Behavior of RuO$_2$(100), (110) and (101) Single-Crystal Faces in H$_2$SO$_4$

Gi-Ho Jeong$^1$

Department of Chemistry, Busan National University, Busan 607, Korea

Hong-Lee Park

Department of Physics, Busan National University, Busan 607, Korea (Received December 31, 1981)

The properties of RuO$_2$ (100), (101) and (110) single-crystal faces in sulfuric acid are investigated by cyclic voltammetry. The shapes of the current-voltage profiles for the (100) and (101) planes indicate mainly reversible Faradaic processes while that for the (110) face resembles that resulting from a irreversible Faradaic process.

**Introduction**

Ruthenium dioxide, RuO$_2$, belongs to the family of transition-metal dioxide compounds with rutile type structure which possesses interesting electric and magnetic properties. It is well known as a corrosion-resistant low overpotential electrode for chlorine evolution$^{1-4}$. Because of its low anodic oxygen overpotential, RuO$_2$ has been shown to be an equally effective electrode for oxygen evolution$^{5-7}$. Furthermore, it has recently been reported that catalytic photodecomposition of water into hydrogen and oxygen proceeds at a much higher rate when RuO$_2$ is added to TiO$_2$ electrode$^8$. The latter property which is particularly significant in the case of hydrogen generation via water decomposition (either electrolysis or photoelectrolysis) becomes a part of any future energy program$^9$. In addition, because of its high electric conductivity and chemical stability, RuO$_2$ shows a great promise as electrical contact material$^{10}$ and strip line conductor in integrated circuits$^{11}$. Most of the works reported so far on the behavior of the RuO$_2$ are on the film electrodes$^{12-22}$ and very little information is available on the properties of single crystals$^2$. However, data on single-crystal RuO$_2$ is highly desirable$^{24}$. Bulk electronic band structure of single-crystal RuO$_2$ has been studied recently$^{25}$.

**Experiments**

Single crystals of RuO$_2$ of typical dimensions 6 mm × 4 mm × 2 mm were grown in our laboratory by the method of chemical transport reaction in flowing system, a technique similar to that used by Reames$^{27}$ and Shafer$^{28}$. The volatile RuO$_3$ is formed by the mechanism:

\[ \text{Ru(solid)} + \frac{3}{2} \text{O}_2 (\text{gas}) \rightarrow \text{RuO}_3 (\text{gas}) \]

when atmospheric pressure of oxygen is passed over Ru metal powder at a temperature of about 1,400°C at a flow rate of approximately 15 cm$^3$/min RuO$_2$ then decomposes and crystallizes into highly ordered single crystal of RuO$_2$ in a boat placed at a cooler temperature of about 1,000°C. Crystal faces were determined by the X-ray diffraction method to better than 1°. The (100) face was polished with 6 µm diamond paste, 12 µm alumina powder, 3 µm and 0.3 µm alumina powder and finally polish etched using Siton. The faces (101) and (110) were used as grown.

Electrical contact was established with the single crystal by attaching a flexible silver-coated copper wire to the back with silver epoxy. Crystal was then mounted in insulated support of Kel-F. Kel-F was chosen over the customary Teflon because of its better molding characteristics at 300°C in addition to its resistance to chemical attack and machinability at room temperature. Geometrical surface areas of the (100), (101) and (110) faces were 2.34, 7.15 and 3.75 mm$^2$, respectively. Unlike in the case of film electrodes where large corrections are necessary for the roughness of the surfaces$^{20,22}$ no correction was made in the present case. All potentials were measured with the reference hydrogen electrode (RHE) in the working electrolyte. The electrolyte solution was 1 N H$_2$SO$_4$ prepared from Baker Ultrex H$_2$SO$_4$ and triply distilled H$_2$O.

**Results and Discussion**

Current-potential curves obtained by cyclic voltammetry on the (100), (101) and (110) RuO$_2$ faces in the potential range between hydrogen and oxygen evolutions are shown in Figures 1, 2 and 3, respectively. Table 1 shows the average composition and atomic density of each of the three planes. There are substantial differences among the compositions of the three planes. While only Ru$^{4+}$ ions are present on the (100) and (101) planes, both Ru$^{4+}$ and O$^{2-}$ ions constitute the (110) face. In addition, all the Ru$^{4+}$ and O$^{2-}$ ions on the planes may not be identical. For example, there are two kinds of Ru$^{4+}$ ions on the (110) surface: firstly one which needs

**Table 1: Atomic Characteristics of RuO$_2$ (100), (110) and (101)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plane Area of the unit cell plane, cm$^2$</th>
<th>Average composition (atoms/cm$^2$)</th>
<th>Atomic density (atoms/cm$^3$)</th>
<th>Ru-O distances (Å)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(100) 14.0 × 10$^{-16}$</td>
<td>1 Ru$^{4+}$</td>
<td>7.1 × 10$^{14}$</td>
<td>1.94 Å</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(101) 24.5 × 10$^{-16}$</td>
<td>2 Ru$^{4+}$</td>
<td>8.2 × 10$^{14}$</td>
<td>1.98 Å</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(110) 19.7 × 10$^{-16}$</td>
<td>2 Ru$^{4+}$ 2 O$^{2-}$</td>
<td>2.0 × 10$^{15}$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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$^{*}$ $\alpha_0 = \beta_0 = 4.4910$ Å, $\delta_0 = 3.1064$ Å
Figure 1. Current–potential curve obtained by cyclic voltammetry on the RuO$_2$(100) face: scan speed = 50 mV/sec.

Figure 2. Current–potential curve obtained by cyclic voltammetry on the RuO$_2$ (101) face: scan speed = 50 mV/sec.

Figure 3. Current–potential curve obtained by cyclic voltammetry on the RuO$_2$ (110) face; scan speed = 50 mV/sec.
only a single $\text{O}^{2-}$ ion per $\text{Ru}^{4+}$ ion to restore the octahedral coordination of the metal ion and the other which needs two $\text{O}^{2-}$ ions per $\text{Ru}^{4+}$ ion. All the $\text{Ru}^{4+}$ ions on the (100) and on the (101) faces are alike in that they all need three more $\text{O}^{2-}$ ions to complete the octahedral symmetry of $\text{O}^{2-}$ ions around them. Planes lying just below the top plane have only $\text{O}^{2-}$ ions in every case. Cyclic voltammograms are essentially determined by the surface reactions. Bulk contributions, if any, do not seem to play a major role.

The $i$-$V$ profiles observed in the cyclic potentiodynamic sweeps of the three crystal planes indicate different types of surface process. The shapes of the $i$-$V$ profile for the (100) and (101) planes (Figures 1 and 2) indicate mainly reversible Faradaic processes involving surface species while that for the (110) face (Figure 3) resembles that from an irreversible Faradaic process involving deposition and electrodeposition of a surface species.

The $i$-$V$ curve for the (101) surface (Figure 2) has a striking similarity to that for a RuO$_2$ film electrode. We observe a pair of peaks ($A_1$, $A_2$) at about 0.7 V that can be attributed to the RuO$_2$/Ru couple and another pair ($A_3$, $C_3$) at about 0.95 V which can be identified with the RuO$_2$/RuO$_2$ couple. The former couple results in a change of oxidation state from 0 to +3 according to the reaction:

$$2\text{Ru} + 3\text{H}_2\text{O} \rightarrow \text{RuO}_2 + 6\text{H}^+ + 6e^-$$

while the latter takes it from +3 to +4 according to the reaction:

$$\text{Ru}_2\text{O}_3 + \text{H}_2\text{O} \rightarrow 2\text{RuO}_2 + 2\text{H}^+ + 2e^-$$

The cathodic peak $C_3$ is due to the solid state reduction of RuO$_2$ accompanied by the penetration of atomic hydrogen into the lattice.

Figure 1 for the (100) plane also has a pair of peaks ($A_2$, $C_2$) at about 0.8 V which can be assigned to the RuO$_2$/Ru couple. The pair ($A_3$, $C_3$) at near 1.2 V can be accounted for by the reaction:

$$\text{Ru} + 4\text{H}_2\text{O} \rightarrow \text{RuO}_2^2- + 8\text{H}^+ + 6e^-$$

resulting in a change of oxidation number from 0 to +6 though it involves the formation of a dissolvable ruthenate ion. The feature $A_3$ at about 1.4 V can be associated with the RuO$_2$/RuO$_2$ couple involving a change of oxidation state from +4 to +8 according to the reaction:

$$\text{RuO}_2 + 2\text{H}_2\text{O} \rightarrow \text{RuO}_4^{2-} + 4\text{H}^+ + 4e^-$$

Peaks at near 0.8 V and 0.7 V have also been observed for pure Ru electrodes which support our identifications of the ($A_2$, $C_2$) and ($A_3$, $C_3$) pairs with the RuO$_2$/Ru couples. The position of the peak $A_1$ at near 0.22 V was found to be unaffected by the sweep rate though its intensity decreased as the rate was increased. Furthermore, if the electrode was kept at 0 V for some time, this peak became more intense and moved to higher potentials. Thus, it can be associated with the oxidation of hydrogen atoms entrapped in the lattice.

The $i$-$V$ curve for the (110) face (Figure 3) is characteristic of a redox process. The reason why it is far different from those on the other two faces is perhaps because there are both Ru$^{4+}$ and O$^{2-}$ ions on this plane whereas only Ru$^{4+}$ ions occupy the other two faces. The feature $A_3$ at about 0.7 V can be associated with the RuO$_2$/Ru couple and the broad peak around 0.9 V to the Ru$_2$O$_3$/RuO$_2$ couple. The break at about 0.66 V can result from a change of oxidation state from 0 to +2 at about 0.46 V followed by another change from +2 to +4 at about 1.12 V according to the reactions:

$$\text{Ru} \rightarrow \text{Ru}^{2+} + 2e^-$$
$$\text{Ru}^{2+} + 2\text{H}_2\text{O} \rightarrow \text{RuO}_2 + 4\text{H}^+ + 2e^-$$

Rest potentials of the single-crystal RuO$_2$ (100), (110) and (101) faces in 1 M H$_2$SO$_4$ have been determined to be 0.36, 0.48 and 0.69 V (RHE), respectively. On the other hand, the rest potential of RuO$_2$ film electrodes in acid solutions (1 M HClO$_4$) is reported to about 0.95 V (RHE) [12] which has been explained as the equilibrium potential attained after a rapid exchange of protons at the electrode–solution interface according to the reaction:

$$2\text{RuO}_2 + 2\text{H}^+ + 2e^- \rightarrow 2\text{RuO}_3 + \text{H}_2\text{O}$$

Standard potential value of 0.43 V has been calculated for the reaction:

$$\text{RuO}_2 + 4\text{H}^+ + 4e^- \rightarrow \text{Ru} + 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$$

which is in between the values for the RuO$_2$ (100) and (110) faces. More reactions of the similar nature need to be investigated in order to explain the present results.

Oxygen evolution has been carried out on the single-crystal RuO$_2$ (100), (110) and (110) faces and Tafel slopes of 95, 115 and 105 mV/decade have been found for them. On the film electrodes, however, a Tafel slope of only 40 to 45 mV/decade has been reported [17]. These differences are not surprising in view of the stoichiometric differences between the films and single crystal planes. However, they do suggest that the mechanism of the oxygen evolution reaction are different on single-crystals than on films. Further work is in progress at this laboratory.

References

Transition-State Variation in the Solvolysis of Benzoyl Chlorides

Ikchoon Lee, In Sun Koo, Se Chul Sohn and Hai Hwang Lee

Department of Chemistry, Inha University, Incheon 160 Korea (Received February 10, 1982)

Solvolysis reactions of some substituted benzoyl chlorides were studied in ethanol-water, ethanol-trifluoroethanol and methanol-acetonitrile mixtures. Results showed that the reaction proceeds via an $S_N2$ process in which bond formation is more advanced than bond cleavage. Comparison of the two models for predicting transition state variation indicated superior nature of the quantum mechanical model relative to the potential energy surface model.

\[ \log(k/k_0) = mY + IN \] (1)

Harris et al.\(^4\) predicted variation of $S_N2$ transition state of benzyl derivatives using a potential energy surface model\(^6\) and Lee et al.\(^8\) applied the similar model to the $S_N2$ transition state of benzensulfonyl derivatives.

The potential energy surface (PES) model for predicting transition state variation is based on the application of the Hammond postulate\(^7\) and the Thornton's rule\(^8\) to e.g., a reaction of a nucleophile(N) attacking a substrate (RX),

\[ \text{N} + \text{RX} \rightarrow [\text{N} \cdots \text{R} \cdots \text{X}]^* \rightarrow \text{N}^+ + \text{R}^- + \text{X}^- \] (2)

On the other hand, Pross and Shlik\(^2\) introduced a quantum mechanical approach to estimating the effect of substituents on transition state structure in $S_N2$ reactions. In this model, the reaction complex is described in terms of a wave function built up from a linear combination of reactant configurations. In an $S_N2$ reaction, (2), a new bond is formed between A and B and a bond within A is broken as a substrate A(RX) is attacked by a nucleophile B(N).