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Data Article

Data on the catalytic CO oxidation and CO₂ reduction durability on gC₃N₄ nanotubes Co-doped atomically with Pd and Cu



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ABSTRACT

Understanding the fabrication mechanism of graphitic carbon nitride (gC₃N₄) nanostructures is critical for tailoring their physicochemical properties for various catalytic applications. In this article, we provide deep insights into the optimized parameters for the rational synthesis of one-dimensional gC₃N₄ atomically doped with Pd and Cu denoted as (Pd/Cu/gC₃N₄NTs) and its fabrication mechanism. This is in addition to the CO oxidation durability along with the electrochemical and photoelectrochemical CO₂ reduction durability of Pd/Cu/gC₃N₄NTs. The presented herein results are correlated to the research article entitled "Precise Fabrication of Porous One-dimensional gC₃N₄ Nanotubes Doped with Pd and Cu Atoms for Efficient CO Oxidation and CO₂ Reduction (Kamel Eid et al., 2019).

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Specifications Table

Subject area	Chemistry
More specific subject area	Catalysis
Type of data	Scheme, Images, Table, and Figures
How data was acquired	Transmission electron microscope ((TEM), TecnaiG220, FEI, Hillsboro, OR, USA), scanning electron microscope ((SEM), Hitachi S-4800, Hitachi, Tokyo, Japan), X-ray diffraction patterns ((XRD), X'Pert-Pro MPD, PANalytical Co., Almelo, Netherlands), CO oxidation (online gas analyzer IR-200, Yokogawa, Japan), CO ₂ reduction Gamry electrochemical analyzer (reference 3000, Gamry Co., USA).
Data format	The obtained data are imaged and analyzed.
Experimental factors	The thermal CO oxidation stability tests were measured under continuous gas mixture flow while heating (25–300 °C). The electrocatalytic CO ₂ reduction durability tests were benchmarked at the room temperature in 0.5 M NaHCO ₃ solution.
Experimental features	Changing the reaction parameters and conditions to optimizing the fabrication process of Pd/Cu/gC ₃ N ₄ . Investigation the thermal CO oxidation durability as well as the electrochemical and photoelectrochemical CO ₂ reduction of Pd/Cu/gC ₃ N ₄ . These results are beside the structural and compositional analysis of Pd/Cu/gC ₃ N ₄ after the catalytic durability reactions.
Data source location	Center for advanced materials, Qatar University, Doha 2713, Qatar.
Data accessibility	The data are obtained and provided in this article.
Related research article	Eid et al., Precise Fabrication of Porous One-dimensional gC ₃ N ₄ Nanotubes Doped with Pd and Cu Atoms for Efficient CO Oxidation and CO ₂ Reduction, <i>Inorganic Chemistry Communications.</i> " [1]

Value of the data

- Optimization of the fabrication process of gC₃N₄ nanostructures doped with binary metals is essential in various catalytic applications.
- Understanding the fabrication mechanism of Pd/Cu/gC₃N₄NTs is essential for tailoring their physicochemical and catalytic properties for various applications.
- The catalytic CO oxidation and CO₂ reduction durability of Pd/Cu/gC₃N₄NTs are central factors in commercial applications.
- These data may open new avenues on using gC₃N₄-based materials for gas conversion reactions.

1. Data

The presented data article is associated with the research article (Kamel Eid et al., 2019 [1]). This includes (i) the SEM and TEM images of metal-free gC₃N₄, (ii) the TEM images of Pd/Cu/gC₃N₄ prepared in different morphologies, (iii) the CO oxidation durability of Pd/Cu/gC₃N₄NTs, Pd/gC₃N₄NTs, and Cu/gC₃N₄NTs, (iv) the electrocatalytic and photoelectrochemical CO₂ reduction of Pd/Cu/gC₃N₄NTs, and (v) the XRD, EDX, and TEM image of Pd/Cu/gC₃N₄ after the CO durability testes.

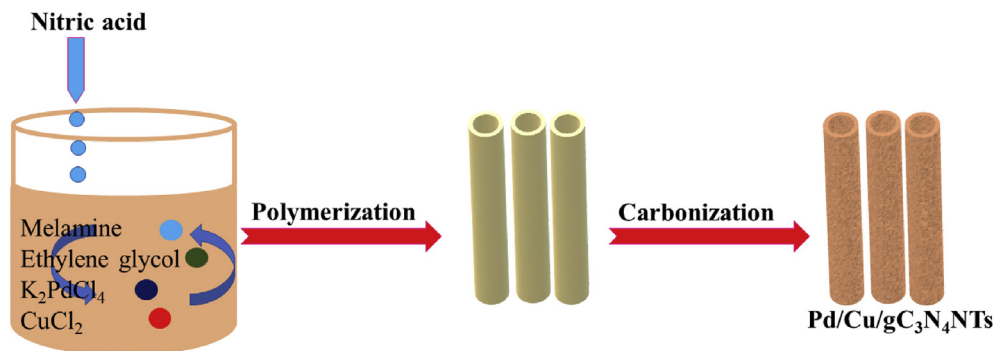
2. Experimental design, materials, and methods

2.1. CO oxidation

We tested the CO oxidation reaction in a fixed bed quartz tubular reactor connected to an online gas analyzer (IR200, Yokogawa, Japan) in the presence of 50 mg of each catalyst. Initial pretreatment was carried out at 250 °C under an O₂ flow of 50 mL min⁻¹ for 1 h, and then H₂ (30 mL min⁻¹) for 1 h. Following that, the catalysts were exposed to the gas mixture involving of 4% CO, 20% O₂, and 76% Ar with a total flow of 50 mL min⁻¹ under continuous heating from 25 °C to 400 °C (5° min⁻¹) [1–5]. The percentage of CO conversion (% CO) was calculated using the following equation:

$$\%CO = [(CO_{in} - CO_{out}) / CO_{in}] \times 100 \quad (1)$$

where CO_{in} is, the input quantity and CO_{out} is the output quantity.



Scheme 1. Schematic shows the synthesis process of Pd/Cu/gC₃N₄NTs.

2.2. Electrochemical reduction of CO₂

The cyclic voltammogram (CVs), linear sweep voltammogram (LSV), and electrochemical impedance spectroscopy (EIS) measurements were measured on Gamry electrochemical analyzer (reference 3000, Gamry Co., USA) using a three-electrode system composed of a Pt wire (counter electrode), Ag/AgCl (reference electrode), and glassy carbon ((5mm) working electrode). The CVs, LSVs, and EIS were measured in a CO₂-saturated aqueous solution of 0.5 M NaHCO₃ at a sweep rate of 50 mV s⁻¹. In the photoelectrochemical measurements, the light source was ozone-free xenon lamp (100 W, Abet Technologies, USA) with fluorine-doped tin oxide as a working electrode in a Quartz photo-glass cell (50 mm × 50 mm). The catalyst loading amount of each catalyst on the working electrode was fixed to 10 μg cm⁻² using. After deposition of each catalyst on the working electrodes, a 5 μL of Nafion solution (1 wt %) was added on each electrode and left to dry completely under vacuum at 80 °C before the measurements.

Scheme 1 shows the fabrication process of Pd/Cu/gC₃N₄NTs, including the initial slow mixing of melamine in an aqueous solution of ethylene glycol solution, contains Pd- and Cu precursors [3]. Then, nitric acid was added dropwise to slowly deprotonate melamine and facilitates the polymerization step

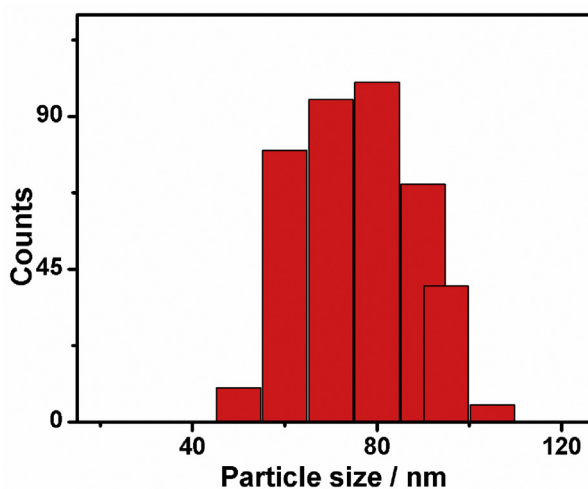


Fig. 1. The size distribution histogram of Pd/Cu/gC₃N₄NTs.

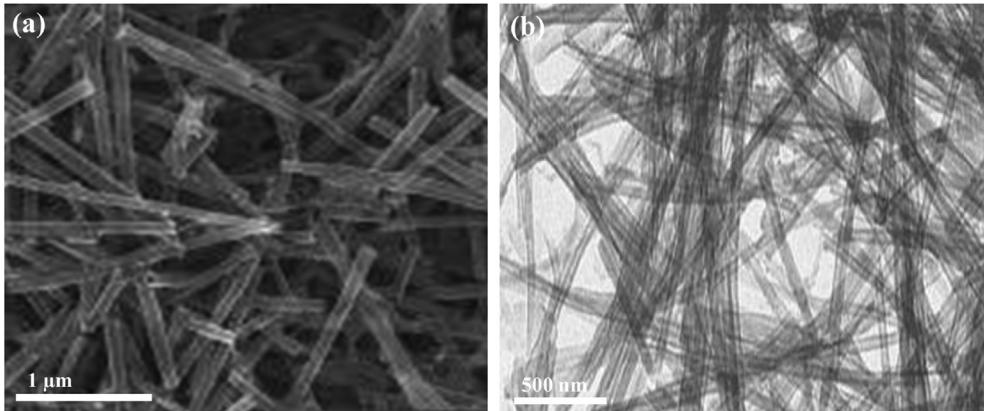


Fig. 2. (a) SEM and (b) TEM images of gC_3N_4NTs .

to polymeric gC_3N_4 , followed by annealing at elevated temperature to allow the carbonization process and formation of gC_3N_4NTs doped with Pd and Cu.

Fig. 1 shows the histogram chart of Pd/Cu/ gC_3N_4NTs . The widths of thus obtained Pd/Cu/ gC_3N_4NTs ranged from 60 to 90 nm. The average width of thus formed nanotubes is nearly 80 nm.

Fig. 2 shows the SEM and TEM images of metal-free gC_3N_4NTs that were prepared by the same method of Pd/Cu/ gC_3N_4NTs but in the absence of Pd and Cu precursors. **Fig. 2a** reveals the SEM image of gC_3N_4NTs formed in high yield (nearly 100%) of nanotubes shape. The nanotube shape was uniform and mono distributed with an average width of 78 nm and an average length of 1.4 μm . The TEM image shows the absence of any undesired nanostructures such as spherical nanoparticles or other shapes.

2.3. Fabrication parameters optimization

Fig. 3a shows the TEM image of Pd/Cu/ C_3N_4NTs nanoflakes prepared by the quick mixing of melamine (1 g) in an aqueous solution of ethylene glycol solution (30 mL) involving K_2PdCl_4 (20 mM) and $CuCl_2$ (20 mM) followed by the slow addition of HNO_3 (60 mL of 0.1 M) under stirring. The obtained precipitate was washed with ethanol and dried at 80 $^{\circ}C$ for 12 h before annealing at 550 $^{\circ}C$ (5 $^{\circ}C/min$) for 2 h under nitrogen. The TEM image reveals the formation of aggregated flakes-like Pd/Cu/ C_3N_4NTs nanostructures obtained in a high yield with an average dimension of ~ 250 nm.

Under the same conditions and parameters of nanoflakes, the quick addition of nitric acid produced sheet-like nanostructures. This arose from the quick deprotonation and polymerization process via rapid addition of nitric acid (**Fig. 3b**). Reducing the concentration of nitric acid to 0.03 M with fixing all other conditions and parameters formed aggregated and non-uniform Pd/Cu/ C_3N_4 nanotubes (**Fig. 3c**). Using isopropanol solution instead of ethylene glycol led to the production of Pd/Cu/ C_3N_4 nanofibers in line with our previous reports (**Fig. 3d**) [2]. The as-formed nanofibers were highly uniform with average dimensions of $1.5 \pm 0.2 \mu m$ in length and 80 ± 3 nm in width.

Fig. 3e shows the formation of gC_3N_4 nanosheets decorated with aggregated Pd/Cu nanoparticles formed through increasing the concentration of Pd/Cu to 60 mM instead of 20 mM with fixing all other conditions. Similarly, decreasing the concentration of Pd/Cu to 40 mM drove the formation of nanosheets decorated with uniform Pd/Cu nanoparticles (**Fig. 3f**). These results warranted that the formation of Pd/Cu/ C_3N_4NTs is highly sensitive to the concentration of reactants and their mixing conditions. In particular, the addition of melamine and nitric acid should be sluggish to provide enough time for a consistent polymerization into uniform nanotubes. Nitric acid facilitates the deprotonation of active $-NH_2$ groups of melamine and allowing the conversion of melamine into melem and then to polymeric gC_3N_4 composed of triazine-based units after carbonization at an elevated temperature [1–5]. Meanwhile, the concentration of Pd/Cu precursors should be lower to be anchored on the N-

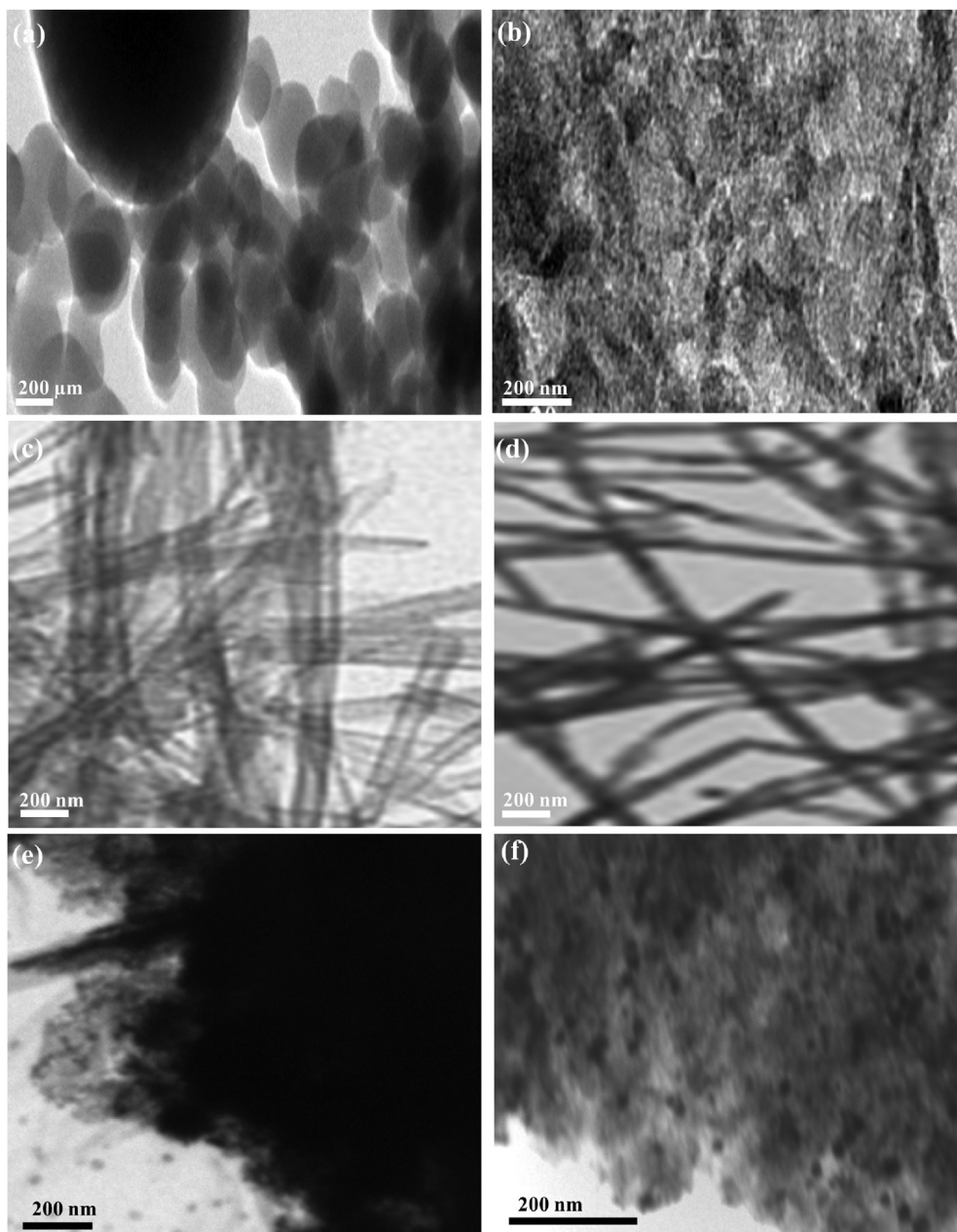


Fig. 3. (a) TEM images of Pd/Cu/gC₃N₄NTs obtained by (a) quick addition of melamine, (b) quick addition of HNO₃, (c) using 60 mL of HNO₃ (0.03 M), (d) using ethanol instead of ethylene glycol. (e) Pd/Cu/gC₃N₄NTs formed using 60 mM of K₂PdCl₄ and CuCl₂ and (f) using 40 mM of K₂PdCl₄ and CuCl₂.

atoms of melamine and then facilitating the atomic doping of Pd/Cu instead of formation of nanoparticles [1–5]. On the other hand, glycol-mediated solution acting as a structure-directing agent for driving the formation of nanotube shape.

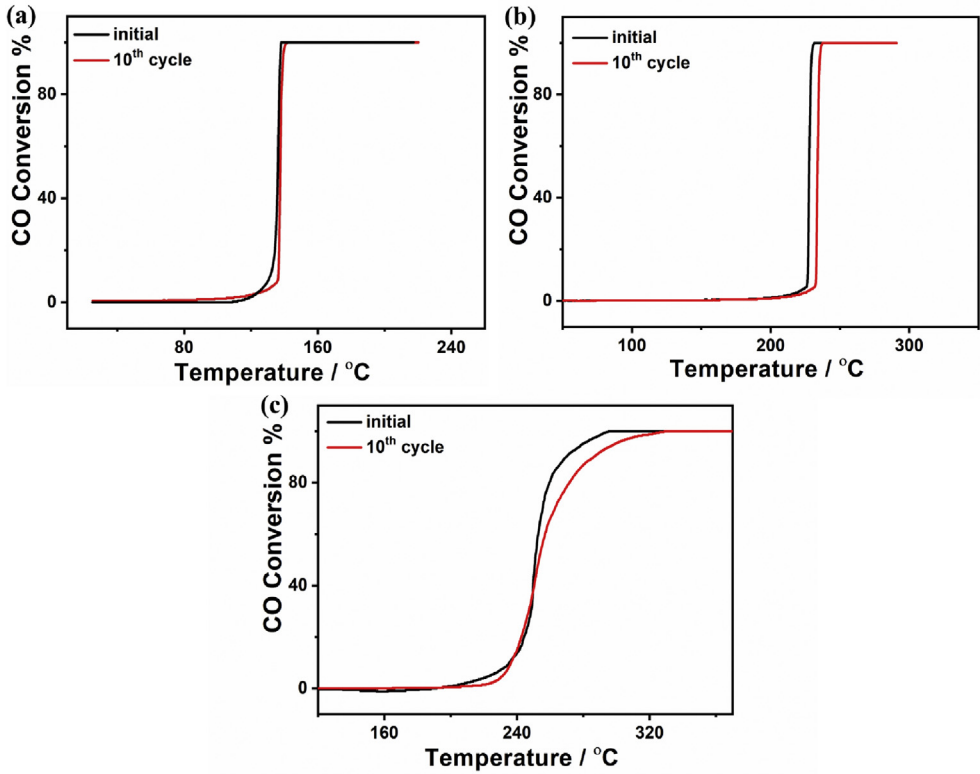


Fig. 4. The CO oxidation light-off stability tests measured on (a) Pd/Cu/gC₃N₄NTs, (b) Pd/gC₃N₄NTs, and (c) Cu/gC₃N₄NTs for ten cycles at their T₁₀₀.

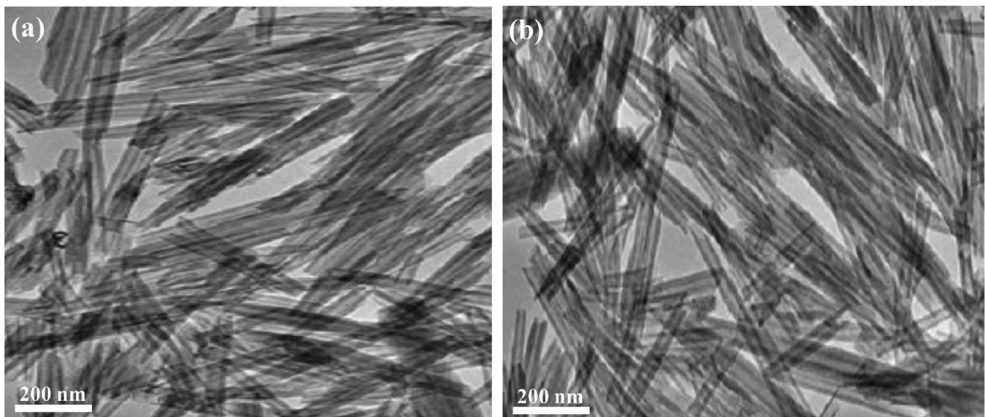


Fig. 5. The TEM image of Pd/Cu/gC₃N₄NTs before (a) and after (b) the stability tests.

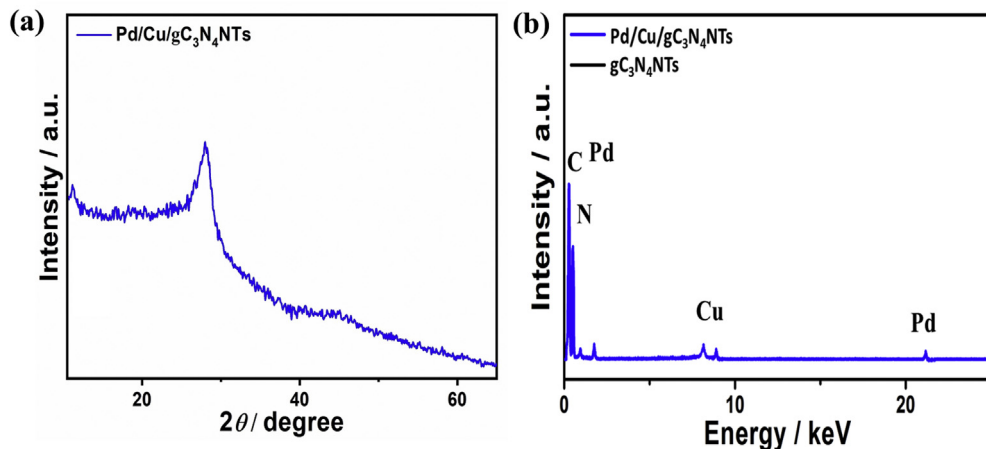


Fig. 6. (a) XRD analysis and (b) EDX analysis of Pd/Cu/gC₃N₄NTs after the CO durability tests.

2.4. CO oxidation stability tests

The CO oxidation durability is an important factor in large-scale environmental and industrial applications [1–4]. Fig. 4 shows the accelerated durability tests of Pd/Cu/gC₃N₄NTs, Pd/gC₃N₄NTs, and Cu/gC₃N₄NTs measured for ten cycles at their complete CO conversion temperature (T_{100}). The results show that Pd/Cu/gC₃N₄NTs is more durable than both Pd/gC₃N₄NTs and Cu/gC₃N₄NTs. Particularly, the CO oxidation kinetics and T_{100} of Pd/Cu/gC₃N₄NTs were almost maintained without any significant changes (Fig. 4a). Meanwhile, the T_{100} of Pd/gC₃N₄NTs, and Cu/gC₃N₄NTs increased only by around 11 °C (Fig. 4b) and 25 °C (Fig. 4c), respectively. However, the CO oxidation kinetics did not decrease substantially on both Pd/gC₃N₄NTs and Cu/gC₃N₄NTs, as shown in their light-off curves (Fig. 4b and c).

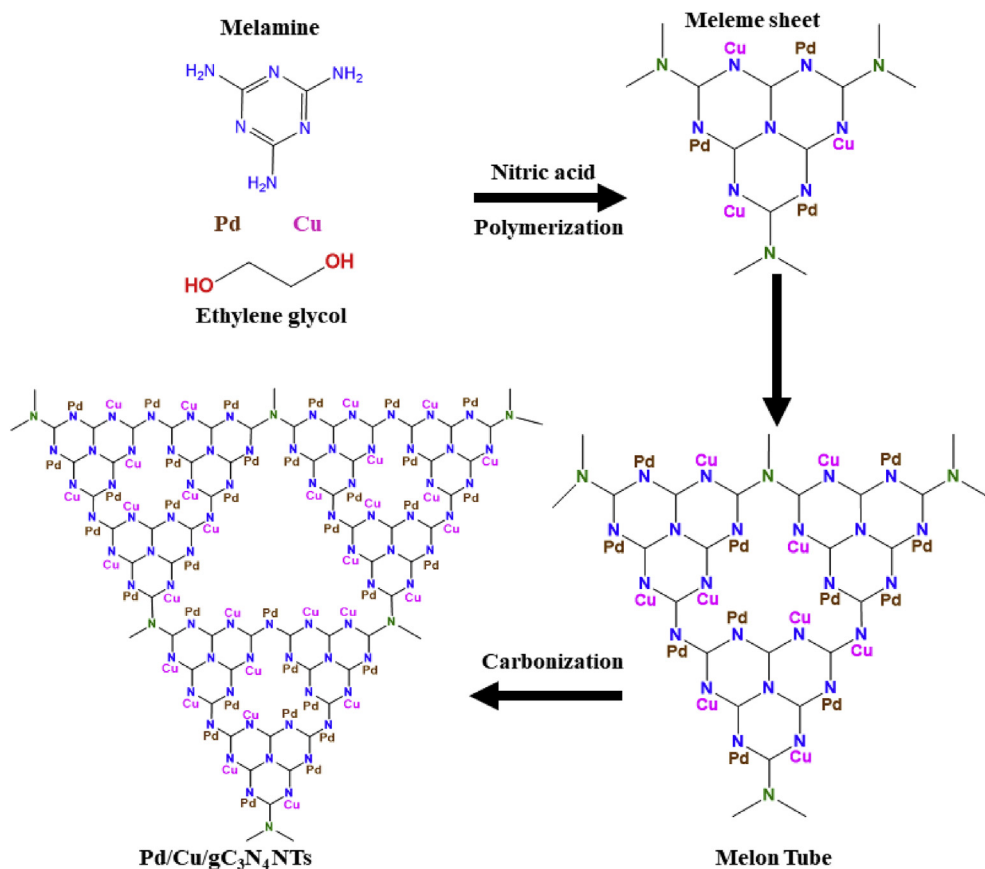
The sample was dispersed in ethanol and sonicated for 3 min and then mounted on a carbon-coated TEM grid. Fig. 5 reveals the TEM images of Pd/Cu/gC₃N₄NTs before (Fig. 5a) and after the CO oxidation stability tests (Fig. 5b). Comparing the TEM image of Pd/Cu/gC₃N₄NTs before and after the CO oxidation durability tests, we found that the structural stability of nanotube shape is fully maintained without any changes. Therefore, the nanotube morphology did not change after ten durability cycles.

Fig. 6a shows the XRD analysis of Pd/Cu/gC₃N₄NTs after the CO durability tests, which displayed the one diffraction peak at 27.01° assigned to {002} facet and one peak at 13.15° attributes to {100} facet of gC₃N₄ nanostructure similar to those obtained for Pd/Cu/gC₃N₄NTs before the CO durability tests. Thus,

Table 1

Comparison between the CO oxidation activity of our newly designed Pd/Cu/gC₃N₄NTs and various catalysts reported elsewhere.

Catalyst	Complete CO conversion, T_{100}	Reference
Pd/Cu/gC ₃ N ₄ NTs	154 °C	Our work
Au _{0.75} Cu _{0.25} /SiO ₂	300 °C	[6] <i>Catal. Today</i> , 2017, 282 105–110.
Pd/La-doped γ -alumina	175 °C	[7] <i>Nat. Commun.</i> , 2014, 5, 4885.
Pd-impeded 3D porous graphene	190 °C	[8] <i>ACS Nano</i> 2015, 9, 7343–7351
Pt/CNx/SBA-15	250 °C	[9] <i>Chem. A Eur. J.</i> , 2014, 20, 2872–2878.
Nanoarray-based CuMn ₂ O ₄ /Washed-coated CuMn ₂ O ₄	320 °C/350 °C	[10] <i>J. Mater. Chem. A</i> , 2018, 6, 19047–19057
Cu ₁ /Mn ₁	180 °C	[11] <i>Catal. Lett.</i> , 2016, 146, 2364–2375
MnO _x	310 °C	[12] <i>Catal. Sci. Technol.</i> , 2016, 6, 8222–8233



Scheme 2. The formation mechanism of Pd/Cu/gC₃N₄NTs and the distribution of Pd and Cu inside gC₃N₄NTs.

the XRD result indicates that Pd/Cu/gC₃N₄NTs reserved its crystallinity after the CO oxidation durability tests. The EDX analyses after CO stability testes is carried out to confirm the compositional durability of Pd/Cu/gC₃N₄NTs (Fig. 6b). The results showed the presence of C, N, Pd, and Cu with atomic contents of 58, 40.9, 0.5, and 0.6, respectively (Fig. 6b). Thus, the EDX result implies that Pd/Cu/gC₃N₄NTs kept its composition without any deterioration, owing to the homogenous distribution of Pd and Cu inside the carbon matrix.

Table 1 shows the comparison between the catalytic CO oxidation activity of our newly designed Pd/Cu/gC₃N₄NTs and the previously reported catalysts such as Pd-based, Au-based Cu-based, Pt-based, and Mn-based. The complete conversion temperature of our obtained Pd/Cu/gC₃N₄NTs was significantly lower than that of all the catalysts reported in the literature as shown in Table 1 in addition to the low cost of our catalyst that was made of nearly 99% gC₃N₄NTs and 1% Pd/Cu.

The TEM, XRD, and EDX results confirmed the structural and compositional stability of the as-synthesized Pd/Cu/gC₃N₄NTs after the CO oxidation stability tests. This probably originates from coupling between the unique physicochemical properties of 1D gC₃N₄ nanotubes (e.g., stability, massive accessible active sites, thermal stability nearly up to 600 °C, and chemical stability in various solvents) and the inherent catalytic merits of Pd/Cu (eg., electronic effect, synergetic effect, strong adsorption/activation/dissociation for CO/O₂, and high tolerance for CO₂ product) [1–5,13–16]. Chemically speaking, the atomic doping of gC₃N₄NTs with Pd and Cu stabilizes them against aggregation as well as protecting their active catalytic sites from the blocking by the reaction intermediates or products.

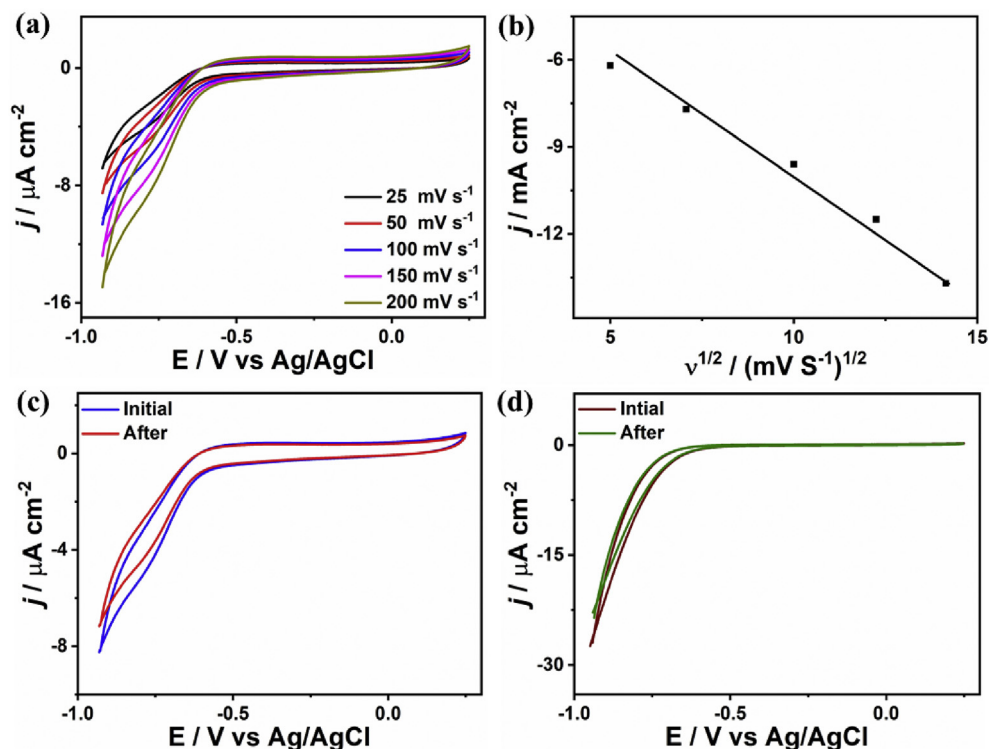


Fig. 7. (a) The CVs measured on the as-made catalysts in CO_2 -saturated 0.5 NaHCO_3 at 50 mV s^{-1} under different scan rates and (b) Randles-Sevcik equation. (c) The electrochemical CVs durability on Pd/Cu/gC₃N₄NTs measured under dark. (d) The photo-electrochemical CVs stability tested under continuous light irradiation (100 W). We performed all the measurements at the room temperature.

Scheme 2 shows the formation process and mechanism of typically prepared Pd/Cu/gC₃N₄. The strong binding affinity between N-atoms of melamine and Pd/Cu facilitate adsorption and anchoring of both Pd and Cu on N-atoms during the polymerization step that led to the homogenous atomic distribution of Pd, and Cu on the N-atoms of gC₃N₄.

Fig. 7a shows the CVs for CO_2 reduction measured under various sweeping rates ranged from 25 to 200 mV s^{-1} , which showed the steady enhancement in the current density with increasing the scan rate. The relationship between the obtained current densities and the square root of scan rates is linear (Fig. 7b).

The electrocatalytic and photo-electrochemical CO_2 reduction durability tests were carried out on Pd/Cu/gC₃N₄NTs via measuring the chronoamperometric test (I - T) for 30 min in CO_2 -saturated an aqueous solution of 0.5 NaHCO_3 at 50 mV s^{-1} . Then the CVs curve were measured again in CO_2 -saturated an aqueous solution of 0.5 NaHCO_3 at 50 mV s^{-1} . The CVs curves showed that Pd/Cu/gC₃N₄NTs kept its initial electrocatalytic CO_2 reduction activity (Fig. 7c) without any significant deterioration in the current density, reduction kinetics, and reduction potential (Fig. 7d), [17].

Fig. 8 depicts the gas chromatography result that was obtained after calibration relative to pure formic acid and methanol under the same conditions. The results demonstrated the presence of formic acid as the main product as well as methanol as an inferior product (Fig. 8). Therefore, the gas chromatography indicates the ability of Pd/Cu/gC₃N₄NTs to reduce CO_2 electrochemically to formic acid at room temperature.

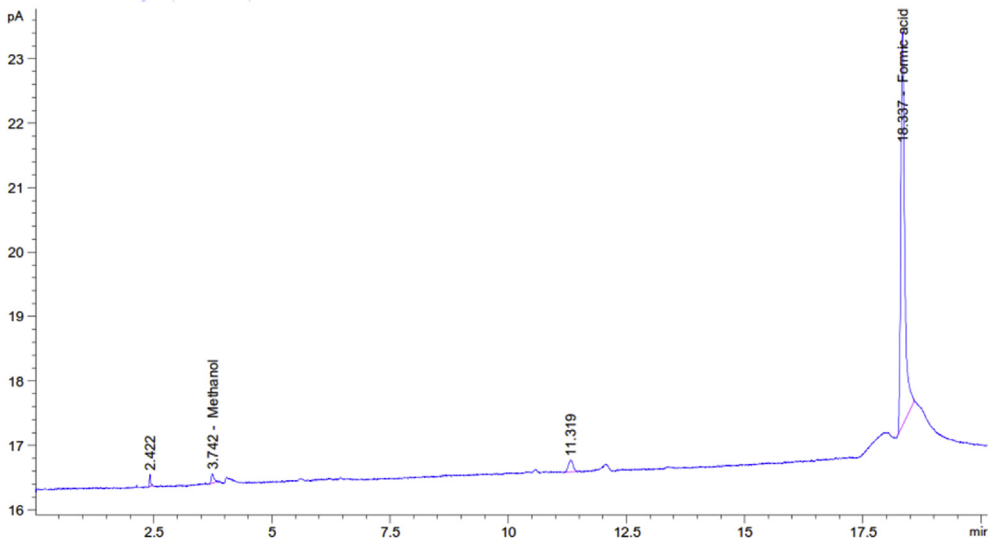


Fig. 8. CO₂ reduction products obtained from the Gas chromatography (Agilent Technologies 7890A) with using a column PerkinElmer Elite-624 at 35 °C.

Acknowledgments

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary data to this article can be found online at <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dib.2019.104495>.

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