



Review

# Dry Reforming of Ethanol and Glycerol: Mini-Review

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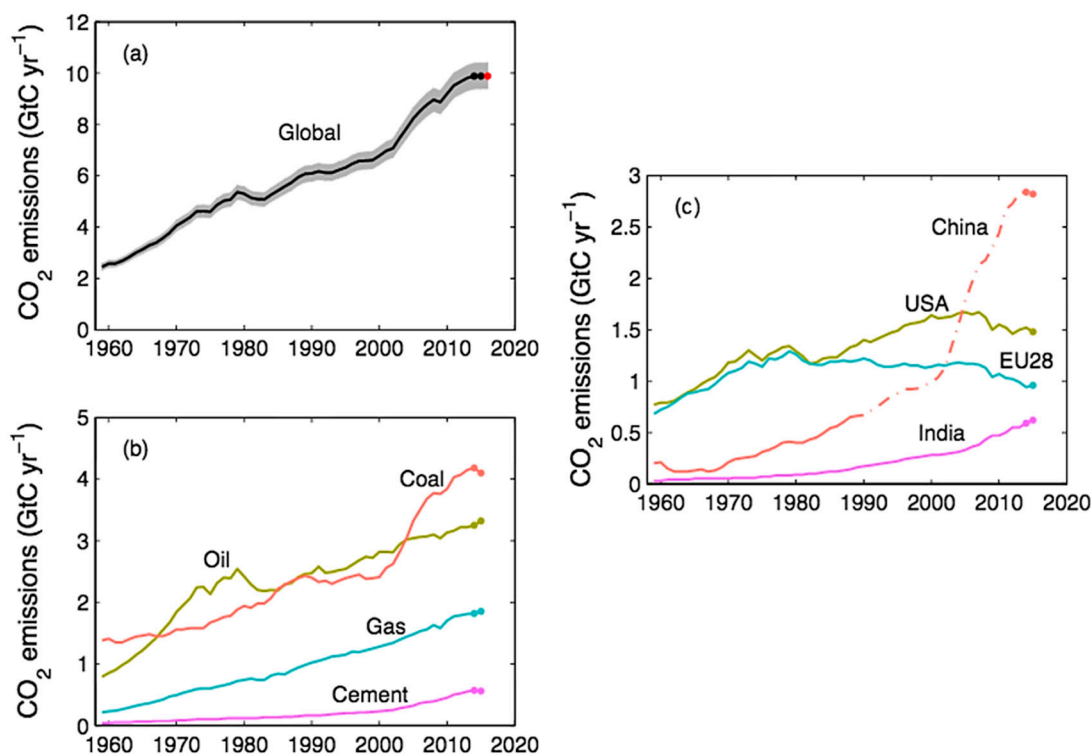
**Abstract:** Dry reforming of ethanol and glycerol using CO<sub>2</sub> are promising technologies for H<sub>2</sub> production while mitigating CO<sub>2</sub> emission. Current studies mainly focused on steam reforming technology, while dry reforming has been typically less studied. Nevertheless, the urgent problem of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions directly linked to global warming has sparked a renewed interest on the catalysis community to pursue dry reforming routes. Indeed, dry reforming represents a straightforward route to utilize CO<sub>2</sub> while producing added value products such as syngas or hydrogen. In the absence of catalysts, the direct decomposition for H<sub>2</sub> production is less efficient. In this mini-review, ethanol and glycerol dry reforming processes have been discussed including their mechanistic aspects and strategies for catalysts successful design. The effect of support and promoters is addressed for better elucidating the catalytic mechanism of dry reforming of ethanol and glycerol. Activity and stability of state-of-the-art catalysts are comprehensively discussed in this review along with challenges and future opportunities to further develop the dry reforming routes as viable CO<sub>2</sub> utilization alternatives.

**Keywords:** CO<sub>2</sub> utilization; dry reforming; ethanol; glycerol; catalyst

## 1. Introduction

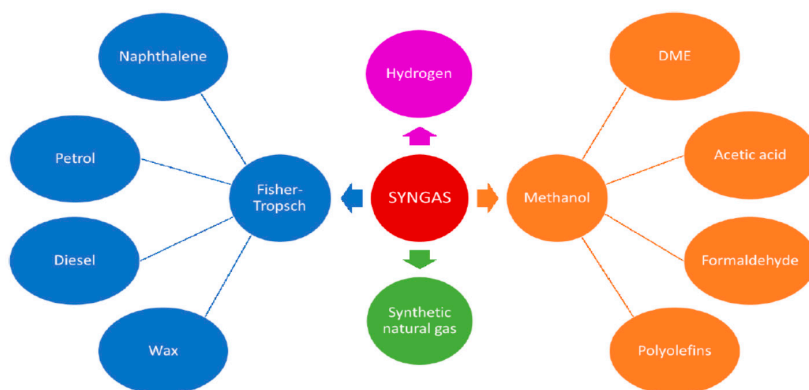
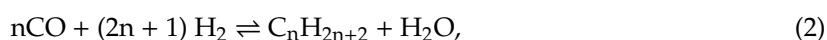
Carbon dioxide is one of the key greenhouse gases causing the observed global warming. Therefore, more attention has been given to the utilization of renewable energy and CO<sub>2</sub> recycling technologies. It is mainly from the combustion of fossil fuels since the Industrial Revolution age. In 1750, the CO<sub>2</sub> concentration in the atmosphere was 277 ppm according to Joos et al. and reached concentrations as high as 406.7 ppm in July 2017 [1]. However, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions have been found to be constant for the last three years as shown Figure 1a according to the International Energy Agency, proving the effect of the global effort regarding environmental policies.

Carbon capture and storage is regarded as a main method to limit CO<sub>2</sub> release in the atmosphere; nevertheless, this technology has not demonstrated commercial viability so far. A more challenging alternative from the chemical and engineering perspective is the carbon capture and recycling (CCR) approach, where CO<sub>2</sub> is converted and recycled back to fuels and added value chemicals.



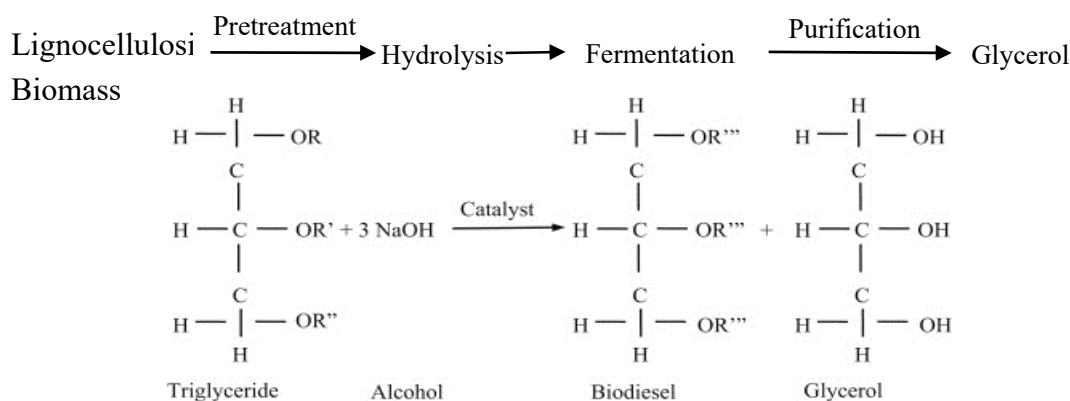
**Figure 1.** CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from fossil fuels and industry for (a) the globe (grey shading); (b) global emissions by fuel type; (c) territorial CO<sub>2</sub> emissions for USA, China, India, and for the EU—reproduced from Le Quéré et al. [2].

CO<sub>2</sub> can react with methane following the reaction of dry reforming of methane reaction (DRM) forming syngas. Syngas contained a mixture of carbon monoxide and hydrogen, which is a crucial raw compound in the chemical industry. Applications of synthesis gas are summarized in Figure 2. It can be used as base material for methanol synthesis (Equation (1)) that can later be upgraded to higher commercial value chemicals such as dimethyl ether (DME), formaldehyde or acetic acid. When introduced into a Fisher–Tropsch unit, syngas can produce fuels or waxes (Equation (2)). Finally, it can be rearranged into methane (Equation (3)) or used as a hydrogen source:



**Figure 2.** Applications of syngas.

Bio-ethanol, as a renewable biofuel, has been proposed as a substitute for fossil fuels. First generation of bio-ethanol was produced from food and was also heavily criticized since it opened the dilemma “food or fuel”. Currently, the second generation of bio-ethanol is mainly from lignocellulosic biomass residues and organic municipal solid waste with more complicated methods in order to avoid the consumption of food as shown in Figure 3. Therefore, bio-ethanol can be regarded as nearly CO<sub>2</sub> neutral. In 2018, the total production of bio-ethanol reached 28,700 million gallons and 83.7% is from USA and Brazil [3].



**Figure 3.** The pathway of production of bio-ethanol and glycerol.

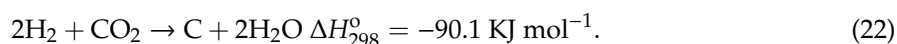
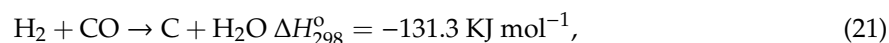
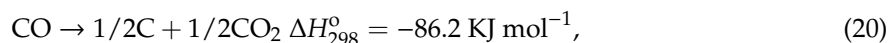
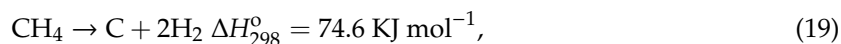
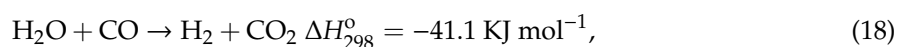
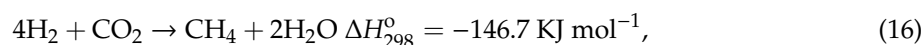
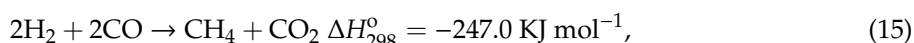
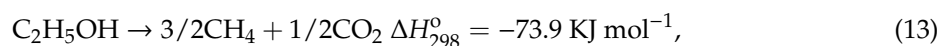
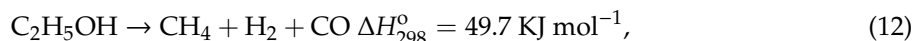
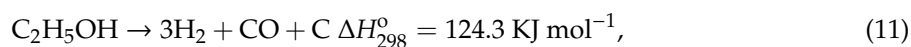
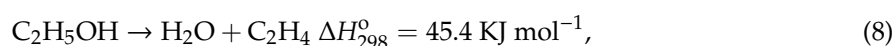
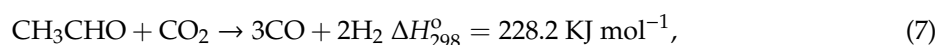
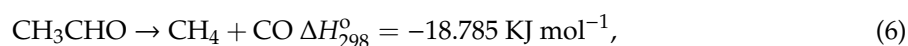
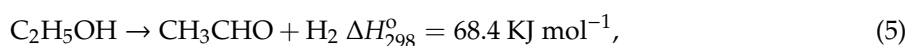
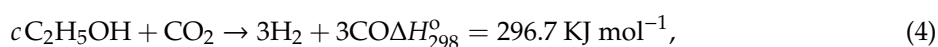
Biodiesel, the second most used biofuels after bio-ethanol, also attracted a wide amount of attention, which is mainly from the transesterification reaction of triglycerides. During the process, 1 kg of glycerol, the main by-product, was produced for 9 kg of biodiesel [4]. It was estimated that the production of glycerol each year can reach 4.2 million tons up to 2020 globally, while less than 3.5 million tons is needed each year [5]. Therefore, it is necessary to explore new market opportunities for glycerol.

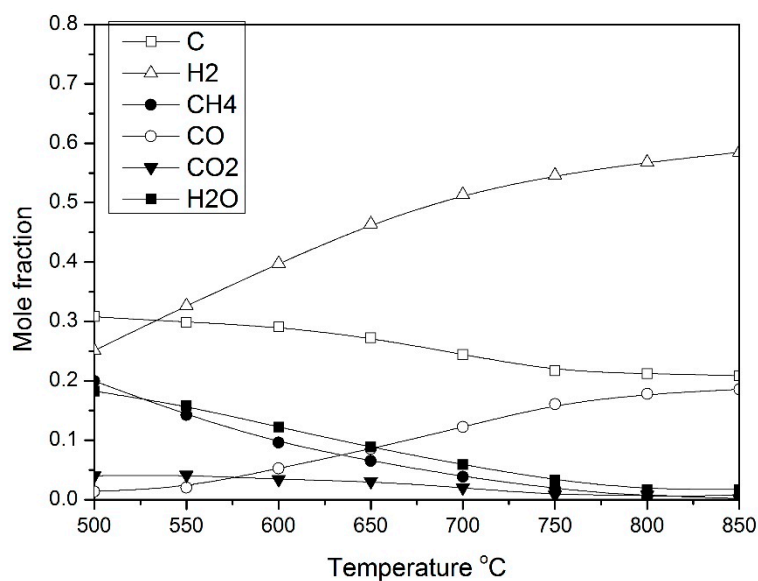
A number of processes, such as pyrolysis and gasification with and without catalysts, have been developed to utilize bio-ethanol and glycerol [6–9]. To effectively close the carbon cycle, dry reforming of bio-ethanol and glycerol to produce syngas or H<sub>2</sub>, which can be used directly or converted into high value chemical compounds were proposed [10–13]. Dry reforming normally occurs at relatively high temperatures (900–1200 K) in the existence of CO<sub>2</sub>. The process involved several parallel reactions, including direct cracking, water gas shift reaction (WGSR), and methanation reactions, which may affect the final products. Therefore, extensive studies have been conducted to understand the dry reforming pathways of bio-ethanol and glycerol and try to maximize the production of H<sub>2</sub> [14,15]. Various catalysts, such as Ni, Rh, and Cu-based, were also proposed to optimize the reaction pathways to avoid the formation of undesired by-products and hinder the formation of carbon on the catalyst.

## 2. Dry Reforming of Ethanol

The simulation of dry reforming of ethanol by thermodynamic analysis has been studied to determine optimum conditions for H<sub>2</sub> production [16–18]. Figure 4 showed the variation of gas composition with temperature. For the studied temperature ranges, H<sub>2</sub> and CO increase linearly with temperature from 823 to 1123 K reflecting the endothermic character of the reforming reaction. According to Equation (4), an equal amount of H<sub>2</sub> and CO can be formed from the ethanol dry reforming. However, the thermodynamic analysis predicted that ethanol can be completely converted to H<sub>2</sub>, CO, CH<sub>4</sub>, CO<sub>2</sub>, H<sub>2</sub>O, and C. In addition, CH<sub>3</sub>CHO may be formed by a dehydrogenation reaction following Equation (5). The formed CH<sub>3</sub>CHO can be further decomposed into CH<sub>4</sub> and CO (Equation (6)) or reformed into H<sub>2</sub> and CO (Equation (7)). The CH<sub>3</sub>CHO can also be dehydrated into C<sub>2</sub>H<sub>4</sub> (Equation (8)) or ether Equation (9). Carbon deposition was predicted to happen especially in the low temperature window with a slight decrease of solid carbon formation when temperature is increased. Above 1100

K, ethanol was completely transformed into H<sub>2</sub>, CO, and C. According to Equation (10), ethylene polymerization can partially form the carbon. The ethanol can also decompose into CO, H<sub>2</sub>, CH<sub>4</sub>, and acetone directly (Equations (11)–(14)). The formed CO and H<sub>2</sub> can be transformed into methane according to Equations (15) and (16). The DRM is strongly endothermic and can produce hydrogen and carbon monoxide (Equation (17)). At lower temperatures, WGSR, an exothermic and reversible reaction, can favor the production of hydrogen and carbon oxide (Equation (18)). The carbon residues can also be formed following decomposition of methane, Boudouard reaction, and reduction of CO (Equations (19)–(22)). According to the thermodynamics, a two-step reaction mechanism was then proposed for the dry reforming of ethanol. Initially, ethanol was directly decomposed into methane and acetaldehyde intermediates, which can be subsequently reformed to syngas [19,20]. Moreover, H<sub>2</sub>O was predicted due to the reversed WGSR. Therefore, it is evident that ethanol reforming by CO<sub>2</sub> forming dominated for the whole temperatures ranges and other side reactions may also occur such as direct decomposition into methane, H<sub>2</sub>/CO/C mixtures and C<sub>2</sub>H<sub>4</sub>O, methane reforming, and reverse WGSR:





**Figure 4.** Equilibrium content of gas composition for the ethanol dry reforming process (Reproduced from [16]).

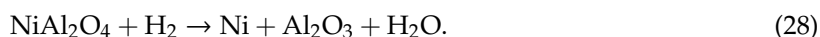
Thermodynamic analysis showed that the optimal conditions for dry reforming of ethanol are: reaction temperatures between 1200–1300 K, CO<sub>2</sub>/ethanol ratios of 1.2–1.3. At these conditions, ~45% H<sub>2</sub>, ~50% CO, and complete conversion of ethanol can be realized without remarkable solid carbon formation [21]. Ethanol conversion increased with the CO<sub>2</sub>/ethanol ratio increasing, but kept almost constant at higher CO<sub>2</sub>/ethanol ratios. A recent experimental study showed that ethanol conversion stabilized from CO<sub>2</sub>/ethanol ratio of 1.4 [22]. Moreover, the H<sub>2</sub> in syngas also decreased at CO<sub>2</sub>/ethanol higher than 1.4, while CO increased. This trend showcases the direct impact of the reversed WGS during the dry reforming processes as reported elsewhere [23–25].

In order to avoid the carbon formation and undesired gas components, different catalysts were synthesized and utilized for the dry reforming of ethanol, such as Ni, Cu, Rh, and Co based catalysts. The Ni based catalyst is the most studied one. Al supported nano-NiO-SiO<sub>2</sub> catalysts with Ni amount of 5, 7, 10, and 15% have been synthesized and used for the dry reforming of ethanol [26]. Catalysts containing 10% Ni showed the best activity partially due to the clustering of Ni particles at higher Ni amounts. Less CO and higher CH<sub>4</sub> were also observed due to higher rate of WGS and direct decomposition of ethanol into CH<sub>4</sub> promoted by the catalyst, respectively. The desired condition for dry reforming of ethanol was found at 1023 K with the ratio of CO<sub>2</sub>/Ethanol being 1.4. At this condition, the conversion of CO<sub>2</sub> was observed to be 75%, while 100% conversion of ethanol was nearly obtained. Wei et al. used the Ni/KIT-6 (mesoporous silica) and Ni/SiO<sub>2</sub> for the dry reforming of ethanol [27]. A comparatively better activity and stability was shown for Ni/KIT-6 catalyst; however, Ni/SiO<sub>2</sub> was deactivated quickly. Complete ethanol conversion was obtained at 823 K for Ni/KIT-6 without observing clear deactivation of the catalyst after 40 h tests. Smaller particle size of Ni was observed for Ni/KIT-6, which can be stabilized by the confinement effect of catalyst channels.

The smaller particle size of Ni markedly hindered the carbon formation. The stronger interaction of metal-support also inhibited the sintering of active metals. Therefore, the catalyst of Ni/KIT-6 greatly inhibited the coke deposition and contributed to the superior activity. Catalysts of Ni/Y<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>-ZrO<sub>2</sub> using two different preparation methods of polymerization and wet impregnation were proposed for the dry reforming of ethanol at 600, 700 and 800 °C [10]. At 600 °C, the highest CH<sub>4</sub> was obtained using a 5%Ni/Y<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>-ZrO<sub>2</sub> catalyst, due to the direct cracking of ethanol into CH<sub>4</sub> and slow dry reforming rate of CH<sub>4</sub> at 600 °C. Increasing temperature to 700 °C accelerated the dry reforming rate of CH<sub>4</sub>, which was then enhanced further at 800 °C. It was showed that stronger interaction between NiO and oxygen vacancies of support was responsible for its superior reforming ability. The preparation of

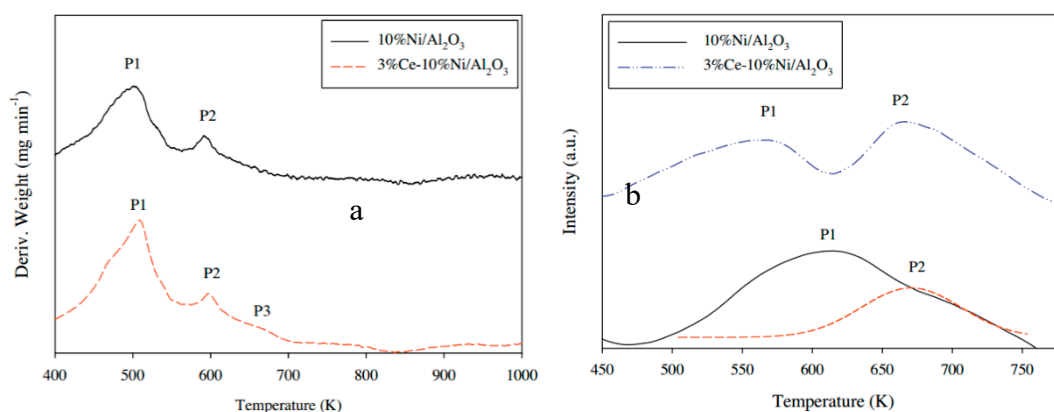
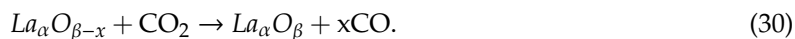
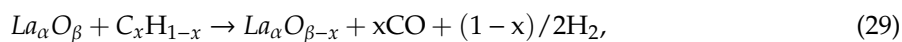
Ni/Y<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>–ZrO<sub>2</sub> catalyst by polymerization in one step was proven as an easier and superior way of loading Ni onto Y<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>–ZrO<sub>2</sub> support than by wet impregnation. In order to prevent the deactivation of Ni catalysts, Ni has also been incorporated into different supports of Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>, CeO<sub>2</sub>, MgO and ZrO<sub>2</sub> to study their activity in the dry reforming of ethanol [28]. Ni-CeO<sub>2</sub> catalyst showed the best performance at 1023 K than at 973 K, suggesting that CO<sub>2</sub> conversion can be enhanced at higher temperatures, while carbon deposition was hindered. It was found that the reducibility of Ni, which was influenced by the interaction between support and Ni, along with the redox property of CeO<sub>2</sub> can promote the selectivity for H<sub>2</sub> and inhibit the unfavored side reactions. The results revealed that specific surface area of supports can affect the particle size and reducibility of active metals. It can be observed that interaction between Ni and the supports affected the particle size strongly, reducibility of Ni. Oxygen vacancy of support also can inhibit the formation of carbon.

To optimize the performance of Ni based catalysts, promoters such as La and Ce were also incorporated [11,19,29]. The advanced redox properties of Ce resulted in great benefits for a Ce-Ni/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> tested in the dry reforming of ethanol. Compared with unpromoted ones, Ce-promoted catalyst can hinder the formation of solid coke due to its oxygen mobility ascribed to CeO<sub>2</sub> as a promoter. The proportion of amorphous carbon as opposed to graphitic carbon was also observed with Ce-Ni/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>. Upon incorporation of Ce, the interaction between Ni and the supports was strengthened, which can promote the formation of smaller NiO clusters facilitating the reducibility of Ni. The incorporation of Ce lowered reduction temperatures by around 315 K. NiO and NiAl<sub>2</sub>O<sub>4</sub> were observed on the surface of the supports during calcination while CeO<sub>2</sub> was observed on the promoted one. The derivative weight of calcination and H<sub>2</sub>-temperature program reduction (H<sub>2</sub>-TPR) of two catalysts was shown in Figure 5, respectively. As shown in Figure 5a, the first peak, P1 (at 501–509 K), was caused by the direct decomposition of metal nitrates forming the corresponding metal oxides (Equations (23) and (24)). The second peak (P2) (591–598 K) was ascribed to NiAl<sub>2</sub>O<sub>4</sub> formation (Equation (25)). The third peaks (P3) of Ce-promoted catalyst (661 K) was due to the transformation of Ce<sup>3+</sup> to Ce<sup>4+</sup> during calcination (Equation (26)). In Figure 5b, two distinct peaks were observed for the H<sub>2</sub>-TPR analysis of catalysts. The P1 (557–599 K) was due to the formation of metallic Ni from the reduction of NiO (Equation (27)), while P2 peak (668–671 K) was due to the transformation of NiAl<sub>2</sub>O<sub>4</sub> to Ni (Equation (28)):

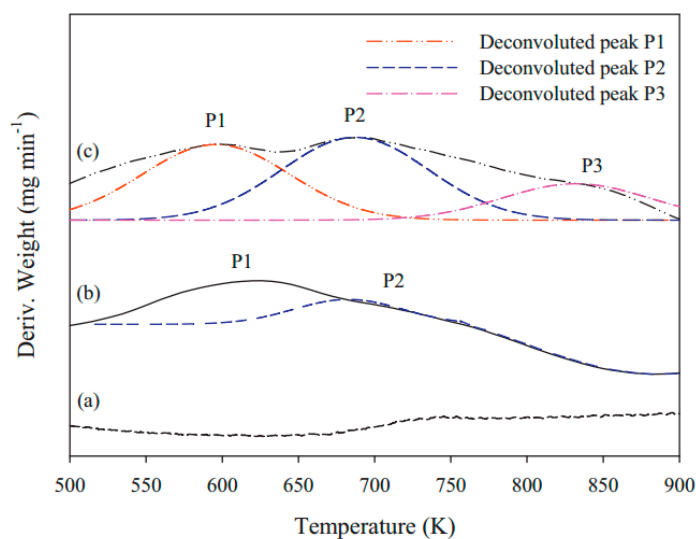


Similarly, La has also been incorporated into Ni/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> [11,20]. La can enhance the dispersion of nickel particle and hinder the agglomeration of active phases. The best performance of dry reforming of ethanol was observed at 3% La loading due to the benefits of La<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> as promoter. The H<sub>2</sub>-TPR analysis of three catalysts were shown in Figure 6. Different from Ce promoted Ni/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>, three peaks were observed for 3%La-10%Ni/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>. The first one, P1, was due to the reduction of NiO to metallic Ni form. The second peak P2 was due to the reduction of NiO particles strongly absorbed by supports. The third peak P3 was due to the reduction of spinel NiLa<sub>2</sub>O<sub>4</sub> phase to elementary Ni. For 10%Ni/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> and 3%La-10%Ni/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>, the temperature for NiO reduction (P1 and P2) decreased to a lower value after La loading, which may be ascribed to the transferring electrons from La<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> to NiO particles. As a result, the enhanced electron density facilitated reduction of NiO. It was also found that dry reforming of ethanol may occur through direct decomposition of ethanol to methane intermediates. The formed intermediated were then reformed to a mixture of CO and H<sub>2</sub> following DRM. Similar to Ce promoted

catalyst, amorphous carbon dominated on the surface of used La-Ni/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> catalyst. This is may be due to the enhanced basicity of the promoted catalysts and the multiple oxidation states of La, which can provide a shortcut of coke conversion by redox reactions (Equations (29) and (30)).



**Figure 5.** Derivative weight for temperature-programmed calcination (a) and H<sub>2</sub>-TPR (b) 3%Ce-10%Ni/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> and 10%Ni/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> catalysts, reproduced with permission from [19].

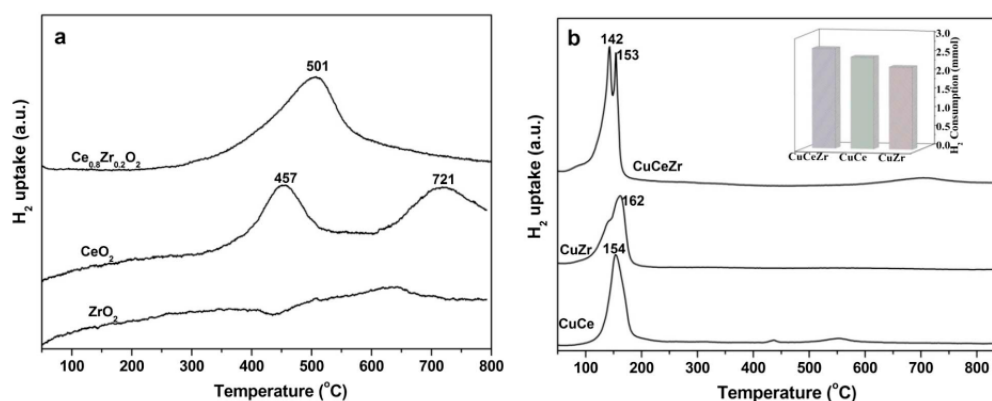


**Figure 6.** H<sub>2</sub>-TPR (a) Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>, (b) 10%Ni/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> and (c) 3%La-10%Ni/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> catalysts, reproduced with permission from [11].

Co based catalysts promoted by Ce and La have also been proposed for the dry reforming of ethanol [30–32]. The addition of Ce and La facilitated the reduction of Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> to CoO, which can be further transformed into Co. The reducibility of active metals in catalysts were analyzed using H<sub>2</sub>-TPR. The reduction ability followed the order of 10%Co/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> < 3%Ce-10%Co/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> < 3%La-10%Co/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>. Three peaks were observed. The first peak for all catalysts was due to the reduction of Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> to CoO, while the second peak was ascribed to the formation of Co from CoO reduction. The third small shoulder was most likely ascribed to the reduction of pinel CoAl<sub>2</sub>O<sub>4</sub> species strongly absorbed by support. Consistent with reducibility of catalysts, the dry reforming activity of ethanol followed the order of 3%La-10%Co/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> > 10%Co/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> > 3%Ce-10%Co/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>. The relationship indicated

that the La and Ce can promote the amount of Co active sites by accelerating the reduction of  $\text{Co}_3\text{O}_4$  demonstrating a clear correlation redox properties—catalytic performance.

The dry reforming of ethanol was proposed using Cu-based catalysts [33–36]. A catalyst of  $\text{Cu/Ce}_{0.8}\text{Zr}_{0.2}\text{O}_2$  was prepared using the co-precipitation method. The synergistic interaction between metal and support along with the redox characteristic of Ce caused a promising activity. A new preparation method of the ball-milling technique was then proposed by the same group for dry reforming of ethanol. The catalyst synthesized by the ball-milling technique showed a better performance than the co-precipitation method, which can be ascribed to the better dispersion of Cu and optimized interaction between metal and support. Moreover, no encapsulated graphite-type carbon was found for this catalyst. In a further study, Cu-based catalysts on various supports ( $\text{CeO}_2$ ,  $\text{ZrO}_2$ ,  $\text{CeO}_2\text{-ZrO}_2$ ) were synthesized. As revealed, the reducibility of Cu and oxygen vacancies decreased in the order of  $\text{CuCeZr} > \text{CuCe} > \text{Cu/Zr}$ . As expected, the CuCeZr catalyst showed the best performance due to higher metal dispersion, stronger interaction between metal and support, and greater concentration oxygen vacancies that are envisaged as reactive sites for molecules' activation. To prove the assumption, all catalysts were exposed to  $\text{H}_2$ -TPR analysis as shown in Figure 7. For the supports, the incorporation of  $\text{Zr}^{4+}$  accelerated mobility of O and increased reducible  $\text{Ce}^{4+}$  cations. For Cu-based catalysts, the reduction started at about  $100^\circ\text{C}$  with the highest peaks at  $142^\circ\text{C}$ ,  $154^\circ\text{C}$  and  $162^\circ\text{C}$  for CuCe, CuCeZr and CuZr, respectively. This is due to the stronger interaction between Cu and CeZr supports that can accelerate oxygen mobility. As a result, catalyst reduction temperature can be reduced.



**Figure 7.**  $\text{H}_2$ -TPR profiles of the as-prepared catalysts (a) supports; (b) Cu-based catalysts, reproduced with permission from [33].

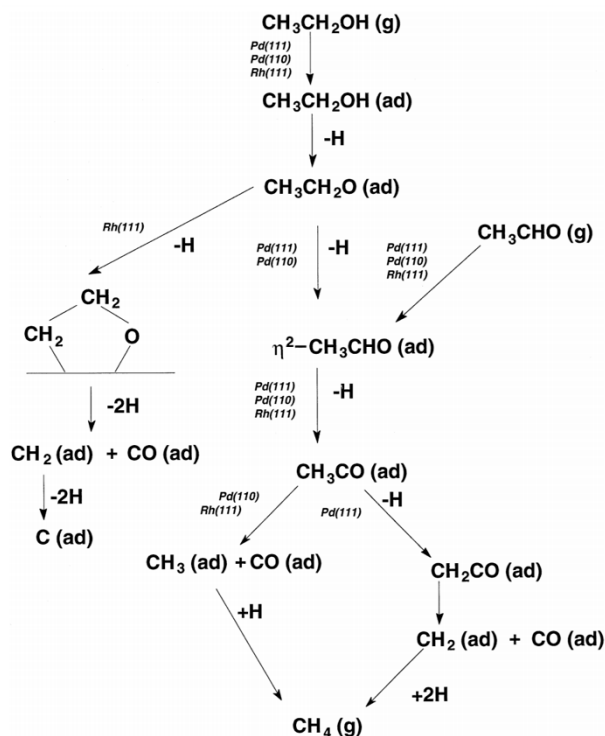
Due to the high activity for C–C bond cleavage and low coke formation, Rh has been extensively used for dry reforming of methane [37]. To validate its applicability on the dry reforming of ethanol by Rh based catalysts, various Rh based catalysts have been prepared. Figure 8 shows that ethanol decomposition may occur by two major routes [38]: (1) forming an oxametallacycle intermediate on  $\text{Rh}(1,1,1)$ , which was directly decomposed to methane and CO; and (2) dehydrogenated intermediates ( $\text{C}_2\text{H}_4\text{O}$  and acetyl species), which can be further decomposed to CO and  $\text{CH}_x$  species.

Due to the proven redox property of  $\text{CeO}_2$ ,  $\text{Rh/CeO}_2$  has been synthesized for the dry reforming of ethanol [14,39]. A relatively good activity and stability were observed for this catalyst due to the interaction between Rh and  $\text{CeO}_2$  and again the advanced redox features of  $\text{CeO}_2$ , which can accelerate  $\text{CO}_2$  activation and prevent carbon deposition. The mechanism was illustrated in Figure 9.

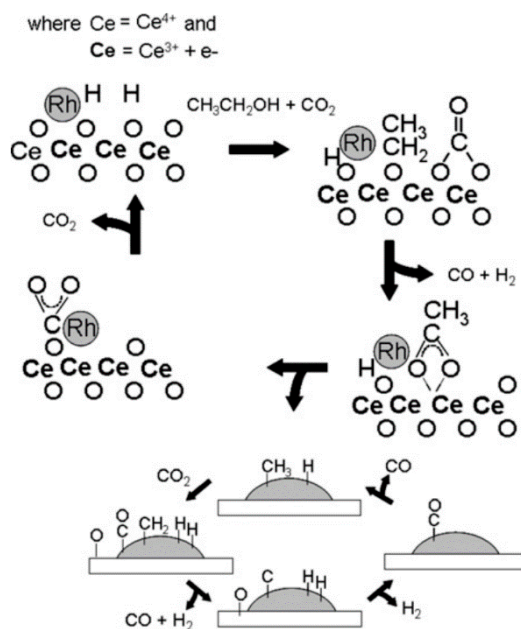
In further research,  $\text{Rh/Ce-SBA-15}$  has been synthesized for the dry reforming of ethanol [40]. The proportion of Ce relative to Si affected markedly the  $\text{H}_2$  production and selectivity. The introduction of Ce into the 1% $\text{Rh/SBA-15}$  increased reforming activity due to the strengthened mobility of oxygen species on the surface of catalysts. Rh-based catalysts were also prepared for the dry reforming of ethanol using  $\text{MxOy-Al}_2\text{O}_3$  oxides ( $\text{M} = \text{Zr, Mg, Ni, Ce, La}$ ) as supports [41]. As shown in Figure 10, the production of  $\text{H}_2$  followed the order:  $\text{Rh/NiO-Al}_2\text{O}_3 \gg \text{Rh/Al}_2\text{O}_3 \approx \text{Rh/MgO-Al}_2\text{O}_3 \approx \text{Rh/CeO}_2\text{-Al}_2\text{O}_3$



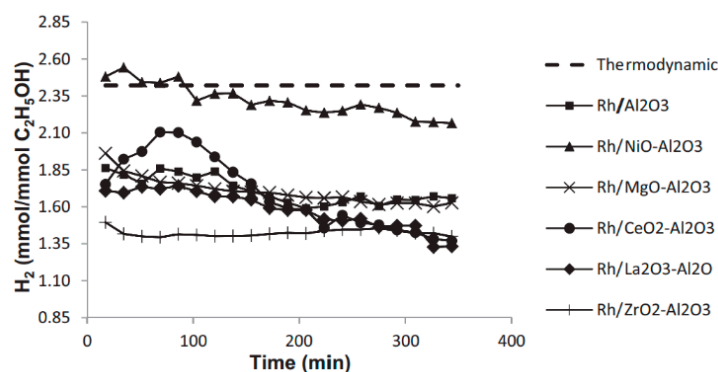
> Rh/ZrO<sub>2</sub>-Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> ≈ Rh/La<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>-Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>. The superior performance of Rh/NiO-Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> may be due to the existence of NiAl<sub>2</sub>O<sub>4</sub> spinel phase, hindering the rhodium deactivation, and the high dispersion of Rh favored by co-existence of nickel particles.



**Figure 8.** Reaction pathways observed for ethanol decomposition on Rh surfaces, reproduced with permission from [38].



**Figure 9.** Reaction pathways observed for ethanol on Rh/CeO<sub>2</sub> surface, reproduced with permission from [14].



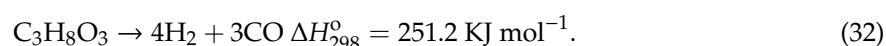
**Figure 10.** Evolution of H<sub>2</sub> yield of ethanol dry reforming reaction at 1073 K over different M<sub>x</sub>O<sub>y</sub>-Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> supported Rh catalysts, reproduced with permission from [41].

The 316 steel (Fe: 61%; Cr: 16–18.5%; Ni: 10–14%; Mo: 2–3%; C: 0.03%) and carbon steel also proved the dry reforming activity of ethanol [42–44]. Compared with the conditions without catalyst, steel can promote the catalytic cracking and catalytic reforming of ethanol forming H<sub>2</sub> and CO. In this process, carbon nanofilament was formed as the desired product. It was proposed that nanoparticles of magnetite can be formed from the oxidation treatment prior to dry reforming reaction, which can be reduced into Fe<sub>3</sub>C during the reforming process. The formed Fe<sub>3</sub>C is responsible for the formation of H<sub>2</sub>, CO, and nanofilament. Hence, a take-home message is to check the potential catalytic activity of the reactor itself and always run a blank test to rule out contributions beyond our catalytic materials.

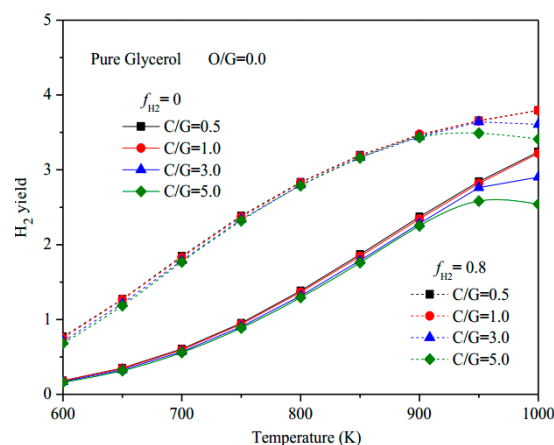
In this part, various catalysts used for dry reforming of ethanol have been summarized. The most used catalyst is Ni based one due to its low cost even though other catalysts of Co, Cu, and Rh based have also been proposed. The most common problem is the deactivation of catalyst caused by coke formation. In order to minimize this effect, promoters of Ce and La were introduced, which showed a promising effect due to the redox properties of Ce and enhanced dispersion of Ni by Ce and La. Different catalyst supports were also discussed. The effect of support on performance is attributed to the interaction between support and active metals. Strong interaction between NiO and oxygen vacancies of catalyst can enhance the catalyst performance. In the ideal conditions, complete conversion of ethanol can be achieved with a theoretical amount of H<sub>2</sub> obtained. Therefore, dry reforming of ethanol is a promising technology to produce syngas.

### 3. Dry Reforming of Glycerol

The dry reforming of glycerol is expected to follow a similar pattern to that of ethanol. Theoretically, 3 mol of H<sub>2</sub> and 4 mol of CO can be extracted from 1 mol of dry reforming of glycerol according to Equation (31). However, direct decomposition of glycerol may also occur following the overall reaction as shown in Equation (32) along with methanation and (reverse) WGSRs. Thermodynamic analysis has been used to study the effect temperature, pressure, and CO<sub>2</sub>/glycerol ratios on glycerol conversion [45,46]. It showed that atmospheric pressure is preferred for the glycerol conversion [47]:



As shown in Figure 11, temperature showed a positive effect on H<sub>2</sub> production, which reached a maximum conversion at CO<sub>2</sub>/glycerol ratios higher than 1 due to the promoted reverse WGSR at higher CO<sub>2</sub> pressure. At a CO<sub>2</sub>/glycerol ratio between 0 and 1 over 975 K, more than three moles of H<sub>2</sub> can be obtained, while more syngas (H<sub>2</sub> and CO) can be produced at higher temperatures and CO<sub>2</sub>/glycerol ratios. The optimum condition for syngas production occurred at 1000 K with CO<sub>2</sub>/glycerol ratio of 1, at which 6.4 mol of syngas (H<sub>2</sub>/CO = 1:1) can be obtained for each mole of glycerol.

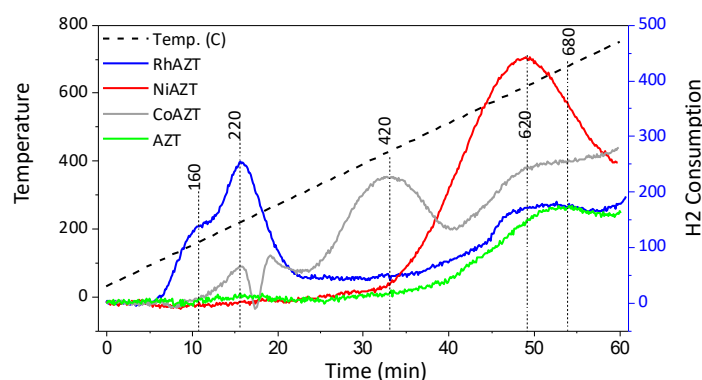


**Figure 11.** The effect of CGR ( $\text{CO}_2/\text{glycerol}$  ratio) and temperature on  $\text{H}_2$  production during the glycerol dry reforming process.  $f_{\text{H}_2}$  is hydrogen separation fraction, reproduced with permission from [46].

In the absence of catalysts, the glycerol conversion is low. To optimize  $\text{H}_2$  production and reaction conditions, various catalysts have been synthesized for the dry reforming of glycerol. Mesoporous catalysts of  $\text{Ni}/\gamma\text{-Al}_2\text{O}_3$  with different amounts of Ni were prepared for the dry reforming of glycerol [12]. With Ni amount increasing from 5 to 15%, the glycerol conversion increased, while it decreased at higher Ni content. The  $\text{H}_2$ -TPR analysis showed that the higher Ni amount promoted the reducibility of the Ni catalyst, which can be related to lower dispersion of Ni at higher content of Ni. Other catalysts, including Rh, Ni, and Co based catalysts ( $\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3\text{-ZrO}_2\text{-TiO}_2$  support) have been synthesized for the dry reforming of glycerol [4], with the particle size of Rh, Ni and Co being 3–4, 10–15, 40–50 nm, respectively. The highest activity was observed for Rh, while the activity of Co was the lowest. Even though the activity of Ni based catalyst was below that of Rh based catalyst, it can still render 95% of the thermodynamic  $\text{CO}_2$  conversion at maximum. The high performance of Ni based catalyst may be due to its ability of gasifying deposited carbon and metallic nature during the reaction. Comparatively, Co based catalyst showed an inferior performance to Rh and Ni due to the sintering, carbon deposition and Co oxidation. To understand the mechanism, all catalysts were exposed to  $\text{H}_2$ -TPR analysis as shown in Figure 12.  $\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3\text{-ZrO}_2\text{-TiO}_2$  support showed a broad  $\text{H}_2$  consumption in the high temperature region (i.e., 893–953 K), which is likely due to reduction of the  $\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3\text{-ZrO}_2\text{-TiO}_2$  support. In addition to this high temperature peak,  $\text{Rh}/\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3\text{-ZrO}_2\text{-TiO}_2$  revealed two more low-temperature  $\text{H}_2$  consumption features at 160 and 200 °C, which can be attributed to the reduction of  $\text{Rh}^{3+}$  to  $\text{Rh}^+$  and  $\text{Rh}^+$  to metallic Rh species, respectively.  $\text{Co}/\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3\text{-ZrO}_2\text{-TiO}_2$  also revealed two low temperature features with relatively lower  $\text{H}_2$  consumption around 220–300 °C which can be ascribed to two-step reduction of  $\text{Co}_3\text{O}_4$  to  $\text{CoO}$  and  $\text{CoO}$  to metallic Co. In addition, there exists a reduction feature at 420 °C, which can be ascribed to the reduction of  $\text{CoO}_x$  species that are strongly interacting with the  $\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3\text{-ZrO}_2\text{-TiO}_2$  support material.  $\text{Ni}/\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3\text{-ZrO}_2\text{-TiO}_2$  exhibited a similar  $\text{H}_2$  consumption profile to that of  $\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3\text{-ZrO}_2\text{-TiO}_2$  support and lacks a low temperature reduction peak (e.g., for  $\text{Ni}^{+2} \rightarrow \text{Ni}^0$ ), indicating the presence of predominantly metallic Ni species on fresh samples with a negligible contribution from  $\text{NiO}$  and  $\text{Ni}(\text{OH})_2$ . For all catalysts, a negative effect of  $\text{CO}_2/\text{glycerol}$  ratios between 1 and 4 on glycerol conversion was observed mainly due to the reverse WGS. For  $\text{CO}_2$  conversion, the catalysts showed an increase in activity for  $\text{CO}_2/\text{glycerol}$  ratio increasing from 1 to 2. However,  $\text{CO}_2$  conversions decreased at higher ratios. This phenomenon has been observed by other researchers [13,48].

A similar study on dry reforming of glycerol by  $\text{La-Ni}/\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3$  showed that glycerol conversion and  $\text{H}_2$  generation rate reached a peak at  $\text{CO}_2/\text{glycerol}$  ratio of 1.67, at which  $\text{CH}_4$  reached the minimum. The existence of  $\text{CH}_4$  in the presence of glycerol only, along with the declining trend at higher  $\text{CO}_2/\text{glycerol}$  (>1.67), indicated that  $\text{CH}_4$  may be formed from direct decomposition of glycerol, which can be then reformed by  $\text{CO}_2$  to  $\text{CO}$  and  $\text{H}_2$ . Regarding the  $\text{H}_2/\text{CO}$  ratio, the direct decomposition

of glycerol produced the highest value, but still below 2, which can be used in the Fischer–Tropsch process in some cases depending on the targeted end products. The declining trend with CO<sub>2</sub>/glycerol ratio increasing may be caused by the reverse WGS. The noble metals (Rh, Ru, Ir, Pd, Pt) were also supported on MgAl<sub>2</sub>O<sub>4</sub> and compared for dry reforming of glycerol [49]. Similarly, Rh showed highest activity and stability, which may be ascribed to high active metal areas. The catalytic activity followed the order: Rh > Ru > Ir > Pd > Pt. Cement clinker-supported Ni catalysts were also synthesized for the dry reforming of glycerol [50,51]. It was found that direct decomposition of glycerol was responsible for the H<sub>2</sub> production as opposed to a direct interaction between glycerol and CO<sub>2</sub> during reforming reaction. Therefore, even though the cement clinker can facilitate the adsorption of CO<sub>2</sub>, it did not favor the production of H<sub>2</sub>.



**Figure 12.** H<sub>2</sub>-TPR data for fresh Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>-ZrO<sub>2</sub>-TiO<sub>2</sub>, Rh/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>-ZrO<sub>2</sub>-TiO<sub>2</sub>, Ni/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>-ZrO<sub>2</sub>-TiO<sub>2</sub> and Co/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>-ZrO<sub>2</sub>-TiO<sub>2</sub> samples, reproduced with permission from [4].

To optimize the behavior of Ni based catalyst, La has been incorporated as a promoter for the dry reforming of glycerol [13,48,52,53]. After evaluating the effect of different content of La loaded, it was found that the glycerol conversion decreased in the order of 2%La-Ni/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> > 3%La-Ni/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> > 4%La-Ni/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> > 1%La-Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> > Ni/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> > 5%La-Ni/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> > Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>. The main reason is that Ni metal can be better dispersed by La. However, when La content was above 2%, the clogging of pores may occur even though there is reduced particle size of Ni metals. Moreover, compared with the non-promoted catalyst, the La promoted catalysts showed a better carbon resistance due to its redox property to remove carbon and less acidity of Ni catalyst decreased by La. The promoters Re and Ag were also incorporated to optimize the performance of Ni based catalysts [54,55]. Similar to La, Ag can also improve the dispersion of Ni metals. However, at a high content of 5% Ag in catalyst, some active metal surface may be covered by Ag, which can decrease the catalyst performance. Differently, the Re can increase the glycerol conversion by enhancing the surface adsorption of OH group of the glycerol.

Rh based catalysts (Rh/ZrO<sub>2</sub> and Rh/CeO<sub>2</sub>) were also synthesized for dry reforming of glycerol [15]. A declining trend of glycerol conversion and H<sub>2</sub>/CO ratios with CO<sub>2</sub>/glycerol increasing were also observed for the studied catalysts. Rh/ZrO<sub>2</sub> deactivated faster than Rh/CeO<sub>2</sub>, due to the sintering of Rh metals and coke formation.

The dry reforming of glycerol with and without catalysts were summarized in this part. Without a catalyst, the production of H<sub>2</sub> from glycerol was low. For the various catalysts, including Ni, Rh, and Co, the highest activity was observed for Rh, while the activity of Co was the lowest. For the noble metals, the catalytic activity followed the order: Rh > Ru > Ir > Pd > Pt. Therefore, it can be concluded that Rh based catalysts showed a superior performance, especially on CeO<sub>2</sub> support. The La was also reported to promote the activity of active metals due to its redox property to remove carbon and less acidity of the Ni catalyst. Even though the conversion of glycerol is lower than ethanol generally, the glycerol conversion can still reach 90% in the presence of Rh/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>-ZrO<sub>2</sub>-TiO<sub>2</sub>. The summarization showed the promising way of dry reforming of glycerol in the well-designed catalysts for H<sub>2</sub>.

The dry reforming of ethanol and glycerol were summarized in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Summary of dry reforming of ethanol and glycerol using different catalysts.

Active Metals	Supports	Promoters	Sample	Comments
Ni	SiO <sub>2</sub>		Ethanol	Clustering of Ni may occur at high Ni loading [26].
	SiO <sub>2</sub> , KIT-6			Stronger interaction of Ni-support inhibited the sintering of Ni [27].
	Y <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub> -ZrO <sub>2</sub>			Stronger interaction between Ni and oxygen vacancies of support accelerated the activity.
	Al <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub> , CeO <sub>2</sub> , MgO and ZrO <sub>2</sub>			Ni-CeO <sub>2</sub> catalyst showed the best performance. Redox property of CeO <sub>2</sub> can promote the selectivity for H <sub>2</sub> and inhibit the unfavored side reactions [10].
	Al <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub>	Ce		Ce-promoted catalyst can inhibit the formation of carbon due to its oxygen mobility of CeO <sub>2</sub> [28].
	Al <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub>	La		La can enhance the dispersion of Ni particle and hinder the sintering of metal oxides [29].
Co	Al <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub>	Ce, La		La and Ce can increase the number of Co active sites by accelerating the reduction of Co <sub>3</sub> O <sub>4</sub> [30–32].
Cu	CeO <sub>2</sub> , ZrO <sub>2</sub>	Ce		CuCeZr catalyst showed the best activity and stability due to higher Cu dispersion, strong metal support interaction and more oxygen vacancies [33–36].
Rh	SBA-15	Ce		The interaction between Rh and CeO <sub>2</sub> and strong redox capacity of CeO <sub>2</sub> can accelerate of CO <sub>2</sub> activation and prevent carbon deposition [40].
	Al <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub> , MgO-Al <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub> , ZrO <sub>2</sub> -Al <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub>	Ce, La		The superior performance of Rh/NiO-Al <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub> is due to the presence of NiAl <sub>2</sub> O <sub>4</sub> spinel phase, and high dispersion of Rh [41].
Ir	Ce <sub>0.75</sub> Zr <sub>0.25</sub> O <sub>2</sub>			The dispersion, reducibility of Ir, oxygen vacancies of supports and interaction between Ir and support decreased with the calcination temperature increasing. IrCeZr550 catalyst (calcination at 823 K) exhibited a satisfactory performance with high activity and stability. Increasing calcination temperature up to 850 °C decreased markedly the interaction between Ir and support, dispersion and reducibility of Ir, and the dissociation capacity of the C–C bond [56].
Ni	Al <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub>		Glycerol	The glycerol conversion increased for Ni from 5 to 15%, while decreased at higher Ni, which may be related to lower Ni dispersion at higher content of Ni [12].
	Al <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub>	La		Glycerol conversion and H <sub>2</sub> generation rate reached a peak at CO <sub>2</sub> /glycerol ratio of 1.67 [13].

Table 1. Cont.

Active Metals	Supports	Promoters	Sample	Comments
	Al <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub>	La		Ni metal can be better dispersed by La [48].
	Al <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub>	Ag		The best glycerol conversion (40.7%) and high yield of H <sub>2</sub> (32%) were observed for Ag-Ni/Al <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub> . This result can be ascribed to the smaller crystallite size of Ag in Ag-Ni/Al <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub> , which was beneficial for metal dispersion [57].
	Al <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub>	Re		Approximately 61% and 56% of glycerol conversion and hydrogen yield were observed for 5% Re-Ni/CaO, respectively. For 15% Ni/CaO, the conversion of glycerol and H <sub>2</sub> yield are lower, being 35 and 30%, respectively. The addition of Re increases the acidic sites of the catalyst and promoted the adsorption of OH group of the glycerol onto the surface of catalyst [54].
Rh, Ni and Co	ZrO <sub>2</sub> -TiO <sub>2</sub>			Rh showed the highest activity, while the activity of Co was the lowest [4].
Rh, Ru, Ir, Pd, Pt	MgO-Al <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub>			The catalytic activity followed the order: Rh > Ru > Ir > Pd > Pt [49].
Rh	CeO <sub>2</sub> , and ZrO <sub>2</sub>			Rh/ZrO <sub>2</sub> deactivated faster than Rh/CeO <sub>2</sub> , due to the sintering of Rh metals and coke formation [15].

#### 4. Conclusions and Future Perspectives

This review summarized the recent advance of dry reforming of ethanol and glycerol in the presence of various catalysts. Temperatures showed a positive effect on conversion, while CO<sub>2</sub>/(ethanol or glycerol) ratio showed a different trend. The highest glycerol conversion can be maintained at CO<sub>2</sub>/glycerol ratios of 1–2, while, for the case of ethanol reforming, the CO<sub>2</sub>/ethanol ratios around 1.4 seem to be the optimum. The H<sub>2</sub>/CO ratio also decreased with CO<sub>2</sub>/glycerol ratio increasing due to the reverse WGS taking place simultaneously. For dry reforming of both compounds, the intermediate CH<sub>4</sub> was regarded as the main primary intermediate from the direct decomposition of ethanol and glycerol, which can be then reformed into H<sub>2</sub> and CO. The active metals, promoters, and supports were summarized in Figure 13. Ni based catalysts have shown their possible application in dry reforming of ethanol and glycerol, while deactivation issues due to the formation of carbon on the surface of catalyst and sintering of active metals hindered its wide application. Various promoters such as La and Ce have been proven to enhance Ni performance. Briefly, the boosted performance of the promoted catalysts is ascribed to: (i) Strong metal-support interaction: encapsulation of active metal nanoparticles by supports, (ii) Mobile oxygen species and creation of oxygen vacancies introduced by promoters mitigating coke formation.

**IUPAC Periodic Table of Elements**

Key:																									
atomic number		Symbol		standard atomic weight																					
1	H																2								
3	Li	4	Be														10								
11	Na	12	Mg														18								
19	K	20	Ca	21	Sc	22	Ti	23	V	24	Cr	25	Mn	26	Fe	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36
37	Rb	38	Sr	39	Y	40	Zr	41	Nb	42	Mo	43	Tc	44	Ru	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54
55	Cs	56	Ba	57–71	Lanthanoids	72	Hf	73	Ta	74	W	75	Re	76	Os	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86
87	Fr	88	Ra	89–103	actinoids	104	Rf	105	Db	106	Sg	107	Bh	108	Hs	109	110	111	112	113	114	115	116	117	118
89	La	90	Ce	91	Pr	92	Nd	93	Pm	94	Sm	95	Eu	96	Gd	97	98	99	100	101	102	103	104	105	106
89	Ac	90	Th	91	Pa	92	U	93	Np	94	Pu	95	Am	96	Cm	97	98	99	100	101	102	103	104	105	106

**Figure 13.** The elements for the catalysts used in dry reforming. Red: Active components; Pink: Support; Yellow: Promoters.

The future foresees a great deal of possibilities for CO<sub>2</sub> reforming reactions as a direct route to tackle CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Perhaps the industrial application of dry reforming remains as the biggest challenge for this technology nowadays. In fact, very few attempts of commercializing dry reforming plants have been conducted so far with the CALCOR process (a reforming process combined with CO<sub>2</sub> recovery and CO purification) patented by caloric being one of the first successful stories [58]. The development of advanced catalysts with high activity, selectivity, and, more importantly, stability constitute the principal bottleneck for the implementation of dry reforming reaction unit in realistic applications. Herein, the directions seem to go through the combination of engineered catalysts with the addition of promoters, multiple active phases, and sacrificial agents to avoid deactivation with cleverly designed regeneration strategies. At lab-scale, we have identified the need to conduct rigorous studies using realistic reforming mixtures (i.e., containing sulphur impurities)—this an effort that the

academic community should embrace to ensure a solid design of scalable high-performing catalysts. In any case, there is a lot of room for research in this promising area of catalysis for CO<sub>2</sub> valorization, and this mini-review just intends to be an introductory quick-guide to selected dry reforming reactions showcasing their potential contribution in the next generation of zero-carbon catalytic processes.

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