Degradation modeling and electrode engineering of SOFCs SOECs and R-SOCs NETL FWP 1022411



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Introduction lacksquare

Outline

- **Recent Progress** lacksquare
 - Computational materials design
 - Electrode design and engineering
 - Cell degradation modeling
- Wrap-Up lacksquare





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NETL SOC Capability Overview

CHALLENGE: SOC technology is cost prohibitive due to long-term performance degradation APPROACH: Develop degradation modeling and mitigation tools to improve performance / longevity of SSEC

Systems Engineering and Analysis

- Techno-Economic Analysis
- Hybrid configuration assessment
- R&D Goals Evaluation



Performance Degradation Modeling

- Degradation prediction tools
- Atoms-to-System scale bridging
- Experimental validation

Increasing Scale

tools

Machine learning-

informed design

• Advanced Gas, Temperature Sensors

LSM/YSZ

Porosity

D-LSM

D-YSZ

D-pore



- Degradation mitigation
- Microstructure optimization
- Technology transfer to industry
- System demonstrations





Impact of microstructural features on lifetime performance

Potential

Cell

6 \$20/MWh Electricity

NETL SOFC Work Plan Tasks

• Task 2: Cell and Stack Degradation Evaluation and Modeling

- Performance and degradation model development
- Microstructural analysis and analysis methods
- Machine learning for materials studies, electrode design

• Task 3: Electrode Engineering

- Infiltration for degradation mitigation
- R-SOC characterization
- Protonic SOC materials characterization and development
- Advanced electrode design and manufacturing
- S/TEM analysis of cell degradation
- Task 4: Strategic Systems Analysis and Engineering
 - R-SOC, SOEC system studies
 - SOFC scaling study, H₂-fueled SOFC market study
- Task 5: Cyber Physical Modeling
 - 1D real-time SOEC stack model development
 - Controls design for dynamic operation of SOC stacks

See "Recent Progress in Solid Oxide Cell Technology Analysis at NETL" by **Greg Hackett at 9:30 AM**

See "Cyber-physical Simulation of Solid Oxide Cell Hybrid Systems" by Biao Zhang at 2:45 PM











Computational materials design

Discovering higher performing, more stable materials



Proton-conducting SOCs

Expanding the degradation modeling framework's material sets

- Proton-conducting SOCs can help lower operating temperatures, increase operational stability, and don't have a diluted H₂ stream
- Materials needs:
 - More active electrodes
 - Electrolytes with higher σ , higher H⁺ transference number
 - Less expensive thermal processing
- SOEC, SOFC performance model code options created for proton-conducting systems
- **NOTE:** NETL's available SOC stack manufacturing cost tool includes options for P-SOCs
 - OSTI ID:1842511





Triple-Conducting-Perovskite Defect Model Released Electrode/Electrolyte materials



- A defect model solver was developed to allow incorporation of nonlinear δ -dependent defect reaction energies and entropies for calculating defect concentration of the triple
 - conducting perovskites (La,Ba)Fe_{1-x}M_xO_{3-δ}
- H₂ incorporation through [OH₀⁻] and [H₀⁻] (hydride) defects.
- Octave-based Script publicly available on NETL' s EDX Server: doi.org/10.2172/2328139



$P(H_2)/P(H_2O)$ Brouwer Diagrams of $(La_{0.1}Ba_{0.9})(Fe_{0.9}M_{0.1})O_{3-\delta}$ at T=1073K



Temperature dependencies of V_0 , OH_0 , and H_0



Proton diffusion in Ba(Co, Fe, Zr, Y)O_{3-δ} (BCFZ/Y)

- Hydride ([H[•]₀]) defect formation added for proton conduction at low P(O₂)
- Defect reaction equations

1. Hydrogenation (proton) reaction $H_2^{(g)} + 2[O_0^x] + 2[M_B^\bullet] \rightleftharpoons 2[OH_0^\bullet] + 2[M_B^x]$

2. Oxidation reaction $\frac{1}{2}O_2^{(g)} + [V_0^{\bullet\bullet}] + 2[M_B^x] \rightleftharpoons [O_0^x] + 2[M_B^\bullet]$

3. Hydride formation $[O_O^x] + 2 [M_B^\bullet] + [H_O^\bullet] \rightleftharpoons [V_O^{\bullet\bullet}] + 2[M_B^x] + [OH_O^\bullet]$ • Calculating c_H and σ_H

1. Hydrogen concentration

 $[OH_O^{\boldsymbol{\cdot}}] + [H_O^{\bullet}] \to c_H$

2. Hydrogen conductivity

J_H: Hydrogen permeation flux
F: Faraday constant
R: gas constant
k: Boltzmann constant
L: membrane thickness
c_H: Hydrogen conc. [atoms/m³]
D_H: self-diffusion coefficient
[m²/s]
z: charge number





Zohourian, R., Merkle, R., & Maier, J. (2017). Solid State Ionics, 299, 64–69. Duffy, Jack H., et al., *Membranes* 11.10 (2021): 766. Lee, Yueh-Lin, et al. *ECS Transactions* 111.6 (2023): 1823.

Proton diffusion in Ba(Co, Fe, Zr)O_{3- δ} (BCFZ)

Initial partial pressures: PH₂: 0.05 atm , PO₂: 0.002 atm





Hydride formation improves match with experimental data



Developing materials through DFT

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[1] Lee, et al., Eng Env Sci (2011)
[3] Jacobs, et al., Chem. Mat. (2019)

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[2] Jacobs, et al., Adv. Eng. Mat. (2018)

BFCZ (Zr = 25, 50, 75%) Performance

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Higher k_{chem} , improved stability, not enough σ_{el}



All BFCZ compositions highly active, on par with BSCF, with only 0.5 log k_{chem} difference over entire Zr range



LSCF/BFCZ75 composite shows about 9x reduction in ASR at 800 °C, 65% less performance degradation vs. LSCF



Machine learning prediction of properties

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Using machine learning for faster calculations, larger sampling space



- 749 data points from 313 studies for 299 unique perovskite compositions
- Elemental features calculated using MAST-ML (UW-M) instead of using DFT
- **19 million perovskite oxides** were examined using ML model

Property	Number of studies examined	Number of measurements extracted	Number of unique materials
k _{chem}	70	98	62
D _{chem}	56	83	58
k *	39	80	48
D*	37	66	42
ASR	235	422	257

Jacobs, R., et al. Adv. Eng. Mat. (2024), just accepted



Machine learning predicted electrode materials

- **NE NE IECHNOLOGY** LABORATORY
- Trained machine learning model could predict properties faster and at least as accurately than DFT-based study and could cover a larger space containing traditionally less-explored elements (e.g., K, Bi, Y, Ni, Cu).





Jacobs, R., et al. Adv. Energy. Mat, 2303684 2024. (doi.org/10.1002/aenm.202303684) Jacobs, R., et al. ACS Applied Energy. Mat, 7(8), 3366, 2024. (doi.org/10.1021/acsaem.4c00125)

Time dependent cross-validation

Examining how many data points would be necessary to make advances

Training on materials known *prior to 2003* suggests high performing materials in the Ba(Fe, Co, Zr)O₃ space, suggesting BSCF and BFCZ could have been predicted at the time using machine learning







Electrode Design and Engineering

Building better performing, longer lasting electrodes



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SOC Electrode Design and Engineering

Objectives

- Enhancement of performance and longevity
- Materials engineering
- Microstructure engineering

Benefits

- Cell/stack cost reduction
- Cell overpotential reduction
- Increased thermo-chemical/thermo-mechanical stability
- Reduced cost-of-electricity and/or cost of hydrogen



DESIGN new materials and structuresDEVELOP tailored electrode designsDEPLOY in commercial SOC systems



ΔΤΙΟΝΔΙ

Simulating infiltrated electrodes

- Using in-house multiphysics code to optimize cathode performance by controlling infiltration and backbone structure
 - Optimal catalytic properties for a given backbone composition/structure
 - Optimal backbone composition/structure for given catalytic properties
 - Optimal lifetime performance based on backbone/infiltrated particle degradation

Volume fractions:	Particle size:
40:60	-1,0,1,2,3,4
50:50	0 = Baseline
60:40	-1 = Coarser
	1-4 = Finer





Experiments vs. Simulations

2023 Results for LSM/YSZ air electrodes

 LSC infiltration into LSM/YSZ overcame the spread in performance from the different backbones.







2024 Update: LSCF/SDC Electrodes



Parameters:

1) Volume Fraction

 V_{LSCF} : $V_{SDC} = 40\%$: 60%, 50%: 50%, or 60%: 40%

2) Grain Size

 $\beta = 0$: Coarse grain(P-0) $\beta = 1$: Fine grain (P-1)

$$D_{LSCF} = 0.52^{\beta_{LSCF}} \cdot D_{LSCF,ref}$$
$$D_{SDC} = 0.38^{\beta_{SDC}} \cdot D_{SDC,ref}$$

 $D_{LSCF,ref} = 0.68 \,\mu m$ $D_{SDC,ref} = 0.63 \,\mu m$

Sample Notation ex) LS_46-P_01 (CF46) volume fraction: V_{LSCF} : $V_{SDC} = 40\%$: 60% grain size: $\beta_{LSCF} = 0$, $\beta_{SDC} = 1$





Calibration of Numerical Model

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PBC Infiltration of LSCF/SDC Backbones



Baseline

PBC-infiltrated



- As with LSM/YSZ, infiltration levelized the performance of all the backbones.
- Still suspect that microstructural discrepancies exist between real and simulated microstructures



Additional Infiltration Results

Recent focus on SOEC infiltration before transition to R-SOCs

- Ni-YSZ/SSZ/LSCF/SDC Samples operated at 1 A/cm² at 850°C •
- Post-mortem analysis is ongoing
- Infiltrated R-SOC testing beginning this quarter •



Infiltration into Steam Electrode

Infiltration into Air Electrode

Fe infiltration more effective and cheaper than Pt

In terms of performance, LSC > $BaFe_2O_4 > SrFe_2O_4$



2400



Additive Manufacturing of SOCs

Creating 3D microstructure gradients to control gradients in T, V

- Automated spray deposition system built at WVU used to apply active anode, electrolyte, and active cathode layers. Deposition parameters adjusted to improve quality/performance
 - Cathode polarization resistance at 800°C improved from 0.377 ohm-cm² down to 0.0381 ohm-cm²
- Finer resolution nozzle installed, deposition width of 1.21 mm vs. 10.95 mm





5/3/2024



Cell and Stack Degradation Modeling

Simulation-driven design of advanced SOCs



Integrated Cell Degradation Model





Analyzing performance degradation

How to determine what's a good or bad electrode?

 SOC Simulations run on database of 1000s of synthetic microstructure covering large matrix of microstructural parameter combinations (particle sizes, phase fractions, particle size distribution, phase fraction distribution, etc.)

Need a single figure-of-merit that captures **both** <u>initial performance</u> and <u>stability</u>

Lifetime energy production chosen.

Presently: operation at a given current density, up to a given time



- SOC Synthetic Electrode Microstructure Database
 - 1,970 unique 3-phase electrode microstructure files
 - DOI: <u>10.18141/1988063</u>
- PFIB-SEM 3D reconstructions of real SOFC electrodes: DOI: 10.18141/1425617



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SOFC Cathode Feature Importance Ranking



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SOEC Figures of Merit

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Linking SOEC lifetime performance to economics





Feature Importance



Low Ni/YSZ ratio, low porosity, small solid particles beneficial for both, but rankings are different Other figures of merit (e.g. degr. only) may show different dependence



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Making specific recommendations: SOEC







SOFC Recommendations

• Samples from Materials Systems Research Inc. (MSRI, Salt Lake City, UT).





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Conclusions

- Materials discovery using machine learning can screen an even larger parametric space than previous high throughput methods
- Modeling is useful tool for deeper interpretation of performance data, designing more durable electrodes, and providing context to literature results
- NETL continues to develop advanced electrode design and fabrication tools for more optimized lifetime performance

How can NETL help you?

- NETL's synthetic microstructure database, real 3D microstructures, microstructural analysis tools, and defect modeling tools are available to the public
- NETL can collaborate with partners, using partner data and conditions to run performance degradation and optimization simulations



2024 FECM Project Review Posters



- "Cation Migration and LSCF Decomposition Related to Long Term Operation Mode as Revealed by Electron Microscopy" – Yoosuf Picard
- "In-House Developed Multiphysics Simulation for the Performance of Solid Oxide Cells (SOCs)" – Jian Liu
- "Defect Thermodynamics and Transport Properties of Perovskite and Fluorite Materials for Solid-Oxide and Proton Conducting Oxide Cells Evaluated Based on Density Functional Theory Modeling" – Yueh-Lin Lee
- "Pathway Study for Large-Scale Hydrogen Production from Solid Oxide Electrolysis Cell Technology" - Kyle Bucheit and Alex Noring
- "Modeling Ni Coarsening under Humid Atmosphere in Electrode of Solid Oxide Cells" -Yves Mantz
- "Inter- & Intra-Granular Nanostructure Degradation of YSZ in Electrolyte Under SOEC Operation" – Yun Chen and Xueyan Song





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