

Hybrid Environmental transmission electron microscope: An integrated platform for in situ imaging and spectroscopies

Renu Sharma

Center for Nanoscience and Technology, National Institute of Standards and Technology, Gaithersburg, Maryland, USA

Environmental transmission electron microscopes (ETEM) and TEM holders with windowed reaction cells, both now commercially available, enable in situ measurements of the dynamic changes occurring during gas-solid and/or liquid-solid interactions. The combination of atomic-resolution images and high spatial and energy resolution has successfully revealed the nucleation and growth mechanisms for nanoparticles, nanowires, carbon nanotubes and the functioning of catalyst nanoparticles. While TEM-based techniques are ideally suited to distinguish between active and inactive catalyst particles and identify active surfaces for gas adsorption, we still must answer the following questions: (1) Are our observations, made from an area a few hundred nanometers in extent, sufficiently representative to determine the mechanism for a specific reaction? (2) Is the reaction initiated by the incident electron beam? (3) Can we determine the sample temperature accurately enough to extract quantitative kinetic information? And (4), can we find efficient ways to make atomic-scale measurements from the thousands of images collected using a high-speed camera. The lack of global information available from TEM measurements is generally compensated by using other, ensemble measurement techniques such as x-ray or neutron diffraction, x-ray photoelectron spectroscopy, infrared spectroscopy, Raman spectroscopy etc. However, it is almost impossible to create identical experimental conditions in two separate instruments to make measurements that can be directly compared.

We have designed and built a unique platform that allows us to concurrently measure atomic-scale and micro-scale changes occurring in samples subjected to identical reactive environmental conditions by incorporating a Raman Spectrometer into the ESTEM [1,2]. We have used this correlative microscopy platform i) to measure the temperature from a 60 μm^2 area using Raman shifts, ii) to investigate light/matter interactions in plasmonic particles iii) to act as a heating source, iii) to perform concurrent optical and electron spectroscopies such as cathodoluminescence, electron energy-loss spectroscopy (EELS) and Raman. We have developed an automatic image-processing scheme to measure atomic positions, within 0.015 nm uncertainty, from high-resolution images, to follow dynamic structural changes using a combination of algorithms publicly available and developed at NIST. This method has been proven to capture the crystal structure fluctuations in a catalyst nanoparticle during growth of single-walled carbon nanotube (SWCNT). Details of the design, function, and capabilities of the optical spectrum collection platform and image processing scheme will be illustrated with results obtained during in situ measurements.

References

- [1] Picher et al., *Ultramicroscopy*. 150 (2015) 10.
- [2] Sharma and Mazzucco, US Patent:US9431211B2