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# Efficient and stable catalyst of $\alpha$ -FeOOH for NO oxidation from coke oven flue gas by the catalytic decomposition of gaseous $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$ †

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Goethite ( $\alpha$ -FeOOH) possesses excellent catalytic activity, high selectivity and good stability as a catalyst for NO oxidation through the catalytic decomposition of gaseous  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$ .  $\text{HO}_2^\cdot/\text{O}_2^{\cdot-}$  as the primary reactive oxygen species is involved in the NO oxidation process together with  $\cdot\text{OH}$ , and  $\text{N}_2\text{O}_5$  is found for the first time in the products of NO oxidation.

Sulphur dioxide ( $\text{SO}_2$ ) and nitrogen oxides ( $\text{NO}_x$ ) yielded by fossil fuels and ore combustion are the major air pollutants produced by traditional chemical industries, including iron and steel, coking, and boilers, and these pollutants cause acid rain, fog, and haze. Wet flue gas desulphurisation (WFGD) and selective catalytic reduction (SCR) are efficient methods used in power plants for desulphurisation and denitration, respectively.<sup>1</sup> However, in traditional chemical industries, for example, coke oven flue gas yielded by coke oven gas combustion has a flue gas temperature of about 200–230 °C and the composition is complex,<sup>2</sup> which limits the utilisation of SCR.<sup>3</sup>

Recently, we proposed a promising process of gas-phase oxidation combined with wet scrubbing using steel slag slurry to treat  $\text{NO}_x$  from low-temperature flue gas.<sup>4,5</sup> In this process, the sparingly soluble NO could be oxidised into soluble  $\text{NO}_2$ ,  $\text{HNO}_3$  or  $\text{N}_2\text{O}_5$  through the gas-phase oxidation process, and then the oxidation products could be absorbed together with  $\text{SO}_2$  in a wet scrubbing device. This method can achieve the simultaneous removal of  $\text{SO}_2$  and  $\text{NO}_x$  using the oxidisers. Some oxidisers, such as  $\text{O}_3$ ,<sup>6,7</sup>  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$ ,<sup>8–12</sup>  $\text{NaClO}_2$ ,<sup>13</sup>  $\text{NaClO}$ ,<sup>14</sup> persulphate salt ( $\text{S}_2\text{O}_8^{2-}$ )<sup>15</sup> and ferrate ( $\text{Fe}[\text{VI}]$ ),<sup>16</sup> can be used as the gas-phase oxidiser for NO oxidation after being gasified if needed.

$\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  is a green and low-cost oxidizer, which can be used as the gas-phase oxidizer for NO oxidation after liquid  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  is gasified at low temperature. Furthermore, the oxidation potential of  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  (1.77 eV) is lower compared with that of  $\text{O}_3$  (2.08 eV) and  $\cdot\text{OH}$  (2.80 eV) and thus its efficiency in oxidising NO is low.<sup>12,17</sup> Thermal decomposition of gaseous  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  can

decompose  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  into radicals ( $\cdot\text{OH}$  or  $\text{HO}_2^\cdot/\text{O}_2^{\cdot-}$ ) with high oxidation potential for NO oxidation. However, this technology requires high  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  consumption ( $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2/\text{NO} = 80$ ) and excessive residence time (34 s) and results in low NO oxidation efficiency (~60%).<sup>18</sup> Introducing catalysts into the  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  decomposition process can effectively decompose  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  into radicals and considerably reduce the consumption of  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$ .<sup>11</sup> Iron-based materials, such as hematite ( $\alpha$ - $\text{Fe}_2\text{O}_3$ ),<sup>8</sup> nanoscale zero-valent iron,<sup>9</sup>  $\text{Fe}_3\text{O}_4$ ,<sup>10</sup>  $\gamma$ - $\text{Fe}_2\text{O}_3$ @ $\text{Fe}_3\text{O}_4$ ,<sup>11</sup>  $\text{Fe}_2(\text{MoO}_4)_3$ <sup>19</sup> and  $\text{Fe}_2(\text{SO}_4)_3$ ,<sup>12</sup> have been used as catalysts to decompose gaseous  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  for NO oxidation. These catalysts have high removal efficiencies as heterogeneous catalysts for the simultaneous removal of NO and  $\text{SO}_2$  in an integrated catalytic oxidation/wet scrubbing process. However, the use of these catalysts results in relatively high  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  consumption<sup>8,9,12,20</sup> and relatively low gas hourly space velocity (GHSV)<sup>19</sup> and catalytic stability.<sup>9,12</sup> Therefore, a catalyst with low  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  consumption and high GHSV and catalytic stability for NO oxidation through catalytic decomposition of gaseous  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  should be developed.

Goethite ( $\alpha$ -FeOOH) is a ubiquitous natural mineral in soils and sediments at the Earth's surface that is widely used as a heterogeneous Fenton catalyst for wastewater treatment due to its abundance, availability, relative stability and low cost.<sup>21</sup> He *et al.* explored the catalytic performance of  $\alpha$ -FeOOH and found that it can be used to catalyse  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  vapour for NO oxidation under low-temperature (<160 °C) flue gas;<sup>22</sup> however, coke oven flue gas has a higher flue gas temperature (200–230 °C), and the reaction products and catalytic mechanism may be different under different temperature regions. Therefore, the performance of  $\alpha$ -FeOOH for NO oxidation through catalysing gaseous  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  under high flue gas temperature should be investigated, and the  $\text{SO}_2$  oxidation efficiency of this process should also be evaluated. Herein, NO and  $\text{SO}_2$  conversions and  $\text{NO}_2$  yield using  $\alpha$ -FeOOH with gaseous  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  were performed under the wide temperature range of 100–350 °C, and the catalytic stability and reaction mechanism were determined.

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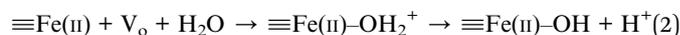
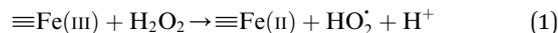
† Electronic supplementary information (ESI) available. See DOI: 10.1039/d0ra00533a



Fresh  $\alpha$ -FeOOH catalyst was prepared *via* precipitation reaction of  $\text{Fe}^{3+}$  followed by crystal transformation according to the method of Böhm.<sup>23</sup> All chemicals used in the experiments were of analytical grade, and deionised water was used. NO, NO<sub>2</sub>, and SO<sub>2</sub> concentrations in simulated flue gas were analysed using a UV differential optical absorption spectroscopy (DOAS) flue gas comprehensive analyser (Laoying3023, Qingdao Laoying Environmental Technology Co., Ltd.). The presence of HNO<sub>3</sub> and N<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub> in the flue gas were detected using a Fourier transform infrared (FTIR) spectrometer (Tensor 27, Bruker Optik, Inc.), which was equipped with a 2.4 m gas cell. Catalysts were characterised *via* X-ray diffraction (XRD) spectroscopy (Empyrean, PANalytical Instruments) and FTIR spectrometry. Hydroxyl radical ( $\cdot\text{OH}$ ) and superoxide anion radical ( $\text{HO}_2/\text{O}_2^{\cdot-}$ ) decomposed by H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> were detected *via* electron paramagnetic resonance (EPR) spectroscopy (A300-10/12, Bruker Optik Inc.), and 5,5-dimethyl-1-pyrroline *N*-oxide (DMPO) was used for capturing  $\cdot\text{OH}$  and  $\text{HO}_2/\text{O}_2^{\cdot-}$ . Specifically, DMPO–H<sub>2</sub>O solvent was used to capture the  $\cdot\text{OH}$  generated after H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> was catalysed, whereas DMPO–CH<sub>3</sub>OH was used to capture  $\text{HO}_2/\text{O}_2^{\cdot-}$ . The experimental equipment for evaluating the catalytic performance of  $\alpha$ -FeOOH was established (Fig. S1, ESI<sup>†</sup>). In brief, the bypass of N<sub>2</sub> carried the gaseous H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> generated by the evaporation of H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> solution and mixed with the simulated flue gas, and then the mixture gas contacted with the catalyst, in which gaseous H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> was decomposed into radicals over the catalyst and oxidised NO and SO<sub>2</sub>. At the outlet of the catalytic reactor, the simulated flue gas after being oxidised was detected using a UV DOAS flue gas comprehensive analyser and an FTIR spectrometer equipped with a gas cell. Each experiment was conducted for 20 min after the temperature was stabilised.

According to Christensen *et al.*,  $\alpha$ -FeOOH is transformed to hematite ( $\alpha$ -Fe<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>) within the temperature range of 171–311 °C, and  $\alpha$ -FeOOH is totally converted to  $\alpha$ -Fe<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> at 350 °C.<sup>24</sup> The fresh catalyst and the catalyst calcinated at 350 °C were characterised *via* XRD and FTIR spectrometry. The FTIR and XRD spectra (Fig. S2 and S3, ESI<sup>†</sup>) indicated that the fresh catalyst was  $\alpha$ -FeOOH and the catalyst calcinated at 350 °C was  $\alpha$ -Fe<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> in an N<sub>2</sub> atmosphere. The colour of the fresh catalyst (yellow) and the calcinated catalyst (red) also proved the above results (Fig. S4, ESI<sup>†</sup>). An FTIR spectrometer equipped with a gas cell was used to analyse the water vapour and further investigate the transformation temperature of  $\alpha$ -FeOOH. Results (Fig. S5, ESI<sup>†</sup>) showed that  $\alpha$ -FeOOH began to decompose into  $\alpha$ -Fe<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> and H<sub>2</sub>O when the temperature was above 200 °C in an N<sub>2</sub> atmosphere. However, when H<sub>2</sub>O(g) and H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>(g) were existed in N<sub>2</sub> atmosphere, they could improve the thermal stability of  $\alpha$ -FeOOH. The reason may be that (1) multiple types of surface hydroxyls ( $-\text{OH}$ s) generated by the adsorption of water on  $\alpha$ -FeOOH surface prevented the dehydration of  $-\text{OH}$ s;<sup>25,26</sup> and (2) H<sub>2</sub>O(g) from the injected H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> solution were adsorbed on the reduced  $\equiv\text{Fe}(\text{II})$  and generated  $\equiv\text{Fe}(\text{II})-\text{OH}$  *via* eqn (1) and (2), and  $\equiv\text{Fe}(\text{II})-\text{OH}$  was converted to  $\equiv\text{Fe}(\text{III})-\text{OH}$  *via* eqn (3).<sup>12,19,22,27,28</sup> The catalyst  $\alpha$ -FeOOH was still stable when temperature was up to 225 °C, and little  $\alpha$ -FeOOH close to the wall of the reactor was converted to  $\alpha$ -Fe<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> (the color of catalyst

was changed from yellow to red) when temperature was up to 350 °C. Therefore, the catalyst  $\alpha$ -FeOOH possesses great thermal stability under the simulated flue gas condition (*e.g.*, the experimental condition in Fig. 1).



As shown in Fig. 1, NO conversion and NO<sub>2</sub> yield were both lower than SO<sub>2</sub> conversion when gaseous H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> only was used for NO oxidation. This result indicated that SO<sub>2</sub> was more easily oxidised by gaseous H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> than NO, which consumed a large amount of H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>. NO conversion and NO<sub>2</sub> yield were higher, but SO<sub>2</sub> conversion was considerably lower than using gaseous H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> only when  $\alpha$ -FeOOH was used to catalyse gaseous H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> for NO oxidation. Therefore,  $\alpha$ -FeOOH performed excellent catalytic activity and high selectivity for NO oxidation. Specifically, NO conversion achieved 98.8% and NO<sub>2</sub> yield reached 77.0% at H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>/NO of 2.0, reaction temperature of 225 °C, catalyst dosage of 0.5 g and GHSV of 137 747 h<sup>-1</sup>. The catalyst of  $\alpha$ -FeOOH achieved a higher NO oxidation efficiency under low H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> consumption and high GHSV compared with those reported by previous studies (Table S1, ESI<sup>†</sup>).<sup>8,9,12,17,19,20</sup>

Fig. 1 shows that NO conversion was higher than NO<sub>2</sub> yield within the temperature range of 100–225 °C, and NO conversion was closer to NO<sub>2</sub> yield when the temperature further increased from 250 °C to 350 °C. This trend indicated that the products of NO oxidation was not just NO<sub>2</sub> within the temperature range of 100–225 °C, and the product of NO oxidation might only be NO<sub>2</sub> within the temperature range of 250–350 °C. The products of NO oxidation were determined *via* FTIR spectroscopy. As shown in Fig. 2, the peaks for NO<sub>2</sub> (1599 cm<sup>-1</sup>), HNO<sub>3</sub> (886 cm<sup>-1</sup>) and N<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub> (1719 cm<sup>-1</sup>) were observed in the FTIR spectra within the temperature range of 100–200 °C.<sup>29,30</sup> However, no obvious peaks for NO<sub>2</sub>, HNO<sub>3</sub>, and N<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub> were detected in the FTIR spectra when H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> was not added. This result indicated that

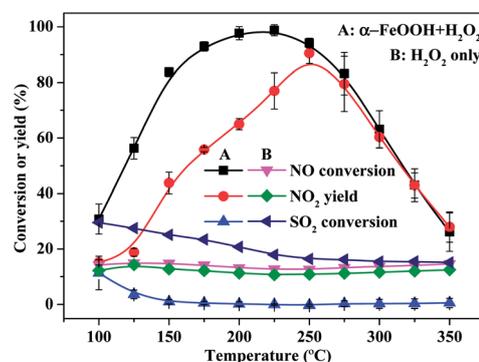


Fig. 1 Effects of temperature on NO and SO<sub>2</sub> conversions and NO<sub>2</sub> yield (H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>/NO, 2.0; H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> solution feeding rate, 148.9  $\mu\text{L min}^{-1}$ ; catalyst dosage, 0.5 g; GHSV, 137 747 h<sup>-1</sup>; NO concentration, 200 ppm; SO<sub>2</sub> concentration, 660 ppm; O<sub>2</sub> concentration, 6%).



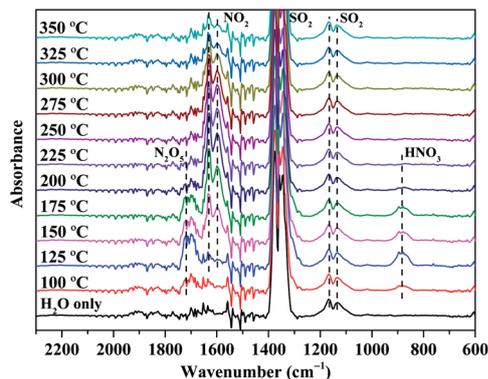


Fig. 2 FTIR spectra of simulated flue gas oxidised by gaseous  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  over  $\alpha\text{-FeOOH}$  under different temperature conditions. (Experimental condition was the same as that in Fig. 1.)

$\text{NO}_2$ ,  $\text{HNO}_3$  and  $\text{N}_2\text{O}_5$  were the main products of NO oxidation through the catalytic decomposition of gaseous  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  over  $\alpha\text{-FeOOH}$  in low-temperature (100–200 °C) region. Furthermore, the peaks for  $\text{HNO}_3$  and  $\text{N}_2\text{O}_5$  in the FTIR spectra disappeared when the temperature increased from 225 °C to 350 °C. The reason is that  $\text{HNO}_3$  and  $\text{N}_2\text{O}_5$  decomposed in the high-temperature region (225–350 °C) (eqn (4) and (5)).<sup>29</sup> In summary,  $\text{NO}_2$ ,  $\text{HNO}_3$  and  $\text{N}_2\text{O}_5$  were the main products of NO oxidation in the low-temperature region (100–200 °C), whereas  $\text{NO}_2$  was the main product in the high-temperature region (225–350 °C).

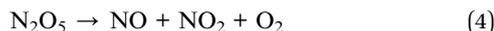


Fig. 1 shows that NO conversion sharply increased when the temperature increased from 100 °C to 200 °C and then decreased when the temperature further increased from 225 °C to 350 °C. The increase in NO conversion with temperature was because high temperatures enhance  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  decomposition into radicals according to the Arrhenius law,<sup>12</sup> which further accelerates NO conversion. The decrease in NO conversion at temperatures above 200 °C could be explained by (1) the thermal decomposition of gaseous  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  under high temperature and/or (2) the transformation of  $\alpha\text{-FeOOH}$  under high temperature. On the one hand, gaseous  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  can be decomposed under high temperature. An FTIR spectrometer equipped with a gas cell was used to detect gaseous  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  under different temperature conditions (free of catalyst) to investigate the decomposition temperature of gaseous  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$ ,<sup>31</sup> and the variations in  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  content were measured by their homologous infrared absorption characteristic peaks (Fig. S6, ESI†). Results (Fig. S7, ESI†) indicated that  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  almost did not decompose at 100–300 °C, and the thermal decomposition of gaseous  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  occurred when the temperature increased further to 300 °C. On the other hand, NO-TPD (Fig. S8, ESI†) showed that the absorbed NO began to desorb when the temperature was above 200 °C. Therefore, when the temperature was above 200 °C, NO

conversion decreased when the temperature was above 200 °C. Overall, the transformation of  $\alpha\text{-FeOOH}$  under high temperature (>200 °C) led to the decrease in NO conversion when the temperature was above 200 °C, and the thermal decomposition of gaseous  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  also resulted in the decrease in NO conversion when the temperature was above 300 °C.

The catalytic stability of  $\alpha\text{-FeOOH}$  was also investigated. As shown in Fig. 3, NO conversion was maintained at a high level (>97.0%) within the first 15 h and then fluctuated slightly but remained at >90.0% at 15–45 h.  $\text{SO}_2$  conversion remained stable at about 2.0%. Results indicated that  $\alpha\text{-FeOOH}$  possesses excellent catalytic activity, good stability and high selectivity for NO oxidation. According to the results in Fig. 1 and 3, the catalyst has an ideal temperature window of 175–250 °C; therefore,  $\alpha\text{-FeOOH}$  can be applied in coke oven flue gas (200–230 °C) treatment.

Fresh and used (after the 45 h test)  $\alpha\text{-FeOOH}$  were characterised *via* FTIR and XRD spectroscopy. The bands at 3363, 3127 and 1628  $\text{cm}^{-1}$  are the O–H stretching mode in  $\alpha\text{-FeOOH}$ , the stretching mode of surface water and the bending mode of  $\text{H}_2\text{O}$ , respectively. The characteristic strong bands at 795 and 891  $\text{cm}^{-1}$  were assigned to the Fe–O–H bending vibrations of  $\alpha\text{-FeOOH}$ . The band at 638  $\text{cm}^{-1}$  was assigned to the Fe–O stretching vibration of pure  $\alpha\text{-FeOOH}$ . The characteristic absorption peaks of  $\alpha\text{-FeOOH}$  in the catalyst after the 45 h test did not change compared with that of the fresh catalyst (Fig. S9, ESI†), indicating that the catalyst maintained the structure of  $\alpha\text{-FeOOH}$  even after the 45 h test. The band at 999  $\text{cm}^{-1}$  was assigned to  $\nu_1(\text{SO}_4)$  frequency, and the bands at 1076, 1136 and 1229  $\text{cm}^{-1}$  were interpreted as  $\nu_3(\text{SO}_4)$  frequencies. These vibrational frequencies are attributed to specifically adsorbed  $\text{SO}_4^{2-}$  ions on the external and internal surfaces of catalyst particles after the 45 h test.<sup>32,33</sup> The XRD patterns showed that the phase of the catalyst before and after the stability test was still  $\alpha\text{-FeOOH}$  (Fig. S10, ESI†). This result also indicated that  $\alpha\text{-FeOOH}$  possessed good stability in the NO oxidation process.

EPR test was conducted to detect the radicals generated by  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  decomposition and analyse the oxygen species of the  $\alpha\text{-FeOOH}/\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  system. Fig. 4 shows the 4-fold characteristic peak

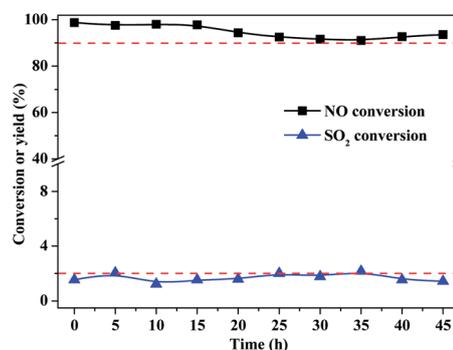


Fig. 3 Catalytic stability of  $\alpha\text{-FeOOH}$ . ( $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2/\text{NO}$ , 2.0;  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  solution feeding rate, 148.9  $\mu\text{L min}^{-1}$ ; catalyst dosage, 0.5 g; GHSV, 137 747  $\text{h}^{-1}$ ; temperature, 225 °C; NO concentration, 200 ppm;  $\text{SO}_2$  concentration, 660 ppm;  $\text{O}_2$  concentration, 6%.)



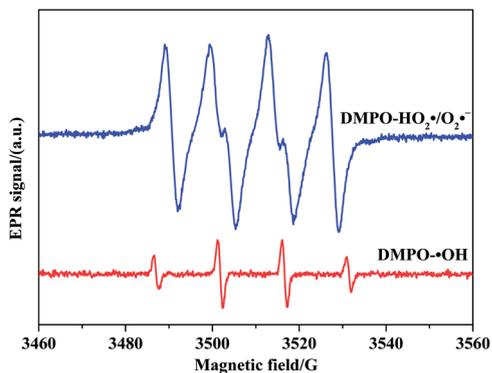
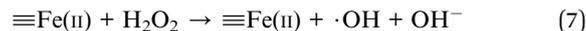
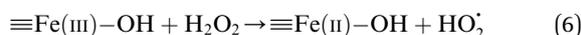


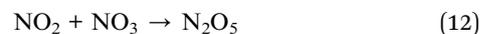
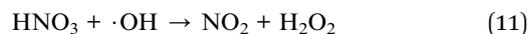
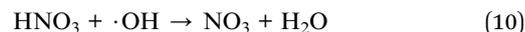
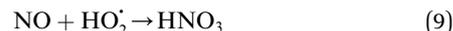
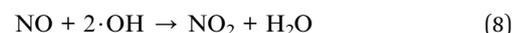
Fig. 4 EPR spectra of the  $\alpha$ -FeOOH/H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> system.

of DMPO- $\cdot$ OH adducts with an intensity ratio of 1 : 2 : 2 : 1 and four notable signals ascribed to DMPO - HO<sub>2</sub><sup>•</sup>/O<sub>2</sub><sup>•-</sup> adducts. These peaks and signals indicate the formation of  $\cdot$ OH and HO<sub>2</sub><sup>•</sup>/O<sub>2</sub><sup>•-</sup> in the  $\alpha$ -FeOOH/H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> system.<sup>21,34</sup> Furthermore, the intensity of the 4-fold characteristic peak of DMPO- $\cdot$ OH adducts was significantly weaker than that of DMPO - HO<sub>2</sub><sup>•</sup>/O<sub>2</sub><sup>•-</sup> adducts, indicated that the quantity of HO<sub>2</sub><sup>•</sup>/O<sub>2</sub><sup>•-</sup> produced by the  $\alpha$ -FeOOH/H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> system was larger than that of  $\cdot$ OH. Therefore,  $\alpha$ -FeOOH can decompose H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> into  $\cdot$ OH and HO<sub>2</sub><sup>•</sup>/O<sub>2</sub><sup>•-</sup>, and HO<sub>2</sub><sup>•</sup>/O<sub>2</sub><sup>•-</sup> may be dominant among  $\cdot$ OH and HO<sub>2</sub><sup>•</sup>/O<sub>2</sub><sup>•-</sup> for NO oxidation. Radical trapping experiments (Fig. S11, ESI<sup>†</sup>) further proved the roles of radicals ( $\cdot$ OH and HO<sub>2</sub><sup>•</sup>/O<sub>2</sub><sup>•-</sup>) in the NO oxidation process. Benzoquinone (BQ, HO<sub>2</sub><sup>•</sup>/O<sub>2</sub><sup>•-</sup> scavenger<sup>20</sup>) was added into the H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> solutions, and H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> and BQ in the mixture solution was vapoured together. NO conversion substantially decreased from 92.9% to 6.1% when the molar ratio of BQ to H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> increased from 0 to 1.0. The reason was that the addition of BQ captured the HO<sub>2</sub><sup>•</sup>/O<sub>2</sub><sup>•-</sup> generated by gaseous H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> decomposition over  $\alpha$ -FeOOH, thereby decreasing NO conversion. NO conversion decreased from 92.9% to 8.0% when isopropanol (i-PrOH,  $\cdot$ OH scavenger<sup>20</sup>) was introduced into the same system as the molar ratio of i-PrOH to H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> increased from 0 to 8.0. The reason was that  $\cdot$ OH generated in the  $\alpha$ -FeOOH/H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> system was captured by i-PrOH instead of oxidised NO. These results indicated that when the addition concentration of the  $\cdot$ OH scavenger (i-PrOH) was eight times that of HO<sub>2</sub><sup>•</sup>/O<sub>2</sub><sup>•-</sup> scavenger (BQ), both systems obtained the similar decrease in NO conversion. Therefore, HO<sub>2</sub><sup>•</sup>/O<sub>2</sub><sup>•-</sup> as the primary reactive oxygen species was involved in the NO oxidation process together with  $\cdot$ OH.

In this catalytic process, the reaction between H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> as an oxidant and iron ions as a catalyst to produce highly active species ( $\cdot$ OH and HO<sub>2</sub><sup>•</sup>/O<sub>2</sub><sup>•-</sup>).<sup>35</sup> The conversion between Fe<sup>2+</sup> and Fe<sup>3+</sup> was proceed according to the Haber-Weiss mechanism.  $\equiv$ Fe(III)-OH and  $\equiv$ Fe(III) are reduced by H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> and generate  $\equiv$ Fe(II)-OH and  $\equiv$ Fe(II) (eqn (6) and (1)), the resulting  $\equiv$ Fe(II)-OH and  $\equiv$ Fe(II) also can be oxidized by H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> and produce  $\equiv$ Fe(III)-OH and  $\equiv$ Fe(III) (eqn (3) and (7)).<sup>12,19,22,27,28,36</sup>



The proposed mechanism of NO oxidation by H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> decomposition over  $\alpha$ -FeOOH is presented in Fig. 5 based on the study of the products of NO oxidation and reactive oxygen species (HO<sub>2</sub><sup>•</sup>/O<sub>2</sub><sup>•-</sup> and  $\cdot$ OH) in the NO oxidation process. (1) Gaseous H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> decomposed into  $\cdot$ OH and HO<sub>2</sub><sup>•</sup> on the active sites ( $\equiv$ Fe(II)-OH and  $\equiv$ Fe(II),  $\equiv$ Fe(III)-OH and  $\equiv$ Fe(III)) of the catalyst (eqn (1)–(3), (6) and (7)) according to the Haber-Weiss mechanism, a result that was proved through EPR analysis and scavenger experiments. (2) NO was oxidised by the generated  $\cdot$ OH and HO<sub>2</sub><sup>•</sup> and produced NO<sub>2</sub> and HNO<sub>3</sub> via eqn (8) and (9). (3) The produced HNO<sub>3</sub> reacted with  $\cdot$ OH and produced NO<sub>3</sub> or NO<sub>2</sub> (eqn (10) and (11)). (4) NO<sub>2</sub> reacted with NO<sub>3</sub> and produced N<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub> via eqn (12).<sup>37</sup> The production of NO<sub>2</sub>, HNO<sub>3</sub> and N<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub> during the NO oxidation process was proved by the FTIR spectra (Fig. 2).



In summary,  $\alpha$ -FeOOH can be used as an efficient catalyst for coke oven flue gas to enhance NO oxidation efficiency through the catalytic decomposition of gaseous H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>. Moreover,  $\alpha$ -FeOOH showed high selectivity for NO oxidation in the presence of SO<sub>2</sub>. In this study, NO conversion achieved 98.8% under the following experimental conditions: H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>/NO of 2.0, reaction temperature of 225 °C, catalyst dosage of 0.5 g and GHSV of 137 747 h<sup>-1</sup>. The 45 h test indicated that  $\alpha$ -FeOOH has good catalytic stability. The EPR test and radical trapping experiments revealed that HO<sub>2</sub><sup>•</sup>/O<sub>2</sub><sup>•-</sup> as the primary reactive oxygen species was involved in the NO oxidation process together with  $\cdot$ OH. Furthermore, NO<sub>2</sub>, HNO<sub>3</sub> and N<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub> were the products of

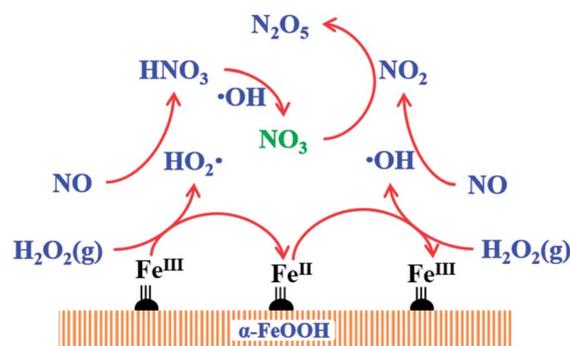


Fig. 5 Catalytic mechanism of NO oxidation by H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> decomposition over  $\alpha$ -FeOOH ( $\equiv$ Fe<sup>III</sup>: $\equiv$ Fe(III),  $\equiv$ Fe(III)-OH;  $\equiv$ Fe<sup>II</sup>: $\equiv$ Fe(II),  $\equiv$ Fe(II)-OH).



NO oxidation through the catalysis of gaseous H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> over  $\alpha$ -FeOOH within the temperature range of 100–200 °C, and NO<sub>2</sub> was the only oxidation product within the temperature range of 225–350 °C.

The catalyst  $\alpha$ -FeOOH can be used to decompose gaseous H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> into radicals and oxidise NO into high-valence NO<sub>x</sub>, and then the oxidation products can be absorbed together with SO<sub>2</sub> in existing industrial-scale WFGD systems.<sup>4,5</sup> This process can achieve the simultaneous removal of SO<sub>2</sub> and NO<sub>x</sub> from coke oven flue gas.

## Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest to declare.

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