

Oxidative Coupling of Methane over Promoted Strontium Chlorapatite

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Abstract—Strontium zirconium phosphate, unpromoted strontium chlorapatite and strontium hydroxyapatite showed low C_2 selectivity for the oxidative coupling of methane, but promoted strontium chlorapatite catalysts showed markedly increased activity and selectivity and also exhibited stable behavior. $SrCl_2$ was the primary promoter and strontium zirconium oxides were considered to be acting as other promoters, but strontium zirconium phosphate and strontium carbonate seemed to be acting adversely. A promoted strontium chlorapatite catalyst which contained a slightly larger amount of $SrCl_2$ than needed to form the chlorapatite showed the best performance and was stable up to 50 h at 1,023 K, and the highest C_{2+} selectivity and yield were 52% and 13.8%, respectively. Although $SrCl_2$ was more stable than NaCl it decomposed slowly during the reaction, leaving strontium oxide or strontium carbonate behind, which is considered to result in slow deactivation of the catalyst.

Key words : Methane, Oxidative Coupling, Strontium Chloride, Strontium Chlorapatite, Strontium Zirconium Phosphate

INTRODUCTION

Direct catalytic conversion of methane to C_2 and higher hydrocarbons (C_{2+}) by oxidative coupling of methane (OCM) is considered a potential route for the production of useful chemicals and fuels from abundant natural gas. A large number of materials, such as alkali-promoted alkaline earth metal oxides, transition metal oxides and rare earth metal oxides, have so far been found to be effective in catalyzing the OCM, but more effective catalysts are still being sought [Amenomiya et al., 1990; Baek et al., 1998; Cho et al., 1998; Guo et al., 1998; Hutchings and Scurrall, 1992; Kim et al., 1997; Kim and Lee, 1993; Kim et al., 1990; Kim and Yu, 1990; Lee and Oyama, 1988; Lee and Oyama, 1989; Maitra, 1993].

Recently, NaCl-promoted sodium zirconium phosphates and lead-substituted calcium hydroxyapatite, both being based on the phosphate compounds instead of oxides, have been reported to show good catalytic performance for the OCM [Yoon and Seo, 1997; Lee et al., 1998; Matsumura et al., 1995]. While the latter catalyst showed very stable performance, the former deactivated relatively fast. The main cause of the deactivation is the disappearance of chlorine because chlorine in NaCl is relatively unstable at such a high reaction temperature. Since chlorine is known to enhance the activity and selectivity [Maitra, 1993], more stable chlorine-containing catalyst can be expected to exhibit better catalytic performance. In this work, promoted strontium chlorapatite ($Sr_{10}Cl_2(PO_4)_6$) as the OCM catalyst was investigated, because the chlorine in the chlorapatite, or that in $SrCl_2$ which was used as a starting material for the catalyst preparation and was considered to act as a promoter, was anticipated to be more stable than that in NaCl. The idea that $SrCl_2$ will be thermally more stable than NaCl may be

deduced by comparing the melting point which may be used as a rough measure for the stability of inorganic chlorides. The melting point of $SrCl_2$ is 1,146 K and that of NaCl is 1073.6 K. Since unpromoted (or pure) strontium chlorapatite as well as strontium hydroxyapatite ($Sr_{10}(OH)_2(PO_4)_6$) and calcium hydroxyapatite ($Ca_{10}(OH)_2(PO_4)_6$) showed poor catalytic performance [Sugiyama et al., 1996; Matsumura et al., 1995; Lee et al., 1998], a zirconium compound and excess $SrCl_2$ were added to promote the catalyst performance. Besides the chlorapatite catalyst, sodium zirconium phosphate was also investigated because it was observed to be present in the prepared chlorapatite catalyst system and it was needed to see its effect. The main purpose of this work is, first, to investigate the promoter effects and second, to test the stability of the catalysts.

EXPERIMENTAL

1. Catalyst Preparation and Characterization

Strontium zirconium phosphate catalysts were prepared from strontium hydroxide ($Sr(OH)_2 \cdot 8H_2O$, Aldrich Chemical), zirconyl chloride ($ZrOCl_2 \cdot 8H_2O$, Junsei Chemical) and phosphoric acid (Yakuri Pure Chemicals). A 0.5 M aqueous solution of zirconyl chloride was added to a 1 M solution of phosphoric acid with vigorous stirring and the resulting mixture was aged for 12 h at room temperature and for additional 12 h at 363 K with gentle stirring, and then dried in air at 333 K for 50 h. The resulting solid was highly hydrated gel containing various zirconium phosphate compounds [Chang et al., 1989; Clearfield et al., 1973; Kong et al., 1999], but containing virtually no chlorine since it was vaporized as HCl during aging and drying. A nearly saturated $Sr(OH)_2$ solution was mixed with the gel and then dried at 333 K for 50 h. The resulting solid was heat-treated at 1,073 K for 2 h, to obtain the strontium zirconium phosphate catalyst. Varying ratios of $Sr : Zr : PO_4$ were employed and the catalyst was designated as $SrZrP(a/b)$, where a

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and b are the number of moles of Sr and Zr per 6 moles of PO_4 .

The promoted strontium chlorapatite catalyst was prepared by the same procedure as described above, except for further addition of strontium chloride ($\text{SrCl}_2 \cdot 6\text{H}_2\text{O}$, Junsei Chemical) together with $\text{Sr}(\text{OH})_2$. The ratio of $\text{Sr}(\text{OH})_2$: Zr : PO_4 was fixed at 1 : 4 : 6 and the amount of SrCl_2 added was varied. The catalyst was designated as $\text{SrClZrP}(a/4)$, where a denotes the total moles of Sr per 6 moles of PO_4 .

Unpromoted strontium chlorapatite ($\text{Sr}_{10}\text{Cl}_2(\text{PO}_4)_6$) and strontium hydroxyapatite ($\text{Sr}_{10}(\text{OH})_2(\text{PO}_4)_6$) were also similarly prepared from stoichiometric quantities of SrCl_2 and $(\text{NH}_4)_2\text{HPO}_4$ for the former and $\text{Sr}(\text{NO}_3)_2$ and $(\text{NH}_4)_2\text{HPO}_4$ with addition of aqueous ammonia for the latter as reported in the literature [Lee et al., 1998]. These catalysts were designated as SrClAp and SrHyAp .

The fresh (before reaction) and used (after reaction) catalysts were characterized by X-ray diffraction (XRD : Mao Science, M18xHF-SRA) with the $\text{Cu K}\alpha$ line to observe the crystalline phases and energy dispersive X-ray spectroscopy (EDS : Tracor Northern, JSM-35 CF) with 15 kV of applied voltage to observe the mole ratios of the elements. In EDS analysis, several particles were taken and the average value was used for the analysis.

2. Catalyst Performance Testing

The catalyst performance was tested by a conventional procedure. The OCM reaction was carried out in an 8-mm inside diameter quartz tube under atmospheric pressure by feeding methane, oxygen and helium as a diluent. The reactor was mounted vertically and heated with an electric furnace, and the feed gas flowed downward. The reaction temperature was measured with a thermocouple which was inserted into the catalyst bed from the top of the reactor. The following reaction conditions were employed unless otherwise specified. The reaction temperature was 1,023 K; the partial pressures of methane and oxygen (p_{CH_4} and p_{O_2}) were 16.5 and 8.3 kPa (0.16 and 0.08 atm) with the total gas flow rate of 100 cm^3/min and the catalyst loading of 1.0 g, giving the space time of 0.6 $\text{g}\cdot\text{s}/\text{cm}^3$. The product effluent was passed through a CaCl_2 trap to remove water and then analyzed by two on-line TCD-equipped gas chromatographs, one fitted with a Carboxen 1004 column (Supelco) to analyze O_2 , CO and CH_4 , and the other with a Haysep Q column (Supelco) to analyze O_2+CO , CO_2 , CH_4 and higher hydrocarbons.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As is generally used, the selectivity to a product in this work is also defined as (the number of moles of C in that product)/(the number of moles of CH_4 consumed); the yield is defined as (the number of moles C in that product)/(the number of moles of CH_4 fed) and is equal to (the CH_4 conversion) \times (the selectivity). The C_{2+} selectivity and yield mean the sum of selectivities and yields of C_2 (ethane and ethene) and higher hydrocarbons. If the terms are used without specifying any product, they mean the C_{2+} selectivity and yield. The observed higher hydrocarbons in this work were propane and propene, and

Table 1. Crystalline phases in strontium zirconium phosphate catalysts

Catalyst	Status	Crystalline phases and relative peak intensity	Possible other major compounds ^{b)}
$\text{SrZrP}(1/4)^a$	Fresh	$\text{SrZr}_4(\text{PO}_4)_6$	-
	Used	$\text{SrZr}_4(\text{PO}_4)_6$	-
$\text{SrZrP}(2/4)$	Fresh	$\text{SrZr}_4(\text{PO}_4)_6 \gg \text{SrZrO}_3$	-
	Used	$\text{SrZr}_4(\text{PO}_4)_6$	SrCO_3
$\text{SrZrP}(3/4)$	Fresh	$\text{SrZr}_4(\text{PO}_4)_6 > \text{Sr}_{10}(\text{OH})_2(\text{PO}_4)_6 \gg \text{Sr}_3\text{Zr}_2\text{O}_7$	-
	Used	$\text{SrZr}_4(\text{PO}_4)_6 \gg \text{Sr}_{10}(\text{OH})_2(\text{PO}_4)_6$	$\text{Sr}_x\text{Zr}_y\text{O}_z^c$
$\text{SrZrP}(3/3)$	Fresh	$\text{ZrP}_2\text{O}_7 \gg \text{SrZr}_4(\text{PO}_4)_6$	-
	Used	$\text{ZrP}_2\text{O}_7 \gg \text{SrZr}_4(\text{PO}_4)_6$	SrCO_3

^{a)}The numbers of moles of Sr/Zr per 6 moles of PO_4 used in the preparation.

^{b)}Not observed by XRD; see text.

^{c)}Various strontium zirconium oxides.

these were usually (but not always) obtained within a few percent of selectivity when the conversion was higher than about 20% and the selectivity was higher than about 40%. For brevity's sake, the propane and propene selectivities were not presented in the following data.

1. Strontium Zirconium Phosphate Catalysts

1-1. XRD Analysis

The crystalline phases observed by XRD are presented in Table 1. In $\text{SrZrP}(1/4)$, only the hexagonal $\text{SrZr}_4(\text{PO}_4)_6$, which has the same stoichiometric ratio of the elements and groups as the materials used in the preparation, was observed. In $\text{SrZrP}(2/4)$, which had a larger amount of strontium, a small amount of cubic SrZrO_3 was observed in the fresh sample, but in the used sample it was not observed. Considering the larger amount of strontium added than needed to form $\text{SrZr}_4(\text{PO}_4)_6$, some strontium compounds which were not detected by the XRD should be present in $\text{SrZrP}(2/4)$ as amorphous forms or in small amounts. When the amount of strontium added was further increased, as in $\text{SrZrP}(3/4)$, the presence of hexagonal strontium hydroxyapatite ($\text{Sr}_{10}(\text{OH})_2(\text{PO}_4)_6$) and tetragonal $\text{Sr}_3\text{Zr}_2\text{O}_7$ was observed in the fresh sample, but the latter was not observed in the used sample. Taking again into account the amounts of materials used in the preparation, some compounds which were not detected by the XRD should also be present in $\text{SrZrP}(3/4)$. The compounds which were not observed by the XRD due to small amount or amorphousness are considered to be most probably strontium zirconium oxides, some of which were observed in the fresh samples, and amorphous SrCO_3 which was formed from strontium, moist and carbon dioxide in the reaction product gas and in air. In $\text{SrZrP}(2/4)$, a relatively large amount of SrCO_3 is considered to be present, and the presence of a small amount of strontium hydroxyapatite may not be ruled out. In $\text{SrZrP}(3/4)$, various strontium zirconium oxides ($\text{Sr}_x\text{Zr}_y\text{O}_z$, which are poorly crystalline) are considered to be present in a relatively larger amount than SrCO_3 since formation of strontium hydroxyapatite was observed. When the ratio of Zr to PO_4 was decreased to 1 : 2, as in $\text{SrZrP}(3/3)$, formation of

$\text{SrZr}_4(\text{PO}_4)_6$ was greatly depressed but crystalline zirconium pyrophosphate (cubic ZrP_2O_7) was well developed. Another strontium zirconium phosphate compound, $\text{SrZr}(\text{PO}_4)_2$, is known to exist, but this compound was not formed although the materials employed were stoichiometrically the same and treated at 1,273 K. This is probably due to the fact that the treatment temperature was not high enough for the formation of $\text{SrZr}(\text{PO}_4)_2$. Considering again the large amount of strontium added, a large amount of SrCO_3 is considered to be present.

1-2. Performance Test

The results of the OCM reaction over the strontium zirconium phosphate catalysts are presented in Table 2. These catalysts showed very stable (constant activity and selectivity) behavior for 8 h, and the data in Table 2 are the average values from 2 to 8 h on-stream. However, the C_2 selectivity and yield were quite low, which indicates that $\text{SrZr}_4(\text{PO}_4)_6$ is not a good

catalyst for the OCM. $\text{SrZrP}(3/3)$ showed almost inert behavior, and this is due to the zirconium pyrophosphate as the main component [Kong et al., 1999]. SrCO_3 also seems to be a poor catalyst. Since $\text{SrZrP}(3/4)$ showed the highest yield among these catalysts, strontium hydroxyapatite and strontium zirconium oxides are considered to be more effective for the OCM than $\text{SrZr}_4(\text{PO}_4)_6$ and SrCO_3 . In fact, strontium hydroxyapatite and strontium zirconium oxides have been investigated for the OCM [Sugiyama et al., 1996; Yang et al., 1995; Nagamoto et al., 1988], and the latter seems to be better than the former although they are not good catalysts compared with other effective catalysts reported. Therefore, no further study on the strontium zirconium phosphate catalysts was carried out.

2. Promoted Strontium Chlorapatite Catalysts

2-1. XRD and EDS Analyses

The XRD analysis results are presented in Table 3. For the catalysts prepared with relatively small ratios of Sr/PO_4 , strontium zirconium phosphate and strontium chlorapatite were observed in comparable amounts. When the Sr/PO_4 ratio approached 10, as in $\text{SrClZrP}(9/4)$, the amount of strontium zirconium phosphate formed became significantly smaller than that of strontium chlorapatite. When the Sr/PO_4 ratio exceeded 10, as in $\text{SrClZrP}(13-21/4)$, strontium zirconium phosphate could barely be seen. Therefore, it can be said that if chlorine is present strontium chlorapatite is easily formed and is more preferentially formed than strontium zirconium phosphate. On the other hand, excess SrCl_2 was found to be decomposed during the reaction, as observed for the used $\text{SrClZrP}(13-21/4)$ catalysts. Therefore, similarly to the discussion in the above section, SrCO_3 and strontium zirconium oxides are considered to be present, as list-

Table 2. Results of the reaction^{a)} over strontium zirconium phosphate catalysts, unpromoted strontium chlorapatite and strontium hydroxyapatite

Catalyst	CH_4 conv. (%)	C_2 sel. (%)	C_2 yield (%)	$\text{C}_2\text{H}_4/\text{C}_2\text{H}_6$
$\text{SrZrP}(1/4)$	6.8	16.2	1.1	0.52
$\text{SrZrP}(2/4)$	9.8	17.5	1.7	0.33
$\text{SrZrP}(3/4)$	16.5	15.3	2.5	0.58
$\text{SrZrP}(3/3)$	2.9	0	0	-
SrClAp	21.4	6.7	1.4	0
SrHyAp	11.8	6.6	0.8	0

^{a)}Average values from 2 to 8 h on-stream at 1,023 K.

Table 3. XRD and EDS analysis results for promoted strontium chlorapatite catalysts

Catalyst	Status ^{a)}	Crystalline phases and peak intensity	Possible other comp.	Cl/Sr (by EDS)
$\text{SrClZrP}(3/4)$	Fresh	$\text{SrZr}_4(\text{PO}_4)_6 >> \text{Sr}_{10}\text{Cl}_2(\text{PO}_4)_6$	-	0.30
	Used	$\text{SrZr}_4(\text{PO}_4)_6 > \text{Sr}_{10}\text{Cl}_2(\text{PO}_4)_6$	$\text{Sr}_x\text{Zr}_y\text{O}_z$	0.11
$\text{SrClZrP}(5/4)$	Fresh	$\text{Sr}_{10}\text{Cl}_2(\text{PO}_4)_6 > \text{SrZr}_4(\text{PO}_4)_6$	-	0.34
	Used	$\text{Sr}_{10}\text{Cl}_2(\text{PO}_4)_6 \approx \text{SrZr}_4(\text{PO}_4)_6 > \text{SrZrO}_3$	-	0.17
$\text{SrClZrP}(9/4)$	Fresh	$\text{Sr}_{10}\text{Cl}_2(\text{PO}_4)_6 > \text{SrZr}_4(\text{PO}_4)_6$	-	0.70
	Used	$\text{Sr}_{10}\text{Cl}_2(\text{PO}_4)_6 >> \text{SrZrO}_3 \approx \text{SrZr}_4(\text{PO}_4)_6$	ZrO_2	0.57
$\text{SrClZrP}(13/4)$	Fresh	$\text{Sr}_{10}\text{Cl}_2(\text{PO}_4)_6 > \text{SrCl}_2$	-	1.07
	Used ^{b)}	$\text{Sr}_{10}\text{Cl}_2(\text{PO}_4)_6 > \text{SrZrO}_3 >> \text{SrCl}_2$	-	0.44
$\text{SrClZrP}(17/4)$	Fresh	$\text{SrCl}_2^{d)} > \text{Sr}_{10}\text{Cl}_2(\text{PO}_4)_6 >> \text{SrZr}_4(\text{PO}_4)_6$	-	1.41
	Used ^{c)}	$\text{Sr}_{10}\text{Cl}_2(\text{PO}_4)_6 >> \text{SrZrO}_3 > \text{SrZr}_4(\text{PO}_4)_6$	$\text{Sr}_x\text{Zr}_y\text{O}_z$, SrCO_3	0.21
$\text{SrClZrP}(21/4)$	Fresh	$\text{SrCl}_2^{d)} >> \text{Sr}_{10}\text{Cl}_2(\text{PO}_4)_6$	-	1.97
	Used	$\text{SrCl}_2^{d)} > \text{Sr}_{10}\text{Cl}_2(\text{PO}_4)_6 >> \text{SrZr}_4(\text{PO}_4)_6$	$\text{Sr}_x\text{Zr}_y\text{O}_z$, SrCO_3	1.43
SrClAp	Fresh	$\text{Sr}_{10}\text{Cl}_2(\text{PO}_4)_6 >> \text{SrCl}_2^{d)}$	-	0.30
	Used	$\text{Sr}_{10}\text{Cl}_2(\text{PO}_4)_6 >> \text{SrCl}_2^{d)}$	-	0.24
SrHyAp	Fresh	$\text{Sr}_{10}(\text{OH})_2(\text{PO}_4)_6$	-	-
	Used	$\text{Sr}_{10}(\text{OH})_2(\text{PO}_4)_6$	-	-

^{a)}The used catalysts had usually been used for 8 h at 1,023 K and for 3-5 h at 1,073 K.

^{b)}Used for 50 h at 1,023 K.

^{c)}Used for 66 h at 1,023 K.

^{d)}Crystalline strontium chloride was observed as mixtures of anhydrous form and (di- and hexa-) hydrate form, and the latter would have been formed by the moisture in the reaction gas and air during cooling and storage. When the amount of strontium chloride remaining was large, the observed crystalline phase was mostly the hydrate form.

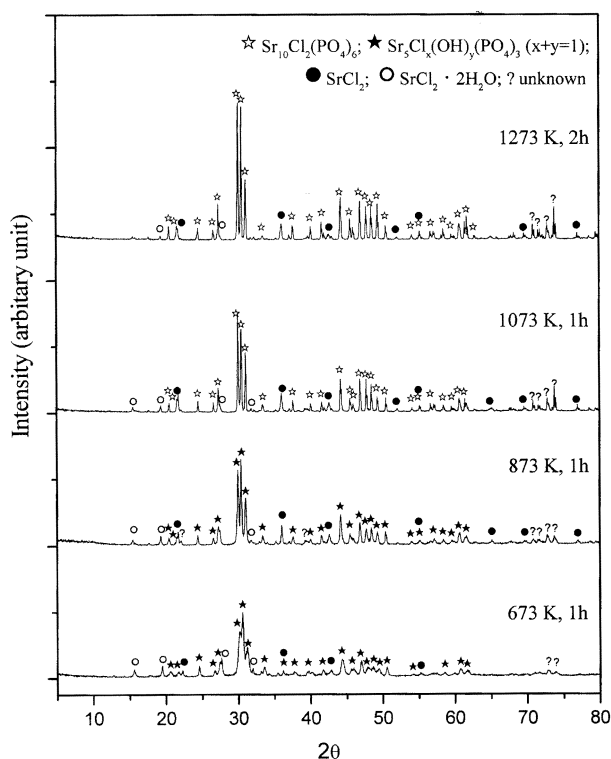


Fig. 1. X-ray diffractograms for SrClAp samples ($\text{Sr}/\text{PO}_4=10/6$) treated at different temperatures.

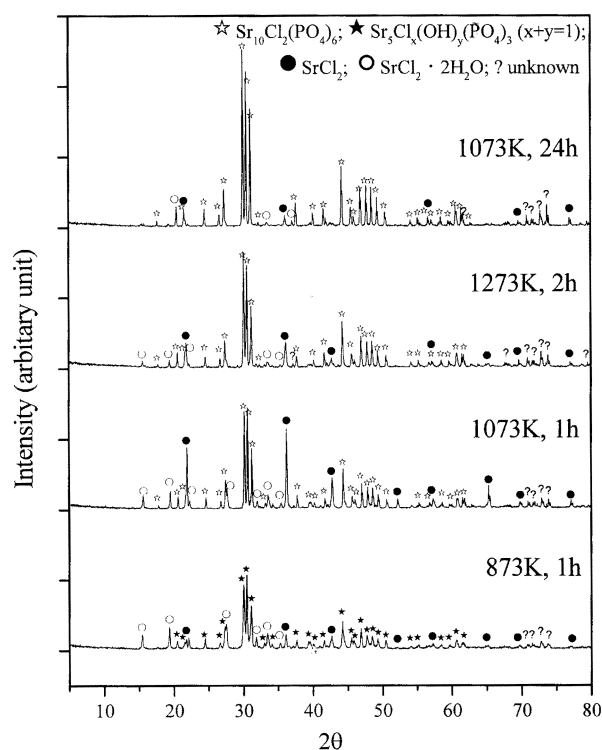


Fig. 2. X-ray diffractograms for SrClAp samples with excess SrCl_2 ($\text{Sr}/\text{PO}_4=12/6$) treated with different temperatures and times.

ed in Table 3, although they were not observed by XRD.

Fig. 1 shows the X-ray diffractograms for the SrClAp samples which were prepared by using stoichiometric amounts of Sr and PO_4 and treated at different temperatures. For the samples treated at 1,073 and 1,273 K, well-developed crystalline strontium chlorapatite was observed and the amount of SrCl_2 remaining was quite small. The samples treated at 673 and 873 K appeared to contain mixtures of strontium chlorapatite and strontium hydroxyapatite; and the strontium hydroxyapatite would be progressively converted to strontium chlorapatite at higher temperatures by the reaction with remaining SrCl_2 . In fact, it has been reported that hydroxyapatite can easily be converted to chlorapatite in the presence of chlorine [Sugiyama et al., 1999]. Fig. 2 shows the X-ray diffractograms for the SrClAp samples which were prepared by using excess SrCl_2 ($\text{Sr}/\text{PO}_4=12/6$) and treated at different temperatures for different hours. The results were similar to those in Fig. 1, except for the peak intensity of SrCl_2 . For the sample treated at 873 K, the SrCl_2 peaks were relatively small. This does not mean that the amount of SrCl_2 is small, but only a small portion of SrCl_2 is in the crystalline form due to poor crystallization. The crystallization seemed to proceed to a greater extent with increasing temperature, and the amount of crystalline SrCl_2 in the sample treated at 1,073 K was observed to be quite large, but it was significantly decreased after treatment at 1,273 K for 2 h. For the sample treated at 1,073 K for 24 h, the amount of SrCl_2 was very small, and it was approximately the same as that in the sample prepared by using stoichiometric amounts of Sr and PO_4 and treated at 1,273 K for 2 h. The results in Figs. 1 and 2

show that strontium chlorapatite is relatively easily formed and is stable under the reaction conditions for OCM, while excess SrCl_2 is continuously decomposed, probably leaving SrO and then SrCO_3 behind.

The EDS results are also shown in Table 3. The composition of each element could not reliably be determined because the Zr $L\alpha$ and P $K\alpha$ lines (2.03 and 2.01 keV, respectively) are so close that they could not satisfactorily be resolved. For Cl and Sr, Cl $K\alpha$ (2.62 keV) and Sr $L\alpha$ (1.81 keV) lines were used. Therefore, only the Cl/Sr ratios are presented. By comparing the Cl/Sr ratio for the fresh sample with that for the used sample, disappearance of chlorine during the OCM reaction was again confirmed. For the used samples of SrClZrP(9/4) and SrClZrP(13/4), which were observed from the XRD analysis to contain very small amounts of SrCl_2 and to be composed mostly of strontium chlorapatite, the Cl/Sr ratios were considerably greater than 0.2, which is the theoretical ratio for pure $\text{Sr}_{10}\text{Cl}_2(\text{PO}_4)_6$. For the used sample of SrClZrP(17/4), the ratio was slightly greater than 0.2, even though a large excess of Sr was employed for the preparation and used for a long period. This indicates that for these samples considerable amounts of SrCl_2 are still present near the catalyst surface, though crystalline SrCl_2 was not observed by the XRD.

2-2. Performance Test

Fig. 3 compares the performances of the promoted strontium chlorapatite catalysts. Since the catalysts showed stable behavior (nearly constant or slowly increasing conversion and selectivity for some catalysts), the average values of the data from 2 h to 8 h on-stream were presented in the figure. Unpromoted

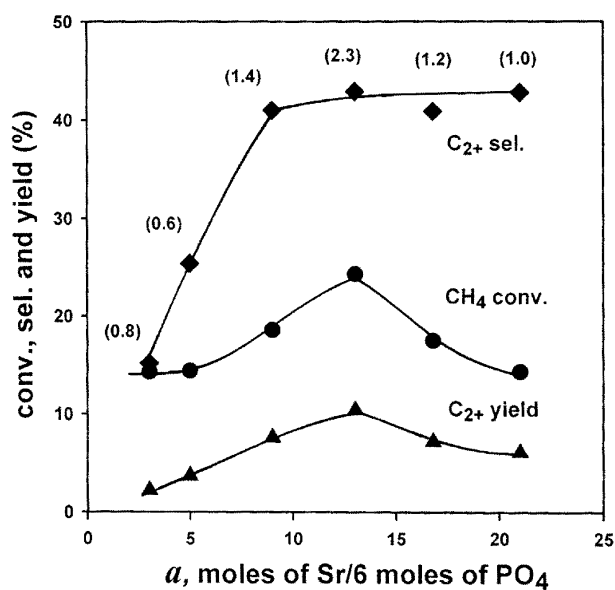


Fig. 3. Effect of the amount of SrCl_2 added on the catalytic performance at 1,023 K.

(The data are averaged values from 2 to 8 h on-stream; the number in the parenthesis denotes the $\text{C}_2\text{H}_4/\text{C}_2\text{H}_6$ ratio)

strontium chlorapatite and hydroxyapatite catalysts (SrClAp and SrHyAp) exhibited very low C_2 selectivities (Table 2), but promoted strontium chlorapatite catalysts ($\text{SrClZrP}(a/4)$) showed markedly higher selectivities. Therefore, it is certain that SrCl_2 is acting as a good promoter. As the ratio a increased, the selectivity increased up to 9 of a and then stayed almost constant. The maximum CH_4 conversion appeared at 13 of a , which indicates that the amount of SrCl_2 , which is slightly larger than that needed for the formation of the chlorapatite, may be the

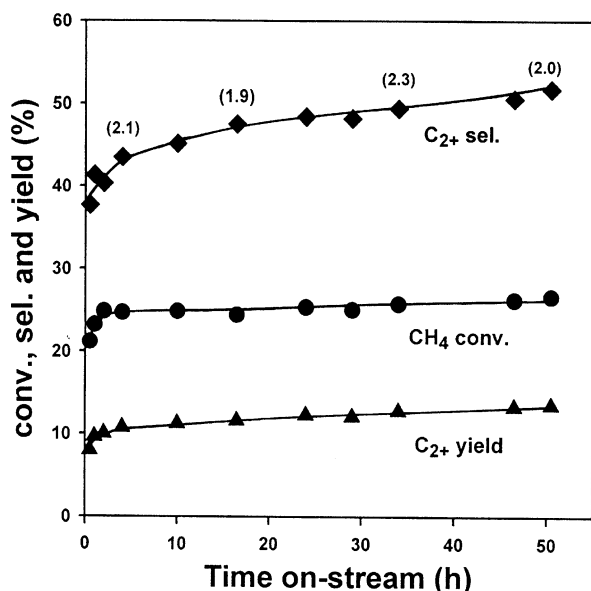


Fig. 4. Change of catalytic performance with time on-stream for $\text{SrClZrP}(13/4)$ at 1,023 K.

(The number in the parenthesis denotes the $\text{C}_2\text{H}_4/\text{C}_2\text{H}_6$ ratio)

optimum. The activity decrease with the larger amount of SrCl_2 is considered due to physical blocking of a larger area of the active surface by the inert SrCl_2 . In addition, if the results of characterization and reaction are put together, strontium zirconium oxides seem to be acting as other promoters, while it is considered that strontium zirconium phosphate and strontium carbonate are not good promoters or they may act adversely.

Fig. 4 shows the activity and selectivity changes with time on-stream at 1,023 K over the $\text{SrClZrP}(13/4)$ catalyst. The methane conversion increased during the initial several hours and then stayed almost constant up to 50 h. This initial increase is considered due to creation of more active sites, which results from ongoing reaction or interaction between SrCl_2 and other components such as strontium hydroxyapatite, strontium zirconium oxides and strontium chlorapatite. The selectivity also increased somewhat rapidly during the initial several hours and then increased slowly up to 50 h on-stream, where it came up to 52%. The $\text{C}_2\text{H}_4/\text{C}_2\text{H}_6$ ratio also remained almost constant. Fig. 5 shows the activity and selectivity changes with time on-stream at 1,023 K over the $\text{SrClZrP}(17/4)$ catalyst. Up to 40 h on-stream the trend was similar to that for $\text{SrClZrP}(13/4)$, but after that the selectivity began to decrease gradually. This decrease is considered due to the increasing amount of strontium oxide or strontium carbonate which was formed by slow decomposition of SrCl_2 . Fig. 6 shows the changes with time on-stream at 1,073 K over the $\text{SrClZrP}(9/4)$ catalyst. The activity, selectivity, yield and $\text{C}_2\text{H}_4/\text{C}_2\text{H}_6$ ratio were fairly high compared with those at 1,023 K. However, at this high temperature the stable behavior lasted only for 5 hours and then the performance deteriorated gradually. This deactivation is also considered due to decomposition of SrCl_2 occurring more rapidly at higher temperature. Therefore, the performance test at 1,073 K was not carried out intensively. From these stability tests, it can be summarized that the promoted strontium chlorapatite cata-

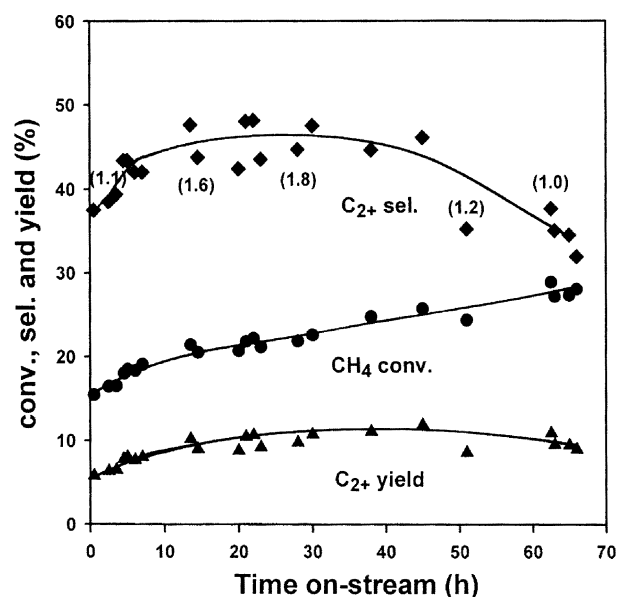


Fig. 5. Change of catalytic performance with time on-stream for $\text{SrClZrP}(17/4)$ at 1023 K.

(The number in the parenthesis denotes the $\text{C}_2\text{H}_4/\text{C}_2\text{H}_6$ ratio)

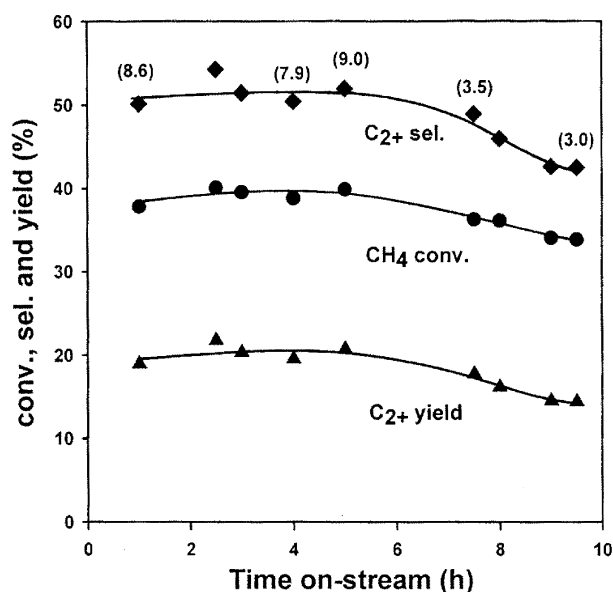


Fig. 6. Change of catalytic performance with time on-stream for $SrClZrP(9/4)$ at 1,073 K.

(The number in the parenthesis denotes the C_2H_4/C_2H_6 ratio)

lysts exhibit fairly stable performance and $SrCl_2$ is much more stable than $NaCl$, but $SrCl_2$ decomposes slowly, resulting in slow deactivation in the long run.

CONCLUSIONS

Strontium zirconium phosphate, unpromoted strontium chlorapatite and strontium hydroxyapatite showed low C_2 selectivity for the oxidative coupling of methane, but promoted strontium chlorapatite catalysts showed markedly increased activity and selectivity and also exhibited stable behavior. $SrCl_2$ was the primary promoter and strontium zirconium oxides were considered to be acting as other promoters, but strontium zirconium phosphate and strontium carbonate seemed to be acting adversely. A promoted strontium chlorapatite catalyst, $SrClZrP(13/4)$, which contained a slightly larger amount of $SrCl_2$ than needed to form the chlorapatite showed the best performance and was stable up to 50 h at 1,023 K, and the highest C_2+ selectivity and yield were 52% and 13.8%, respectively. Although $SrCl_2$ was more stable than $NaCl$ it decomposed slowly during the reaction, leaving SrO or $SrCO_3$ behind, which is considered to result in slow deactivation of the catalyst.

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