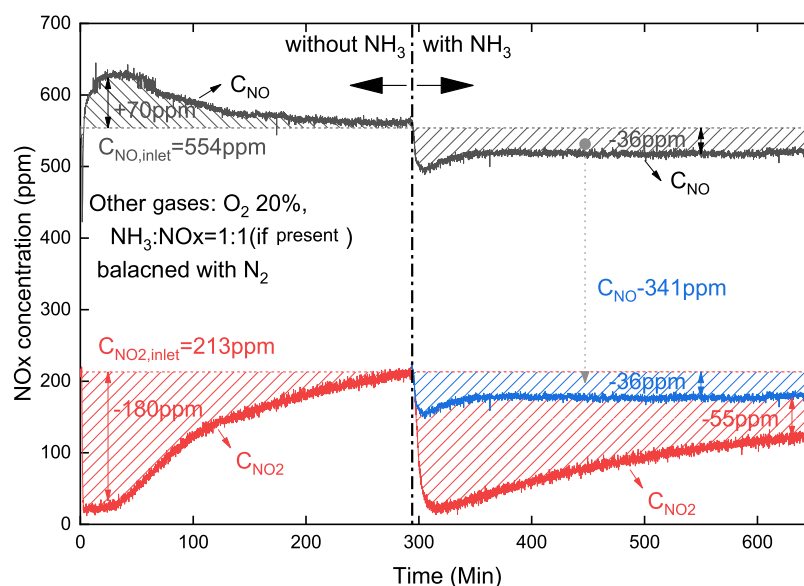


Figure 4. NO_x transient conversion over ACs with the effect of NH₃ in dry mixtures.

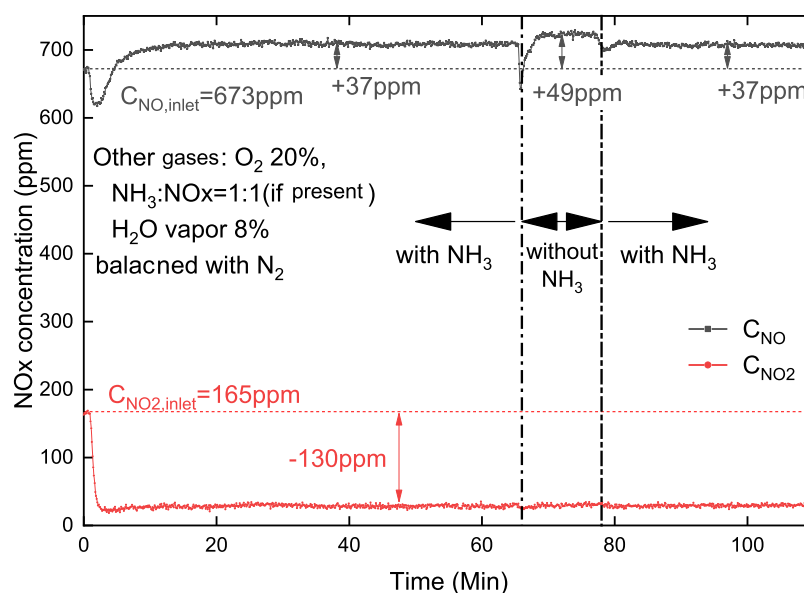


Figure 5. NO_x transient conversion over ACs with the effect of NH₃ under wet conditions.

addition of NH₃, NO₂ adsorption on ACs via a disproportionation route played the dominant role in NO₂ removal.

Figure 6 shows the effect of NH₃ on NO_x conversion over ACs under wet conditions. When NH₃ flow was turned off, no significant change in the NO₂ concentration was observed, whereas the NO concentration slightly increased. When NH₃ flow was turned on again, the NO concentration decreased by 12 ppm, while it was still higher than the initial NO concentration, which means that the addition of NH₃ partially inhibited the NO₂ conversion via a disproportionation route under wet conditions. However, the NO₂ concentration remained unchanged, indicating that the addition of NH₃ had no contribution to NO₂ removal under wet conditions. Hence, it can be concluded that increasing the NO₂/NO ratio supposed to enhance the NO_x conversion ratio.

Figure 7 illustrates the NO_x conversion rate along with reaction time with different NO₂/NO ratios. NO_x conversion was only about 12% and remained stable during the

experiment period when the NO₂/NO ratio was 0.25. When the NO₂/NO ratio increased to 1.21, the NO_x conversion rate was about 30% at the initial stage and decreased linearly to about 3% after 300 min. With a further increase of the NO₂/NO ratio to 24, the NO_x conversion ratio reached 46% at the initial stage and then linearly decreased to about 20% and maintained at about 20% after 250 min. The above results confirmed that increasing the NO₂/NO ratio could effectively improve the NO_x conversion rate, while further investigation is required to explain why the NO_x conversion rate decreased along with reaction time at a NO₂/NO ratio higher than 0.25.

Figure 8 shows the breakthrough curves of NO₂ conversion over ACs at a NO₂/NO ratio of 1.21 and 24 under wet conditions. A significant decrease of the NO₂ concentration and an increase of the NO concentration compared with initial concentration were observed, indicating that the disproportionation route of NO₂ adsorption is dominant in NO_x conversion at NO₂/NO = 24 and 1.21. Different from the

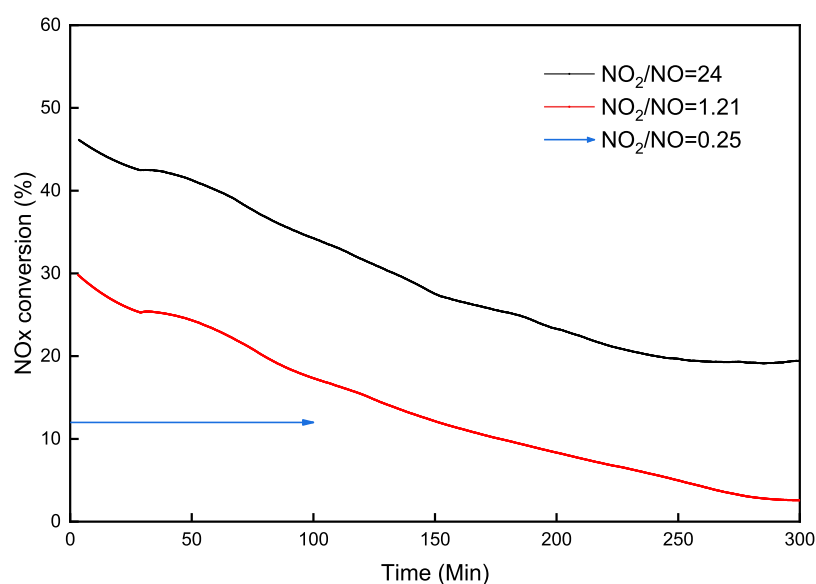


Figure 6. NO_x conversion over ACs with the effect of the NO_2/NO ratio.

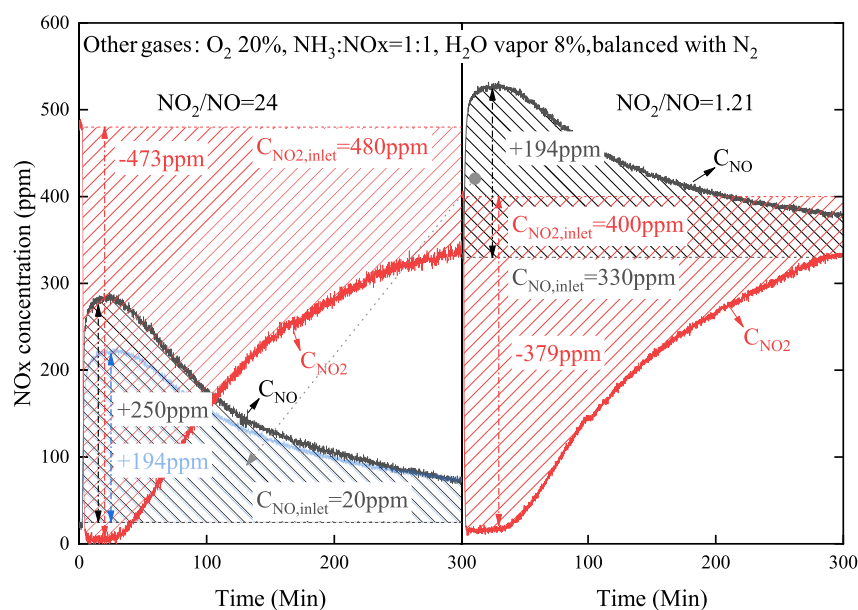


Figure 7. Breakthrough of NO_2 over ACs in wet mixtures.

stable NO and NO_2 outlet concentrations in the ratio $\text{NO}_2/\text{NO} = 0.25$, the NO_2 concentration increased slightly after reaching nearly zero and the NO concentration decreased slightly after cresting. The adsorbed NO_2 in the form of $-\text{C}(\text{ONO}_2)$ occupied the active sites on the AC surface. The active sites were reduced with the increase of the adsorbed NO_2 molecules, which resulted in the breakthrough of NO_2 . The initial NO_2 concentration of the gas mixture with a NO_2/NO ratio of 0.25 is too low, and the adsorption time was not long enough to achieve the breakthrough of NO_2 .

Figure 9 shows the reduction percentage of NO_2 , calculated based on the production of NO (gray shadow in Figure 8), and the adsorption percentage of NO_2 , calculated by subtracting the reduced NO_2 from the total NO_2 conversion (red shadow in Figure 8), along with reaction time, within the first 150 min, the NO_2 reduction rate was almost equal to the NO_2 adsorption rate. This was consistent with the disproportiona-

tion route. After 150 min, NO_2 reduction was getting higher than NO_2 adsorption and the difference increased along with reaction time. The decrease of NO_2 reduction and adsorption was due to the reducing active sites on ACs for the formation of $-\text{C}(\text{ONO}_2)$ along with reaction time. The production of NO did not follow the production of $-\text{C}(\text{ONO}_2)$. This means that the direct reduction of NO_2 to NO occurs, which might not make any contribution to final NO_x conversion.

According to Gao¹⁵ and Jegurim,⁴⁰ the adsorbed NO_2 would release NO and leave $-\text{C}(\text{O})$ on the surface of ACs. Generally, $-\text{C}(\text{O})$ would further react with NO_2 to form $-\text{C}(\text{ONO}_2)$, which follows the disproportionation route. With the increase of the adsorption time, not every $-\text{C}(\text{O})$ would react with NO_2 , which resulted in a higher NO_2 reduction rate than the adsorption rate as shown in Figure 9.

2.3. NO_x Conversion over ACs with Ozone Oxidation.

As discussed above, a higher NO_2/NO ratio could improve the

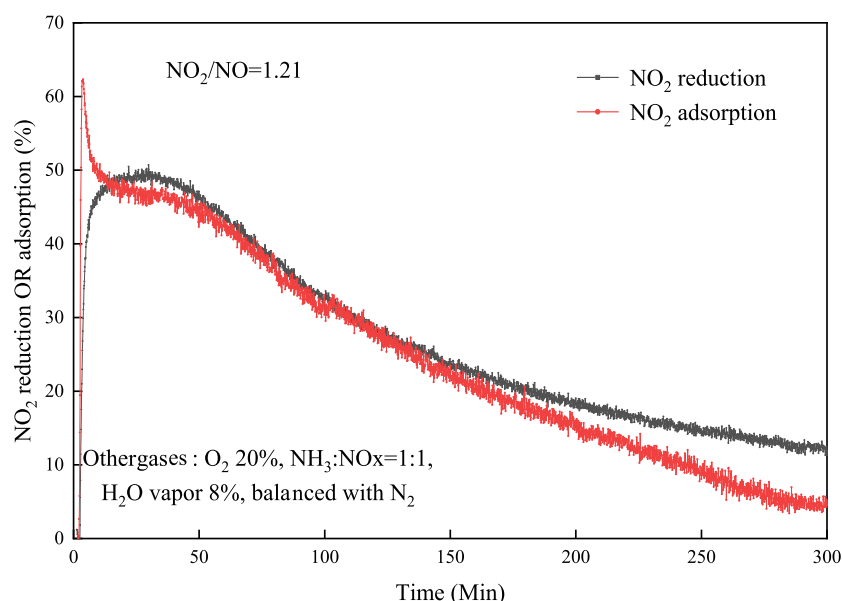


Figure 8. NO₂ adsorption and reduction over ACs.

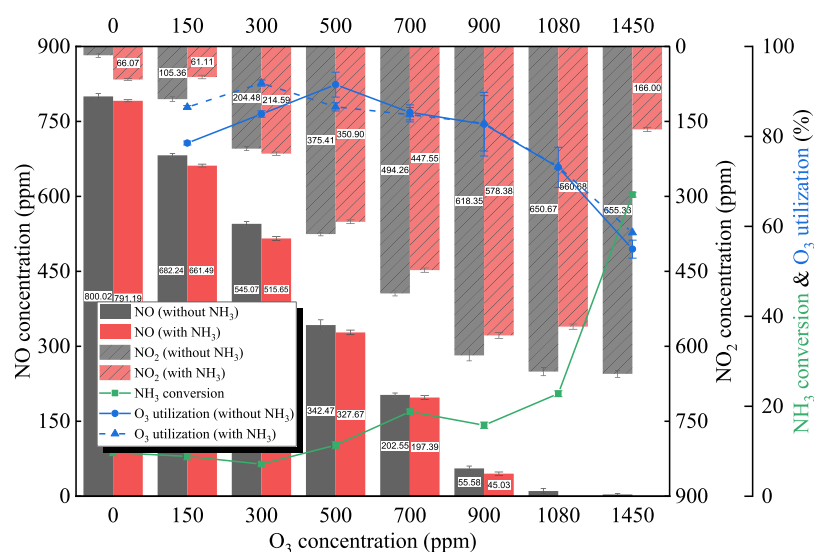


Figure 9. Gaseous oxidation of NO by ozone.

NO_x conversion. Ozone oxidation has been considered as a common method for NO_x removal. The effect of O₃ on NO oxidation, especially in the presence of NH₃, was studied before the mixture went through the fixed-bed reactor containing ACs, and the results are shown in Figure 10.

It can be seen that with the increase of the O₃ concentration from 0 to 900 ppm (O₃/NO ≤ 1), the NO concentration sharply dropped, whereas the NO₂ concentration increased rapidly whether with or without NH₃. With a further increase of the O₃ concentration to higher than 900 ppm (O₃/NO > 1), the NO concentration dropped to zero for both with and without NH₃. The NO₂ concentration stabilized at about 650 ppm in the absence of NH₃ in the gas mixture. As for gas mixtures with NH₃, the NO₂ concentration sharply dropped to about 166 ppm at a O₃/NO ratio of 1.5. The NH₃ conversion rate was 10–20% at O₃/NO ≤ 1, and sharply increased to 67% at O₃/NO = 1.5. Furthermore, white crystals were found on the inside wall of the tubes after NH₃ addition. The produced crystalline solids were collected and characterized by

infrared spectroscopy (IR) using a Fourier-transform infrared spectroscopy (FTIR) spectrometer (Thermo Scientific Nicolet 6700). The sample was mixed with KBr at a weight ratio of 1:200 and milled before being flaked. The IR spectra of the white crystals are shown in Figure 11. According to literature,^{41,42} the solid is identified as ammonium nitrate (NH₄NO₃). The utilization rate of O₃ was around 80% at O₃/NO ≤ 1, which dropped upon further increasing the O₃/NO ratio. When O₃/NO > 1, N₂O₅ was generated in the gas mixture,³⁷ which resulted in the decrease of the O₃ utilization rate. N₂O₅ further reacts with NH₃ and produced NH₄NO₃,⁴³ which caused the decrease of the NO₂ concentration and the increase of the NH₃ conversion rate.

Transient experiments were conducted over ACs in a wet mixture consisting of 900 ppm NO, 500 ppm O₃, and the results are in Figure 12. At 100 °C, NO_x conversion after O₃ oxidation exhibits a similar trend compared to directly mixing of NO and NO₂ at a ratio of 1.21. The produced NO decreased along with NO₂ breakthrough. This indicates that

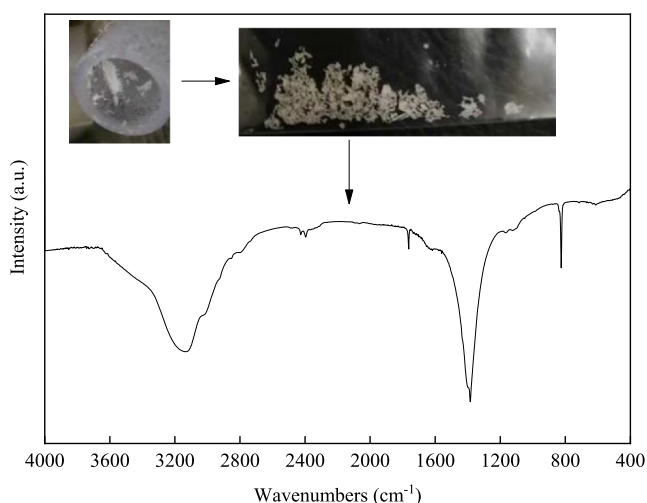


Figure 10. IR spectra of the produced crystalline phase in experiment at $O_3/NO = 1.5$.

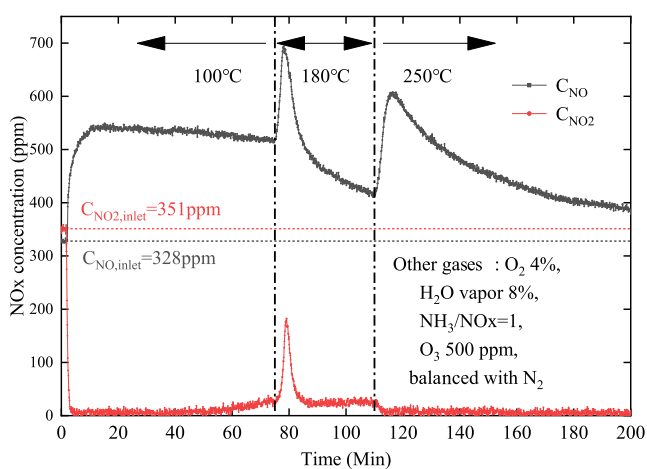


Figure 11. NO_x transient conversion over ACs after oxidized with O_3 with the effect of temperature.

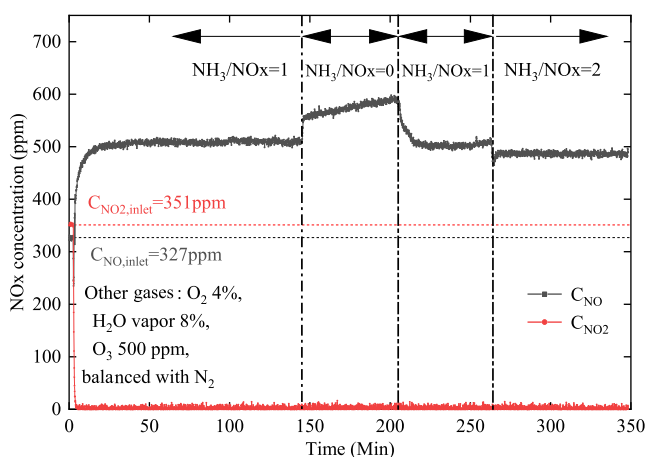


Figure 12. NO_x transient conversion over ACs after oxidized with O_3 at a low GHSV.

the existence of O_3 in the gas mixture exhibits hardly any impact on NO_x conversion over AC when $O_3/NO \ll 1$. When the experimental temperature increased to $180^\circ C$, the NO concentration dropped to 413 ppm following a crest. The NO_2

concentration stabilized at about 28 ppm after the crest. With the increase of experimental temperature to $250^\circ C$, the NO concentration further decreased to 385 ppm after a crest. The NO_2 concentration dropped to nearly zero. The decrease of NO and NO_2 concentrations with increasing temperature was attributed to the weakening NO_2 adsorption via a disproportionation route and the strengthening fast SCR reaction. The crests of NO and NO_2 concentrations at $180^\circ C$ and the NO concentration at $250^\circ C$ were resulted from the decomposition of deposited NH_4NO_3 in the ACs. The results can prove that higher operation temperature can promote total NO_x conversion.

Although increasing the operation temperature is an effective method to enhance NO_x conversion, it is difficult to be achieved in practical applications. Increasing the gas hourly space velocity (GHSV) and the NH_3/NO_x ratio is also believed to be beneficial for NO_x conversion. The NO_x conversion of the gas mixture with different NH_3/NO_x ratios at a low GHSV of only 4500 was studied and the results are shown in Figure 13. Compared with the breakthrough of NO_2 in Figures 8 and 12, the NO_2 concentration stabilized at near zero for 350 min after putting more ACs in the reactor. This means lower GHSV can contribute to stable NO_x conversion for a longer reaction time. Transient change of NH_3 in mixtures effected the NO concentration at the outlet of the reactor. When the NH_3/NO_x ratio was 1 in the gas mixture, the NO concentration stabilized at about 500 ppm, which was approximately 170 ppm higher than the initial NO concentration. Taking NH_3 away from mixtures resulted in the increasing of the NO concentration. The NO concentration resumed after NH_3 reloaded as $NH_3/NO_x = 1$. A further increase of the NH_3/NO_x ratio to 2 led to a slight decrease of the NO concentration through the ACs. The NO concentration stabilized at around 490 ppm (10 ppm lower than $NH_3/NO_x = 1$). The amounts of NO production and NO_2 reduction approximately meet the disproportionation route molar ratio. This has demonstrated the domination of the disproportionation route in the process.

3. DISCUSSION

3.1. Reaction Mechanism over ACs. NO_x conversion mechanisms are summarized in Figure 14. Oxidation of NO by O_2 or O_3 under both wet and dry conditions as well as in the presence of NH_3 was studied before the gas mixture was sent to the fixed bed containing ACs. O_2 can oxidize NO with low efficiency, while O_3 is more efficient. A slight reduction of NO and NO_2 by NH_3 was observed. If the O_3 concentration was higher than the NO concentration, NH_4NO_3 crystals were formed in the gas mixture containing NH_3 . Moisture plays an important role in determining the conversion routes of NO_x over ACs. Under dry conditions, NO_x conversion was dominated by the disproportionation route if there was no NH_3 in the mixture. Obvious fast SCR reaction as well as direct adsorption of NO_2 to ACs were found after NH_3 was added to gas mixtures. As for wet mixtures, the fast SCR reaction was too weak to be observed under most operating conditions, especially for the gas mixture containing a higher NO_2 concentration at $100^\circ C$. The disproportionation reaction dominated under most operation conditions and under wet conditions. Because of the deposition of $-(ONO_2)$ on the ACs, the disproportionation reaction was inhibited, which has resulted in the increase of the outlet NO_2 concentration and the decrease of NO_x removal with time. With the breakthrough

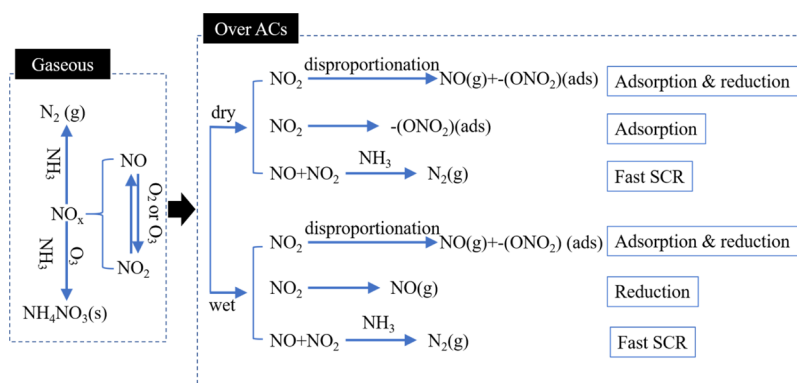


Figure 13. NO_x conversion mechanisms in the gaseous phase and over ACs in a highly oxidizing atmosphere.

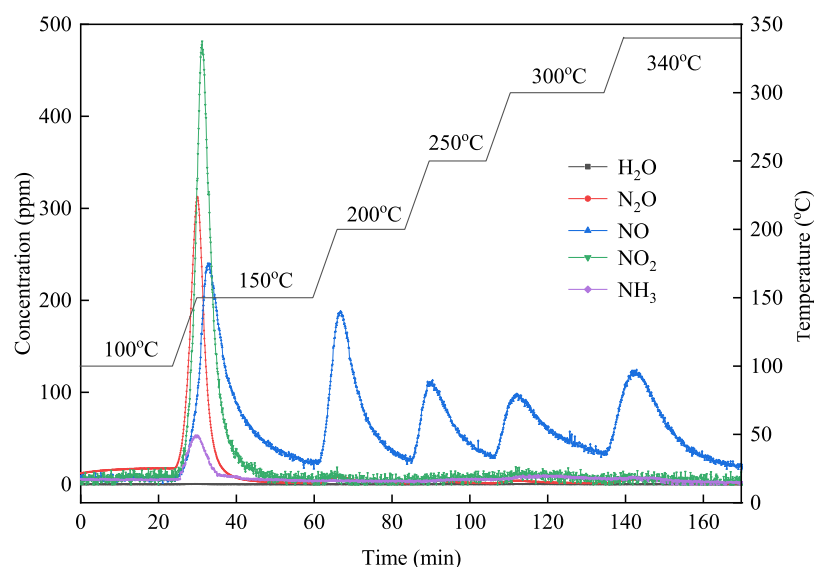


Figure 14. Regeneration curves of ACs after the reaction under the conditions of set IV-i.

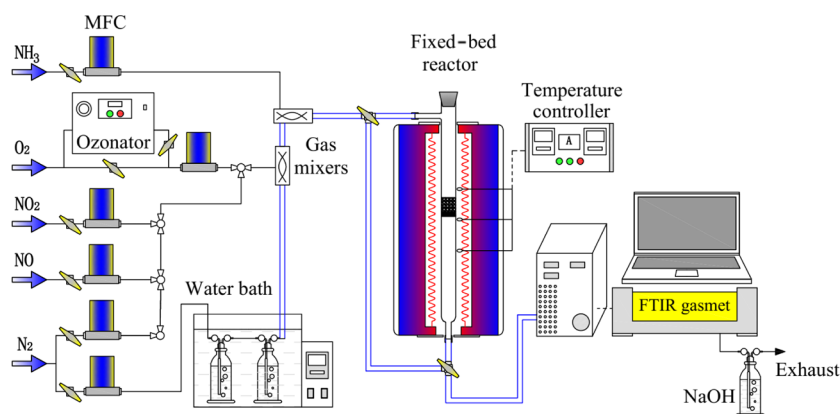


Figure 15. Schematic diagram of the fixed-bed experiment system.

of NO_2 , the NO_2 conversion gradually shifted from adsorption via the disproportionation route to direct reduction to NO . Increasing operation temperature can strengthen the fast SCR reaction over ACs, which has become quite important at 250 °C under wet conditions.

3.2. Method of NO_x Removal with ACs in a Highly Oxidizing Atmosphere. According to the analysis discussed in section 3, increasing the NO_2/NO molar ratio by O_3 oxidation can promote NO_x conversion over ACs at 100 °C

with moisture in flue gas. The NO_x conversion cannot exceed 50% ($C_{\text{NO}_x} = C_{\text{NO}_2}$) due to the dominant disproportionation reaction of NO_2 over ACs with one-time oxidation. Increasing operation temperature is an efficient method to break the conversion limit, while energy consumption created difficulties. NH_3 is essential in NO_x conversion. Lack of NH_3 will result in the increase of direct reduction of NO_2 to NO over ACs, which is negative for total NO_x conversion. Further study is required to optimize the amount of NH_3 added into the flue

gas in order to prevent NH₃ escape. The O₃/NO ratio should be lower than 1 to prevent the formation of ammonium nitrate in the reactor with NH₃.

Considering $-C(\text{ONO}_2)$ deposition on ACs via the disproportionation reaction, ACs need to be continuously regenerated to ensure stable NO_x removal efficiency. In the design of reactors, GHSV should be coordinated with AC replacement. AC regeneration can be coupled with SO₂-saturated ACs in the regenerator in Figure 1. Products of AC regeneration after NO_x conversion are shown in Figure 15. When temperature increased to 150 °C, NO, NO₂, N₂O, and NH₃ were produced. Upon further increase of temperature, only NO was produced. The released NO_x and NH₃ are expected to be further converted into N₂ or acid liquor. The produced mixtures by regeneration are characterized by high temperature, low moisture, and low flux, which could be easily converted to N₂ with the SCR reaction.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Moisture and the oxidizing atmosphere contributed to a significant difference in NO_x conversion both with the gaseous reaction and adsorption/reduction over ACs, especially for NO₂ conversion. The disproportionation reaction of NO₂ over ACs dominated NO_x conversion under dry conditions with no NH₃. Apparent fast SCR was observed under dry conditions with NH₃ over the ACs. Under wet conditions, the disproportionation reaction dominated NO_x conversion over ACs both with or without NH₃ in the gas mixtures. Increasing the NO₂/NO ratio in the gas mixture enhanced the NO_x conversion rate over ACs. $-C(\text{ONO}_2)$ deposition on ACs generated by the NO₂ disproportionation route resulted in the decrease of the NO_x conversion rate along with the reaction time. O₃ oxidation was efficient in increasing the NO₂/NO ratio, whereas NH₃ is necessary for NO_x conversion under wet conditions. Increasing temperature and decreasing GHSV can promote NO_x conversion over ACs after O₃ oxidation. NO oxidation by O₃ coupled with NH₃ and continuous regeneration of ACs is a potential method for NO_x removal from sintering flue gas.

5. MATERIALS AND METHODS

5.1. Materials and Characterization. The commercial coal-based AC specialized for desulfurization and denitration was utilized in the study. The ACs received are columnar with a diameter of 9 mm, and were crushed and sieved into particles in the mesh range of 80–150 for this study.

The chemical composition of the sample was determined using an elemental analyzer (Vario EL). The textural properties of the sample were characterized by an automatic surface analyzer (Quantachrome Autosorb 1C) as N₂ adsorption/desorption isotherms at 77 K. The specific surface area was calculated by the Brunauer–Emmett–Teller method using the N₂ adsorption isotherm. The single-point adsorption method was employed to calculate the total pore volume of the sample. The micropore volume was calculated using the t-plot method. The chemical composition and textural properties of the sample are shown in Table 1.

5.2. NO_x Adsorption, Reduction, and Desorption Tests. The NO_x conversion (adsorption and reduction) and desorption tests were carried out using a 500 mm long quartz fixed-bed tube reactor (17 mm i.d.), as shown in Figure 15. All flue gas components except ozone (O₃) and water vapor were

supplied in cylinders and were mixed in a gas mixer to simulate the flue gas. The flow rate was precisely controlled using mass flow controllers. O₃ was made of pure O₂ using an ozonator, and water vapor was generated using a heated water bubbler. All the tubes, valves, and joints in contact with SO₂ were constructed from either quartz or polytetrafluoroethylene. Moreover, electric-heating tape (Thermolyne) embedded with temperature controllers was used to heat the transport line both upstream and downstream of the fixed-bed reactor to preheat the simulated flue gas and prevent any possible condensation before analysis. The NO, NO₂, and NH₃ concentrations were monitored and recorded continuously every 5 s using an on-line FTIR spectroscopy gas analyzer (Dx4000, Gaset Company, Finland). The O₃ concentration was analyzed using an ozone monitor (GF-Z-3-50, Shenzhen).

The experimental conditions are summarized in Table 2. In each typical conversion experiment operation, ACs (if required) were put into the glass reactor. Before each experiment, the gas mixtures compositions were measured by FTIR spectroscopy through the bypass of the reactor. When the desired value was reached and stabilized, the gas flow was switched to the glass reactor to start the NO_x conversion and desorption experiments.

NO_x conversion, NO₂ adsorption, NO₂ reduction, NH₃ conversion, and O₃ utilization were calculated according to the following equations

$$\text{NO}_x \text{ conversion} = \frac{C_{\text{NO}_2, \text{inlet}} + C_{\text{NO}_{\text{inlet}}} - C_{\text{NO}_2, \text{outlet}} - C_{\text{NO}_{\text{outlet}}}}{C_{\text{NO}_2, \text{inlet}} + C_{\text{NO}_{\text{inlet}}}} \times 100\%$$

$$\text{NO}_2 \text{ adsorption} = \frac{C_{\text{NO}_2, \text{inlet}} - C_{\text{NO}_2, \text{outlet}} - (C_{\text{NO}_{\text{outlet}}} - C_{\text{NO}_{\text{inlet}}})}{C_{\text{NO}_2, \text{inlet}}} \times 100\%$$

$$\text{NO}_2 \text{ reduction} = \frac{C_{\text{NO}_{\text{outlet}}} - C_{\text{NO}_{\text{inlet}}}}{C_{\text{NO}_2, \text{inlet}}} \times 100\%$$

$$\text{NH}_3 \text{ conversion} = \frac{C_{\text{NH}_3, \text{inlet}} - C_{\text{NH}_3, \text{outlet}}}{C_{\text{NH}_3, \text{inlet}}} \times 100\%$$

$$\text{O}_3 \text{ utilization} = \frac{C_{\text{NO}_{\text{inlet}}} - C_{\text{NO}_{\text{outlet}}}}{C_{\text{O}_3, \text{inlet}}} \times 100\%$$

where, $C_{\text{NH}_3, \text{inlet}}$ and $C_{\text{NH}_3, \text{outlet}}$ represent the NH₃ concentration (ppm) in the gas mixture at the inlet and outlet of the reactor, respectively, while $C_{\text{NO}_{\text{inlet}}}$ and $C_{\text{NO}_{\text{outlet}}}$ represent the NO concentration (ppm) in the gas mixture at the inlet and outlet of the reactor, respectively. $C_{\text{O}_3, \text{inlet}}$ is the O₃ concentration (ppm) at the inlet of the reactor.

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Notes

The authors declare no competing financial interest.

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