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A comparative study of some kaolinites surface properties

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ABSTRACT: The surface properties of five kaolinites of various origins were analyzed using potentiometric titration, electrokinetic measurements and low-pressure gas adsorption associated to derivative isotherm summation (DIS) modeling. The data show that sample structure is important in determining the surface properties. The combined analytical results clearly shows the existence of a permanent negative layer charge for all the samples. The general features that could be observed for the five kaolinites are: the titration curves are shifted to lower pH with increasing ionic strength due to the layer charge; the amount of consumed proton is influenced by the permanent layer charge; although low, the permanent charge determines the electrokinetic behavior. The shape anisotropy and the charge distribution on the basal and edge surfaces are crucial parameters to understand the behavior of kaolinite particles in aqueous media. The Cameroonian sample of the set exhibits a significant permanent charge together with large specific surface area associated to fine particle size and considerable shape anisotropy.

Keywords: Kaolinite; Electrokinetic; Potentiometric titration; Surface; DIS Modeling

1. INTRODUCTION

Clays are raw materials of importance in various domains such as agriculture, material engineering, health and environmental issues. Amongst clays, kaolin occurrences are common. Primary kaolin deposits are of hydrothermal or residual origin (or mixed hydrothermal and residual); secondary deposits are sedimentary (Murray, 2000; Bergaya et al., 2006; Menezes et al., 2017). The most common clay mineral within the kaolin group is kaolinite (kaol). Each kaol layer is formed by the superposition of one aluminium hydroxide octahedral sheet and one silica tetrahedral sheet. Thus, a kaol layer has asymmetrical basal planes: siloxane and hydroxylated alumina. Basal planes of kaol carry a small permanent negative charge due to isomorphous substitution in both octahedral and tetrahedral sheets, whereas the edge surfaces carry a pH-dependant variable charge due to the protonation/deprotonation of edge hydroxyl groups from broken bonds (Schofield and Samson, 1954; Williams and Williams, 1978; Bolland et al., 1980; Herrington and al., 1992). However, as far as the permanent charge is concerned, cation substitutions in the lattice of kaol are scarce, and the resulting small deviations from stoichiometry are difficult to detect by direct chemical analysis. However, even a small surface charge may influence the surface properties of kaol. In addition, the anisotropic and platy structure of kaol layers also influences its surface properties. Ma and Eggleton (1999b) have shown, using high-resolution transmission electron microscopy, that three types of surface layers may exist on a natural kaol crystal. Type 1 has the expected 0.7 nm surface layer as termination. Type 2 has one 1 nm pyrophyllite-like (or low beidellite-like) layer as the surface layer on one side of a kaol particle (ie. TOTOTO...TOTOT, where T and O stand respectively for the tetrahedral and the octahedral sheet). The spacing between the TOT (1 nm thick) and the TO (0.7 nm thick) is non-expandable due to hydrogen bonds. Type 3 has one or several 1 nm collapsed smectite-like layers at one or both side of a stack forming a special kind of kaol-smectite

interstratification. The latter type was observed by these authors only on some poorly ordered kaol.

Primarily, the kaol surface charge was investigated through cation exchange capacity (CEC) and potentiometric titration. [Ma and Eggleton \(1999a\)](#), show that the CEC is mainly due to the edges and to basal hydroxyl surface of the mineral. They also conclude that permanent negative charge due to isomorphous substitution is significant. [Angove and al., \(1997\)](#), studied the adsorption of cadmium on kaol. They were able to fit the adsorption data to a simple Langmuir model at pH 5.5. However at pH 7.5, a better fit was obtained with a two-site Langmuir model. In the same work, titration experiments allowed for a close fit by a constant capacitance surface complex model that incorporates two bidentate surface complexes. The results from their experiments were consistent with the view that Cd(II) adsorbs to kaol by two distinct processes : ion-exchange at the permanently charged sites on the silanol face and surface complexation to aluminol and silanol groups occurring at the crystal edges. In a comparative study of transition metals adsorption on kaol, [Ikhasan et al., \(1999\)](#) came to the same conclusion. [Zhou and Gunter \(1992\)](#), examined the kaol surface charge in the light of surface charge density and showed, through kaol CEC variation with pH, that the ionization of the basal surface also takes place in aqueous solution. Nevertheless, this contribution of basal faces seems not to be significant enough according to [Brady and al., \(1996\)](#), who explain pH-dependent surface charges in kaol by proton donor–acceptor reactions. Based on the measured proton adsorption isotherms and molecular modeling of proton-relaxed kaol structure, the authors show that edge sites contribute more to kaol charge development, and point out that edge surfaces represent 10 to 50% of the total area, showing that usual estimation of 20% maximum could be an underestimation. [Huertas et al., \(1998\)](#) used a multi-site model to compute the surface properties of kaol and reported that the surface charge of kaol in an inert electrolyte solution involves three different surface sites: external

hydroxo-aluminium in the octahedral layer, weak Al acidic site, and silanol groups at the crystal edges. Protonation-deprotonation of these groups depending on the pH determines the surface charge.

In recent years, potentiometric titration and electrokinetic measurement techniques were commonly used to explore the surface charge of clay minerals (Schroth and Sposito, 1997; Thomas et al., 2002; Appel et al., 2003; Avena et al., 2003; Duc et al., 2006; Tertre et al., 2006; Tombácz and Szekeres, 2006; Chassagne et al., 2009; Zhu et al., 2016). Kraepiel et al. (1998) described the acid-base behavior of permanently charged minerals by applying a surface complexation model to montmorillonite and kaol. For kaol, protonation-deprotonation reactions were supposed to take place both on the edges (Al-OH groups) and on the gibbsite basal planes (Al-O-Al groups). The above authors quoted that kaol does not correspond exactly to the model solid, given that the permanent and variable charge distributions are not uniform on the clay surface. In addition, two different surfaces, basal planes and edges, are involved in the acid-base chemistry of clay, which is far from a representation of the interface as an infinite plane. The evaluation of the dissociable charge is still challenging as reported by Duc et al., (2005a). These authors reported, in their review, that the discrepancies amongst the titration data in the literature are due to the experimental procedures for the preparation of the clays and for the quantification of the charge. In two subsequent experimental papers, the same authors found evidences for the origin of this dependency and arouse some critical points for the best experimental conditions: wet storage of the clay, inert gas atmosphere for titration to avoid carbonation, and short interval time between successive titrant increments to minimize side reactions. They also established that continuous titration is more reliable than batch titration for quantifying the surface charge of clays (Duc et al., 2005b, 2006).

The discrepancies of surface charge data of clays are also due to the anisotropic nature of the platelets, and to the non-uniform distribution of their surface charge on the basal and edge

faces. Electrokinetic studies mostly deal with the measurements of the electrophoretic mobility. For kaol, many studies can be found ([Williams and Williams, 1978](#); [Rowlands and O'brien, 1995](#); [Kosmulski and Dahlsten, 2006](#); [Tombácz and Szekeres, 2006](#); [Chassagne et al., 2009](#); [Zhu et al., 2016](#)). Many of these studies are consistent with each other, but there is a great variability for the positioning of the iso-electric point (IEP), which is the pH of zero mobility. As pointed out by some authors, this variability can be attributed to differences in chemical composition of the studied samples, to the preparation of the samples, and their history ([Tombácz and Szekeres, 2006](#); [Chassagne et al., 2009](#)).

Low pressure gas adsorption investigations based on the Derivative Isotherm Summation (DIS) method described by [Villieras et al., \(1992\)](#) is a versatile tool to quantify the surface heterogeneity distribution of minerals, and especially on kaol. Also the clay particles anisotropy can be accessed through DIS. A correlation between the edge surface area from DIS and the experimental CEC makes it possible to establish the origin of the CEC and to conclude on the existence of isomorphous substitution and presence of minor amounts of smectite ([Cases et al., 2000](#); [Villieras et al., 2002](#); [Sayed Hassan et al., 2005](#)). More recently, atomic force microscopy (AFM) was used by [Gupta and Miller \(2010\)](#) to specifically characterize the alumina and the silica layer of the kaol sheet.

The purpose of the present study was to investigate the effect of very low layer substitution in kaol on their surface charge properties in aqueous salt solution. Therefore, four “reference” samples were selected for their different origins, and for their low (but not zero) amount of crystal layer substitutions. A sample from Cameroon was included in the study, since it already showed interesting ability for industrial applications, and more precisely as reinforcing phase in composite materials made of cassava starch ([Mbey et al., 2012, 2015](#); [Mbey and Thomas, 2015](#)). A consistent analysis of the surface properties of the Mayouom sample may be useful to impulse or ameliorate its potential use in composites making.

The five samples underwent a broad set of analyses in order to draw an extensive picture of their crystallo-chemical, textural and surface properties at the solid-gas and solid-electrolyte interface. From the literature investigation carry out for this work, no similar work was found. More particularly, the use of the DIS method for such comparative study is a premiere.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1. Kaol samples sources and Na-kaol preparation

The sources of the five studied samples are given in table I. The samples were collected through wet sieving over a 40 μm mesh. The cakes obtained after sedimentation were dried in an oven for 24 hours at 70°C prior to use. The particle size distribution of the collected fractions was analysed using a Sympatec laser diffraction granulometer equipped with the HELOS optical system and the WINDOX software for data collection.

Sodium exchanged samples (Na-kaol) were prepared by two successive exchanges of 5 g of kaol in 125 mL of 1 M NaCl solution. For the first exchange, the clay sample was stirred in 1 M NaCl solution for two hours and the dispersion was centrifuged at 9000 rpm during 10 min. The kaol cake was further dispersed in 1 M NaCl solution and stirred overnight. The clay cake recovered by centrifugation then underwent four washing cycles in deionised water for chloride and excess cations elimination, by alternating dispersion in water and centrifugation at 9000 rpm during 10 min. The elimination of chloride ions from the supernatant was tested using a 0.1 M solution of AgNO_3 . The final clay cake was oven dried at 50°C during 24 hours and stored in polyethylene bottle prior to subsequent use.

2.2. Chemical analysis

Chemical analysis for major elements was obtained by inductive coupled plasma by atomic emission spectrometry (ICP-AES) at the *Service d'Analyse des Roches et des Minéraux* (SARM, Nancy, France). The samples were fused in lithium metaborate (LiBO_2) and dissolved in nitric acid prior to analysis.

2.3. X-ray diffraction

Powder X-Ray diffraction patterns on bulk samples were recorded using a D8 Advance Bruker diffractometer equipped with a Co K α radiation ($\lambda = 1.7890 \text{ \AA}$) operating at 35 kV and 45 mA. The diffraction patterns were obtained from 1.5° to 32° at a scanning rate of 1° min^{-1} . For the oriented clay mounts, samples are dispersed in water and left to settle for about 30 min in order to select the $< 2 \text{ }\mu\text{m}$ fraction in the supernatant, according to the Stokes' law. Oriented clay mounts were obtained by depositing drops of supernatant on a glass slide and drying, prior to special treatments including glycolation and firing at 550°C . The XRD patterns of the oriented and treated samples were recorded from 1° to 20° (θ). The coherent scattering domain (D) was calculated from X-ray patterns using the full width at maximum half height of the d_{001} reflection and the Scherrer equation.

2.4. Fourier Transform Infrared (FTIR) Spectroscopy.

Infrared spectra were recorded in diffuse reflectance mode using a Bruker Fourier Transform Interferometer IFS 55. The spectra, recorded from 4000 cm^{-1} to 600 cm^{-1} with a resolution of 4 cm^{-1} , are obtained by accumulation of 200 scans. Potassium bromide (KBr) pellets containing $\sim 15\%$ of the powder clay were obtained by pressing (10 tons/cm^2) manually ground mixtures of the clay and oven dried potassium bromide.

2.5. Electron Microscopy.

Transmission electron microscopy coupled with energy dispersive X-Ray spectroscopy (TEM-EDX) was performed on a Philips CM20 microscope operating at 200 kV.

2.6. Cation exchange capacity (CEC).

The CEC was obtained by saturation of 3 g of clay with hexaamminecobalt(III) ions ($[\text{Co}(\text{NH}_3)_6]^{3+}$). The amount of hexaamminecobalt(III) ions adsorbed by the solid phase, was obtained after evaluation of the remaining Cobalt in the supernatant through colorimetric titration at 472 nm using UV-vis spectroscopy.

2.7. Nitrogen and Argon adsorption at 77 K.

Conventional nitrogen adsorption-desorption isotherms at 77 K were recorded on a step-by-step automatic home-built set-up. Pressures were measured using 0-1000 Pa and 0-100,000 Pa Baratron-type pressure sensors provided by Edwards. The nitrogen saturation pressure was recorded in situ using an independent 0-100,000 Pa Baratron-type pressure sensor provided by Edwards. Prior to adsorption, the samples were outgassed overnight at 110°C and under a residual pressure of 0.01 Pa. Nitrogen N55 (purity > 99.9995%) used for experiments was provided by ALPHAGAZ (France). Specific surface areas (SSA) were determined from adsorption data by applying the Brunauer-Emmet-Teller (BET) equation and using 16.3 Å² for the cross sectional area of nitrogen. In the present study, the error in the determination of the SSA was estimated as +/- 1 m²/g.

Low-pressure argon adsorption isotherms of Argon at 77 K were recorded on a home-made automatic quasi-equilibrium volumetric set up (Villieras et al. 1992, 1997; Bardot et al., 1998). The Na-kaol sample was outgassed overnight at 110°C under a residual pressure of 10⁻⁴ Pa. High purity Argon (>99.9996%) provided by ALPHAGAZ (France) was used as an adsorbate and introduced continuously through a micro leak. Pressure measurements are performed using two differential pressure gauges (Datametrics) in the 0-10 Torr and 0-1000 Torr ranges and 0.1% accuracy. The quasi equilibrium pressures are recorded as a function of time to obtain the adsorption isotherm. More than 2000 data points are collected during the adsorption of the first layer and are plotted as the first derivative of the adsorbed quantity as a function of the logarithm of the relative pressure $\ln(P/P_0)$, which corresponds to an energy scale (T). The data are analyzed using the theoretical derivative adsorption isotherm summation (DIS), described by Villieras et al. (1992), to examine surface heterogeneity of the samples. In this method, a heterogeneous surface is assumed to be formed of patch-wise distribution of discrete energetic domains that can be considered locally homogeneous. Thus,

the total derivative adsorption isotherm can be simulated by the sum of local theoretical derivative adsorption isotherms on each domain (equation 1).

$$\theta_t = \sum X_i \theta_{it} \quad (1)$$

where θ_t is the total adsorption isotherm; θ_{it} is the adsorption isotherms on the different energetic domains of the surface; X_i is its fractional contribution to θ_{it} .

The experimental derivative curve is then fitted using theoretical local isotherms derived from one layer and/or multilayer adsorption formalisms (BET formalism in the case of this study). The total specific surface area is the sum of the monolayer capacities of the various domains, taking into account the cross sectional area of Argon (13.8 Å).

2.8. Potentiometric titration.

The titration was done after the method proposed by [Duc et al., \(2006\)](#). Typically, the proton surface excess of each Na-kaol was quantified by continuous titration at $25 \pm 1^\circ\text{C}$ (the temperature control is ensured by the use of a thermocryostat) using a Titrand 809 titration device equipped with two dosing units (Dosino 800) and a combined pH electrode. The system is driven automatically by the software Tiamo (version 1.2.1 light). All the experiments are conducted under magnetic stirring and under an Argon flow to prevent carbonation. The pH electrode is calibrated with five buffers at the beginning of each test to check the nernstian response. An average of 1g of kaol is mixed with 50 mL of NaNO_3 electrolyte solution of concentration 10^{-3} M, 10^{-2} M and 10^{-1} M. At first, the pH is increased from natural pH to 9 by addition of NaOH (0.1 M) aliquots, and subsequently decreased to pH 3 by addition of HNO_3 (0.1 M). The NaOH and HNO_3 aliquots addition is controlled by the software between 10 μl and 200 μL (100 μL in the direction of increasing pH). The delay between two consecutive titrant additions is set between 50 s and 600 s for both increasing and decreasing pH pathways. This delay time, after which the pH value is considered as stable, is controlled by the pH drift limit set at 0.5 mV/min in the decreasing direction from

pH 9 to 3. The data recorded in this range were used to calculate the surface excess curves. A slightly larger pH drift of 1 mV/min is used in the alkaline direction to reach the starting pH of 9. The pH range 3 to 9 was chosen to limit dissolution of the samples.

The actual surface excess is calculated as the difference between the amount of H^+ or OH^- consumed by the blank electrolyte and by the suspension at each titration point. A positive sign was attributed to an excess consumption in H^+ and a negative sign was attributed to an excess consumption in OH^- . The intersection point between the blank and the suspension curves is the point of zero net proton consumption (PZNPC).

2.9. Electrophoretic mobility measurement.

Electrophoretic mobility of the Na-kaol was measured by micro-electrophoresis. In this technique, a dispersion of particles is placed in a capillary cell and submitted to an electric field. The migration rate of particle due to the electric force is then measured. The measurements were done using a Zetaphoremeter V (CAD Instrumentation). The capillary cell is placed on a microscope and lighted up at 90° by a laser. The dispersion in the cell is submitted to an electric field of 80 V/cm and a CCD camera is used to capture the particle displacement in the cell. The mobility was measured in $NaNO_3$ background (10^{-3} M, 10^{-2} M and 10^{-1} M). Dilute kaol dispersions were prepared by mixing 3 mg to 8 mg of Na-kaol with 300 mL of electrolyte solution and stirred overnight. Each dispersion was sonicated for 2 min, large aggregates were left to settle (10 minutes), and the supernatant was used for measurements. The pH was adjusted by adding aliquots of 0.1 M of NaOH or HNO_3 before introducing the dispersion in the capillary cell.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Mineralogy and chemical composition

From X-ray diffraction (figure 1), kaol is the dominant mineral in all the samples, together with small amounts of illite/muscovite and titanium oxide. The identification was confirmed

on the oriented samples (figure 1b), the glycolation (figure 1c) and the thermal treatment at 550°C (figure 1c). The reflection at 16.33 Å in the MAC sample, denoted X, was assigned to a possible illite-kaol mixed layer mineral. This conclusion was drawn from glycolation (figure 1c), heating at 550°C (figure 1d) and DMSO intercalation (figure 1e) experiments. After glycolation (figure 1c), this reflection is not shifted, which excludes the presence of isolated or interstratified swelling clay sheets. After heating (Figure 1d), the previous conclusion is reinforced due to the absence of the usual collapse of smectite at 10 Å. The DMSO intercalation lead to the formation of characteristic reflection of DMSO-kaol intercalate at 11.26 Å and no supplementary mineral phase was observed. All of the previous are in line with the proposed interstratification of illite-kaol at 16.90 Å on the oriented clay mount (figure 1d). This kaol mixed layer is formed of kaol including very small amounts of illite (or even swelling 2:1) as also proposed by [Shakarov et al. \(1999\)](#) in a study on kaol-illite-vermiculite mixed layer. Such mixed structure is also proposed by [Hong et al. \(2015\)](#) with d_{001} value around 13 Å. Such mixed layer are viewed as intermediates phase formed during transformation of illite to smectite, vermiculite and kaol ([Hong et al, 2015](#)).

The infrared spectra (Figure 2) are typical of kaol. The characteristic bands at 3697, 3666, 3651 and 3620 cm^{-1} (figure 2a) are the stretching bands of O—H bonds in the kaol structure. The band at 3697 cm^{-1} is assigned to surface O—H, in-phase stretching vibration. The bands at 3666 and 3651 cm^{-1} are attributed to the surface O—H, out of phase stretching vibration and the band at 3620 cm^{-1} is known as the inner O-H stretching vibration ([Farmer, 1974](#); [Cases et al., 1982](#); [Frost and Johansson, 1998](#); [Frost et al., 2001](#); [Balan, 2010](#); [Mbey et al., 2013](#)). These bands are sensitive to cation substitution and planar defects. In the present case, they are reasonably well defined, although less than what can be observed in well-ordered kaol such as GB1 from the St. Austell deposit (Great Britain) ([Cases et al., 1982](#), [Balan et al., 2010](#)). Thus, the five samples display a relatively well-ordered structure, although partly

275 disordered by planar defects such as substitutions, or by intercalation of clay sheets of
276 different nature. The kaol silica Si—O stretching are observed at 1115 cm^{-1} and the symmetric
277 stretching of Si—O—Si appear at 1016 cm^{-1} . The aluminol bonds of the gibbsite clay sheet are
278 revealed through the bending vibration of Al—OH at 917 cm^{-1} and the —OH (of Al—OH)
279 translational vibration at 786 cm^{-1} . The stretching bands of Si—O in quartz (free silica) are also
280 observable at 748 cm^{-1} and 694 cm^{-1} (Qtaitat et al., 2005; Al-Trawneh, 2005). The IR spectra
281 of the Na-kaol samples (not presented) exhibit the same characteristic bands.

282 TEM-EDX confirms the kaol-rich nature of all the samples (figure 3) as shown by the Si/Al
283 ratio from EDX which is close to 1 for all samples. Also the shape of the particles is clearly
284 hexagonal as expected for kaol, although less straightforward in MY3, where the particles are
285 significantly smaller than in the other samples, and form cluster aggregates.

286 The chemical analysis (table I) corresponds well to kaol minerals. In particular for the Kga2
287 sample, the data are comparable to that provided in the study by Mermut and Cano (2001).
288 Other elements (P_2O_5 and TiO_2) that are generally associated to kaol are also present. The
289 magnesium content, which could be due to traces of 2:1 clay minerals such as smectite, illite
290 or muscovite, is of interest (taking into account the detection limit of 0.02%) in MAC
291 (0.27%), MY3 (0.24%) and GZA4 (0.11%). Particle size analysis (table II), yielded for all
292 samples a D50 below $8\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ and a D90 below $25\text{ }\mu\text{m}$. The value of D50 indicated relatively
293 high fine kaol fraction content in for all the samples. Using the chemical composition, the
294 structural formula of the kaol phase in each sample was approximated (table III). One should
295 note that, due to the impurities always associated to clay minerals, it is not possible to
296 accurately calculate the structural formulae, hence the proposed formulae are approximates.

297 The calculation procedure is based on the ideal hydroxyl composition and a total of 28
298 negative charges in the crystalline cell structure (Karathanasis, 2008). From the approximate
299 formulae, the presence of stoichiometric defaults are evidence. Coupling the structural

formula of the kaol in each sample and the elemental chemical composition, a mineralogical quantification was done assuming the following: TiO_2 is a pure phase; K_2O is only due to interlayer K in illite/muscovite. The results of the quantification (table IV) indicate that all the samples have a kaol content higher than 80%. Illite content is especially significant in MY3 (10.4%) and GZA4 (4.8%).

3.2. Texture from Nitrogen adsorption/desorption isotherms

The Nitrogen adsorption/desorption isotherms (figure 4) can be classified of type IV according to the IUPAC recommendations (Sing et al., 1985). They exhibit a narrow hysteresis between the adsorption and desorption branch, which is a usual feature for kaol, assigned to beveled shaped mesopores (Sayed Hassan et al., 2005; Delineau, 1994).

The values of the BET specific surface area (SSA) (table V) indicate absence of significant amount of micropores as suggested by the overall shape of the isotherms. Since the MgO content is assumed here to be related to the presence of traces of swelling 2:1 clay, the SSA of which is generally above $100 \text{ m}^2.\text{g}^{-1}$, one may expect an increase of the SSA with the MgO content. This trend is indeed observed, except for the MAC sample. This exception is not a contradiction, given that the difference may arise also from the crystalline disorder, the size, the shape or the distortion within the clay platelets in each sample. The SSA of MAC also agrees with the absence of swelling clay as previously mentioned from X-Ray analysis.

3.3. Surface energetic heterogeneity from DIS analysis of Argon adsorption isotherms.

The experimental derivative adsorption isotherms (figure 5) display the feature usually observed for phyllosilicates (Villieras et al., 1992; Bardot et al., 1998; Sayed Hassan et al., 2005). A major peak is observed at medium adsorption energy (-6 to -1 Ln P/Po), corresponding to the adsorption on basal faces. The broad shoulder at higher energy ($< -6 \text{ Ln P/Po}$) corresponds to the adsorption on edge faces. Using DIS, the isotherms were successfully modelled with a sum of six to seven local derivatives (table VI). For all the

samples, the edge faces were modelled with domains 1 to 3, and the basal faces with domains
 4 to 6 (table VI). Only MAC and MY3 fall out of this trend, since an additional basal domain
 (domain 7) was needed. As discussed in previous works (Sayed Hassan et al., 2005; Bardot et
 al., 1998), domains 1-2 are assigned to high energy adsorption sites of edge faces while
 domain 3 is characteristic of charged edge faces. The charge heterogeneity of the edge surface
 is evidenced by these three energy domains. The interactions of cations with basal faces is
 evidenced by domain 4 (average $\ln P/P_0 = 4.3$) and, from the work by Michot and Villieras
 (2002) on synthetic saponite, it can be assumed that the cation density on these sites is less
 than 1 per 140 \AA^2 . Domain 6 (average $\ln P/P_0 = 2.4$) is assigned to adsorption on basal low
 energy sites observed for all phyllosilicates. Domain 5 parameters are characteristic for the
 adsorbed cations and agree (as well as the parameters of domain 4 and 3) with the reported
 value for Na-kaol in a previous study (Sayed Hassan et al., 2005). The additional domain 7
 ($\ln P/P_0 = -4.6$) for MAC and MY3 is probably due to the surface charge of associated sheets
 of smectite or illite-like clay mineral (Sayed Hassan et al., 2005). Given that the MgO
 contents of these two samples were the highest compared to the other three samples, smectite
 clay layers are the most likely to be considered.

The geometrical and structural information drawn from the measured basal and edge surface
 areas (BSA and ESA) are reported in table VII. The SSAs calculated from DIS are in the
 same order of magnitude as the classical N_2 BET SSA (average difference +1.3 m^2/g for the
 classical N_2 BET SSA). The fact that the N_2 BET SSAs are larger is often observed given that
 N_2 exhibits stronger interactions than Ar with adsorption sites (Bardot et al., 1998; Michot et
 Villieras, 2002). As reported by Sayed Hassan et al. (2005), the basal surface area is not
 influenced by the nature of the cation and thus the cation density on this surface is probably
 low. Hence, one may assume that the difference in edge surface area is likely to be an

indication for the edge surface charge available for each sample, which should be supported by the titration results.

The thickness and diameter of particles are calculated using geometrical equations reported by [Sayed Hassan et al. \(2005\)](#). The edge surface area (ESA) and the basal surface (BSA) are used to compute, respectively, the length and the thickness. Although the coherent scattering domain and the thickness of the particles are different concepts, they can be identical in size for true nano-crystalline powder where each grain represents a coherent domain. That is why the grain size is usually larger than the coherent scattering domain. Comparing the calculated thickness values with the coherent scattering domain (D , in table VII) shows that the largest difference is 28 nm for the sample MY3, whereas it remains less than 10 nm for the other samples. From kinematical theory, this difference indicates that the crystallites are strain free for all the samples ([Ungar et al., 2005](#)). In addition, the fact that the size of the coherent domains follows the same trends as the particle size is a proof of the reliability of the DIS modeling. The lamellarity index which corresponds to the percentage of BSA, is lowest for the MY3 samples. The higher ESA observed for this sample may arise from two sources: (i) the illite contribution to ESA or (ii) the more anisotropic shape of this sample particles. If a contribution from illite is assumed, then the ESA of GZA4 would be expected to be the following higher value, but this is not the case. It is then believed that the kaolinite particles anisotropy could be a better cause. According to TEM observation, the anisotropy is higher for MY3 (figure 3) and this may be an a priori evidence for the previous assumption.

3.4. Electrokinetics.

Assuming that protonation-deprotonation on edge hydroxyls is the dominant origin of surface charge in kaol implies that, as for simple oxides, their electrophoretic mobility should depend on the pH and on the ionic-strength (lowest mobility at highest ionic strength), and the mobility curves should cross at a common point close to zero mobility. However, from the

results in figure 6 (left column for the raw kaol and right column for the corresponding Na-kaol), only for PAH-Na a common intersection point may be fairly proposed, close to pH 4. For the other samples, the observed trend is not consistent with the expected one, in particular for the MAC, GZA4 and MY3 samples, for which the mobility curves are almost parallel to the pH axis. Such a behavior is close to that observed for permanently charged clay minerals such as smectites (Thomas et al., 1999). Indeed, a permanent charge originating from isomorphic substitutions was evidenced from the calculated structural formula of all the studied samples (see table IV). As reported by other authors (Tombácz and Szekeres, 2006), the permanent charge dominates the electrokinetic behavior. In the case of MY3, GZA4 and MAC, the more marked permanent charge behavior is consistent with the presence of associated smectite layers as shown from the chemical analysis (table II) where significant amounts of MgO and CaO (associated to exchangeable Calcium in smectites) were measured. The domain 7 from DIS analysis (table VII) is in line with the proposed presence of few smectite layers in MAC and MY3.

3.5. Charge on amphoteric surface sites.

The surface excess values yielded by acid-base titration was normalized to the edge surface area (ESA) obtained from DIS (figure 7). Although a clear separation between the protolytic reactions at edge and basal sites and the ion exchange on permanent negative sites is not strictly possible, normalization to ESA is still pertinent for comparison, since it is assumed that protolytic edge reactions are well evidenced by titration. In the absence of permanent charge, and by analogy with common (hydro)oxides, the titration curves are expected to display dependence on the pH and on the ionic strength (highest surface excess at lowest ionic strength), and a common intersection point indicating the Point of Zero Charge (PZC). Such behavior was observed only for PAH-Na which exhibited a common intersection point at pH close to 3.5 (figure 7e). The titration curves of the four other samples were shifted towards

higher pH according to decreasing ionic strength, as observed by [Duc et al., \(2006\)](#) and modelled by [Delhorme et al., \(2010\)](#) for smectite and illite. An explanation for such differences cannot be derived from the geometrical parameters (table VII) obtained using DIS model, but rather from the structural differences between the samples. The permanent charge electrostatically affects the dissociation of the edge sites by increasing the affinity for the protons ([Avena et al., 2003](#); [Kraepiel et al., 1999](#); [Delhorme et al., 2010](#)), the amount of titrated charge is likely to decrease with increasing permanent layer charge. The samples MY3 (figure 7a), MAC (figure 7b) and GZA4 (figure 7c) have values for surface charge ranging between 7 and 8 $\mu\text{mol}/\text{m}^2$ which may be of same range within experimental error and indicative of significant permanent charge as also observed from their electrokinetic feature (figure 6) which is similar to that of permanently charged minerals. Sample PAH with surface excess from titration of 10 $\mu\text{mol}/\text{m}^2$ may be the least permanently charged as shown by its mobility feature which depends on pH. The Kga2 sample is intermediate with a titration charge of about 9 $\mu\text{mol}/\text{m}^2$. For all the samples, the values of surface excess range in a narrow interval from 7 to 10 $\mu\text{mol}/\text{m}^2$ and are associated to the kaol nature of the samples. The difference amongst the samples may arise from the basal surface contribution which is probably in line with the layer charge.

A low dependency of the titration curves to ionic strength is observed through the slight split of the curves upon ionic strength increase. This dependency is coherent with the existence of a permanent negative charge as reported for 2:1 clay minerals ([Duc et al., 2005b, 2006](#); [Tombácz and Szekeres, 2006](#)). The point of zero salt effect (PZSE), which is reached as the common intersection of the curves at different ionic strength, is only observed for the PAH sample at pH~3.5. The trends of the curves for the other samples indicates a PZSE beyond pH 3. The point of zero net proton charge (PZNPC), which is the point at which the proton charge goes to zero, is not unique, but rather ionic strength dependent, for all the samples. In

theoretical studies (Avena et al., 2003; Kraepiel et al., 1999), the absence of a PZNPC is shown to be due to the effect of the structural charge on dissociable edge sites. For ionic strength 0.01 M and 0.001 M, a common intersection for zero net proton charge exist for all the samples except for PAH within the pH interval (3.8 to 6.4). As reported by Chorover and Sposito (1995), because the PZNPC within our samples is ionic strength dependent (decreases to lower pH as the ionic strength increases) then this is an evidence for a permanent negative charge within these kaol. Because of the existence of this net permanent charge, no coincidence between the PZNPC and the PZSE is observed. This is also agreeing with the absence of PZC (in the studied pH range) (see figure 7) which is assumed to exist when $PZNPC = PZSE$ (Sposito, 1989).

4. CONCLUSION

Examination of a broad set of properties on five kaol samples yields valuable information on the relationships between the crystal-chemical defects and the surface charge in electrolyte dispersion. The combination of these results allows the build-up of a consistent image of the morphological, structural, textural and surface properties of the studied kaol. Although most of the evidences are indirect and dispersed, some conclusions can be proposed:

- The permanent layer charge, resulting from non-negligible rates of substitution and stoichiometric defaults cause the titration curves to shift to lower pH with increasing ionic strength (MY3, MAC or GZA4 in particular); the proton consumption (due to pH-dependent, or variable charge) is influenced electrostatically by the layer charge which (even if low) and dominates the electrokinetic behavior;
- The DIS modeling was useful to probe presence of associated smectite-like minerals in samples MY3 and MAC. The presence of few 2:1 layers at the surface, after milling and dispersion of the sample, may affect the electrokinetic properties (MAC and MY3 samples);

448 - Modeling parameters derived from DIS are consistent with reported parameters for
449 phyllosilicates. However, a clear link between the electrophoretic mobility and/or protolytic
450 charge data and the geometrical parameters from DIS was not evidenced;

451 - In interfacial processes, the reactivity of kaol is controlled by its permanent charge. The
452 negative electrophoretic mobility indicates that colloids stability will be controlled
453 electrostatically by cations, hence given the low measured charges, delamination of kaol for
454 particle size reduction may be useful to improve colloid stability.

455 The Cameroonian sample (MY3) is found to be a very fine kaol material with large specific
456 surface area and high shape anisotropy, associated with significant layer charge. These factors
457 may influence the particle orientation and particle-particle interaction in a composite material,
458 depending on the charge feature of the associated compound.

459 A final remark can be that the purity of natural kaol can hardly be improved for analytical
460 purposes because, unlike smectites, their particle size and shape prevent effective separation
461 by centrifugation.

462

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470

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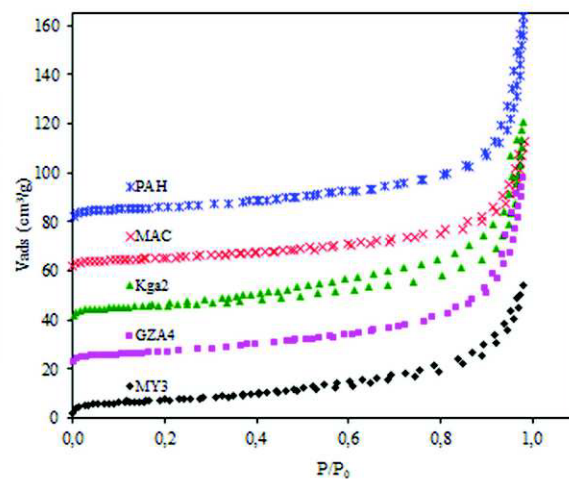
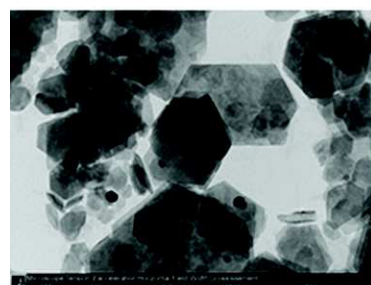
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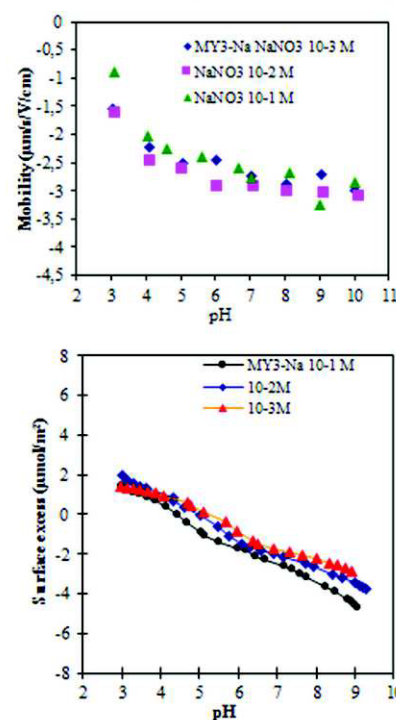
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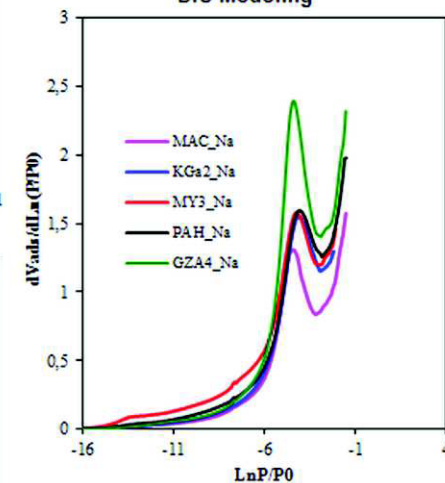
Mineralogy, Chemistry, textural and surfaces analyses



Electrophoresis-potentiometric titration to probe surface charge



DIS-Modeling



Analysis of the crystallo-chemical, textural and surface properties at solid-gas and solid-electrolyte interface of five kaolinites

Surface properties of five natural kaolinite samples are analyzed > Deviation from stoichiometric defaults and some substitutions are evidenced from chemical analyses > The permanent charge electrostatically influence the proton consumption during acid-base titration > Electrokinetic behavior is dominated by the permanent charge > **From** the DIS modeling the presence of trace 2:1 clay layer on **some samples was probe**.

Table II: Size distribution of the kaol samples

Samples	MY3	Kga2	GZA4	MAC	PAH
D10	1.6	1.6	0.94	1.04	1.17
D50	7.22	7.19	2.76	3.64	5.66
D90	23.9	21.16	7.11	15.67	21.03
Mode	10.4	9.6	3.6	6.25	8.77

Table III: Structural formulae of the studied kaolinites, calculated from chemical analysis

	Average structural formula
MY3	(Al _{1.94} Fe _{0.06})(Si _{1.98} Fe _{0.02})O ₅ (OH) ₄ Ca _{0.002} Mg _{0.02}
MAC	(Al _{1.94} Si _{0.02} Fe _{0.01} Mg _{0.02} Ca _{0.01})(Si ₂ O ₅)(OH) ₄
PAH	(Al _{1.98} Fe _{0.02})(Si _{1.98} Fe _{0.02})O ₅ (OH) ₄
Kga2	(Al _{1.98} Fe _{0.02})(Si _{1.99} Fe _{0.01})O ₅ (OH) ₄ (Fe _{0.01})
GZA4	(Al _{1.95} Fe _{0.04} Ca _{0.01})(Si _{1.99} Mg _{0.01})O ₅ (OH) ₄

Table IV: Mineralogical composition of the kaolinite samples

	Kaolinite	Illite/Muscovite	TiO ₂	SiO ₂	Iron Oxide	Total
MY3	83.3	10.4	3.4	0.0	0.0	97.1
MAC	95.8	0.2	1.5	0.1	0.1	97.7
PAH	94.9	1.3	2.2	0.5	0.0	98.8
Kga2	95.4	0.3	2.2	0.5	0.3	98.7
GZA4	92.4	4.8	1.2	0.5	0.1	99.0

Table V: Specific Surface Area ($\pm 1 \text{ m}^2/\text{g}$) and CEC of the kaol samples

	CBET	Vm BET cm ³ /g	S BET m ² /g	CEC meq/100g
MY3	130	5.9	25.9	6
GZA4	79	5.7	24.9	4.1
Kga2	88	4.8	21.0	10.6
MAC	100	4.3	18.7	7.9
PAH	100	5.0	22.0	4

Vm : monolayer volume from BET modeling; CBET: BET constant

Table VI: Main parameters derived from the application of the DIS method to argon adsorption at 77 K on Na-exchanged kaolinites.

		MY3	MAC	Kga2	GZA4	PAH
Domain 1	ln(P/P ₀)	-13.3	-12.6	-12.7	-12.0	-13.1
	V _m	0.16	0.06	0.04	0.06	0.10
	w/kt	1.2	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
Domain 2	ln(P/P ₀)	-10.3	-10.3	-10.5	-10.6	-10.5
	V _m	0.52	0.11	0.13	0.11	0.18
	w/kt	-0.7	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
Domain 3	ln(P/P ₀)	-6.9	-7.0	-6.8	-6.9	-6.9
	V _m	1.10	0.47	0.60	0.68	0.82
		-0.2	-0.10	-0.8	-0.8	-0.8
Domain 4	ln(P/P ₀)	-4.2	-4.2	-4.3	-4.4	-4.3
	V _m	1.87	0.69	2.58	3.65	2.54
	w/kt	1.5	1.8	1.5	2	1.5
Domain 5	ln(P/P ₀)	-3.6	-3.6	-3.6	-3.5	-3.6
	V _m	0.35	0.07	0.76	1.24	0.85
	w/kt	1.5	1.8	1.5	1.5	1.5
Domain 6	ln(P/P ₀)	-2.4	-2.4	-2.4	-2.3	-2.4
	V _m	1.29	1.29	1.24	1.21	1.39
	w/kt	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Domain 7	ln(P/P ₀)	-4.5	-4.6			
	V _m	1.07	1.77			
	w/kt	1.5	1.8			

Table VII: Geometrical and structural **parameters** deducted from application of DIS to Argon adsorption at 77 K on Na-kaolinites. The thickness obtained by the Scherrer equation from X-ray diffraction of the powder is given for comparison.

	MY3	MAC	KGa2	GZA4	PAH
ESA (m ² /g)	6.6	2.4	2.9	3.1	4.1
BSA (m ² /g)	17.0	14.2	17.0	22.6	17.8
SSA (m ² /g)	23.6	16.6	19.9	25.7	21.9
Length (nm)	267	735	608	569	430
<i>D</i> (XRD, Scherrer)* (nm)	17	44	34	26	34
Thickness (nm)	45	54	45	34	43
Lamellarity Index (%)	72	86	88	88	81

* *D* is the Scattering Coherent Domain calculated from X-ray pattern using the full width at maximum half-height of the d₀₀₁ diffraction peak and the Scherrer equation.

Table I: Sources and chemical composition (percentages of oxides of the major elements) of the kaolinite samples

Samples	MY3	GZA4	Kga2	MAC	PAH
Sources	Cameroon (Mayouom) Njoya et al., 2006	France (Charentes) Dubreuilh et al., 1984	USA (Georgia) Moll, 2001	USA (Macon, Georgia) Schroeder and Shiflet, 2000	USA (Georgia) Schroeder and Shiflet, 2000
Chemical Composition					
SiO ₂	44.28	45.47	43.89	45.20	44.33
Al ₂ O ₃	34.21	36.66	37.37	36.65	37.34
Fe ₂ O ₃	1.97	1.27	1.17	0.44	1.13
MnO	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
MgO	0.24	0.11	0.03	0.27	0.05
CaO	0.04	0.18	< L.D	0.26	< L.D
Na ₂ O	< L.D	0.04	< L.D	< L.D	< L.D
K ₂ O	1.23	0.57	0.04	0.02	0.15
TiO ₂	3.39	1.21	2.17	1.50	2.18
P ₂ O ₅	0.26	0.06	0.05	< L.D	0.05
LOI	13.70	14.01	14.29	14.67	14.40
Total	99.33	99.59	99.01	99.01	99.63

L.D: detection limit; LOI: loss on ignition

Figure 1

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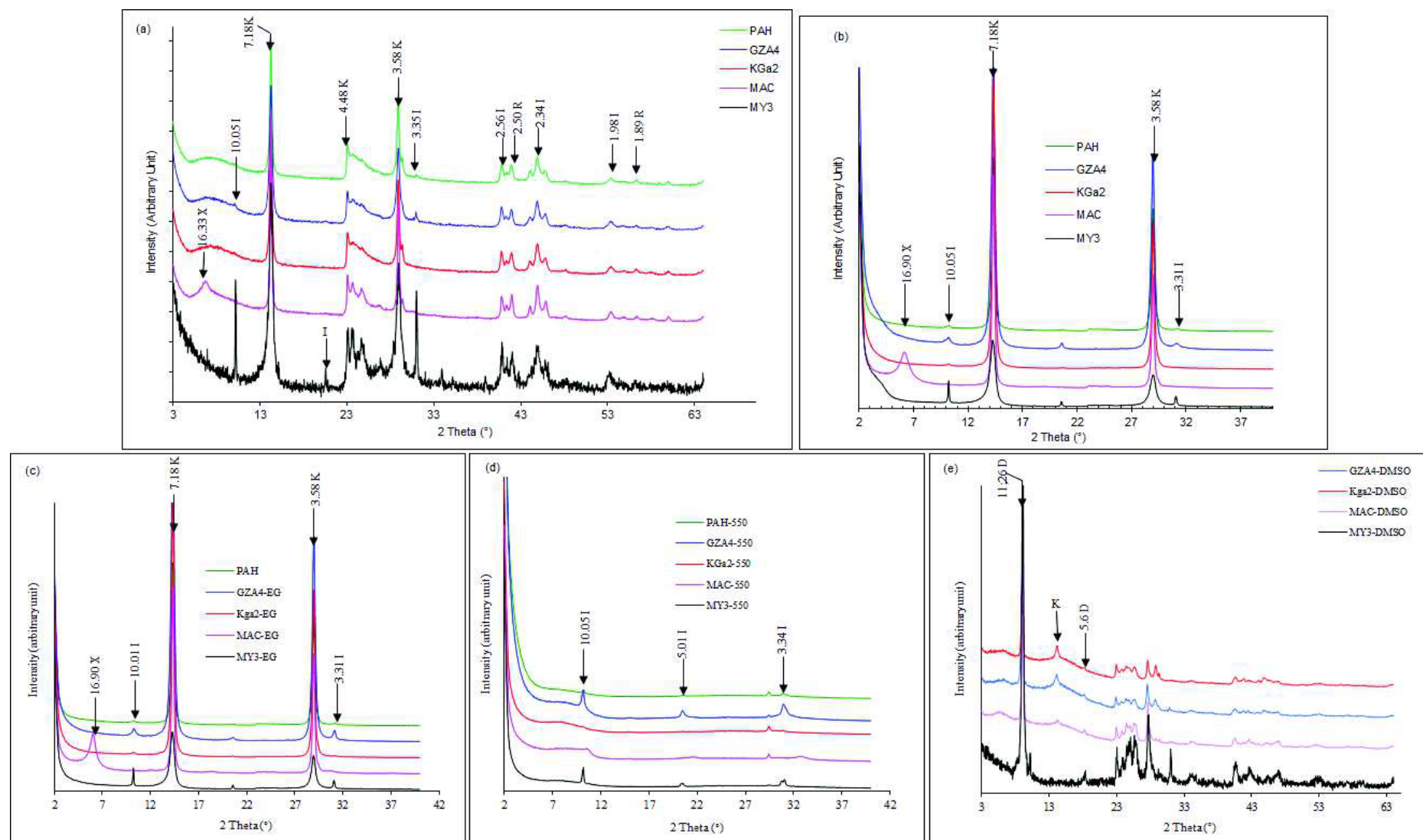


Figure 1: DRX pattern of the raw kaolinite samples: (a) bulk sample ($< 40\ \mu\text{m}$) (b) oriented samples ($< 2\ \mu\text{m}$) (c) Ethylene glycol solvated samples (d) Heated samples at $550\ ^\circ\text{C}$ (e) DMSO intercalated samples

K: Kaolinite; I: Illite; R: titanium oxide (rutile); D: kaolinite-DMSO intercalated; X: interstratification

Figure 2
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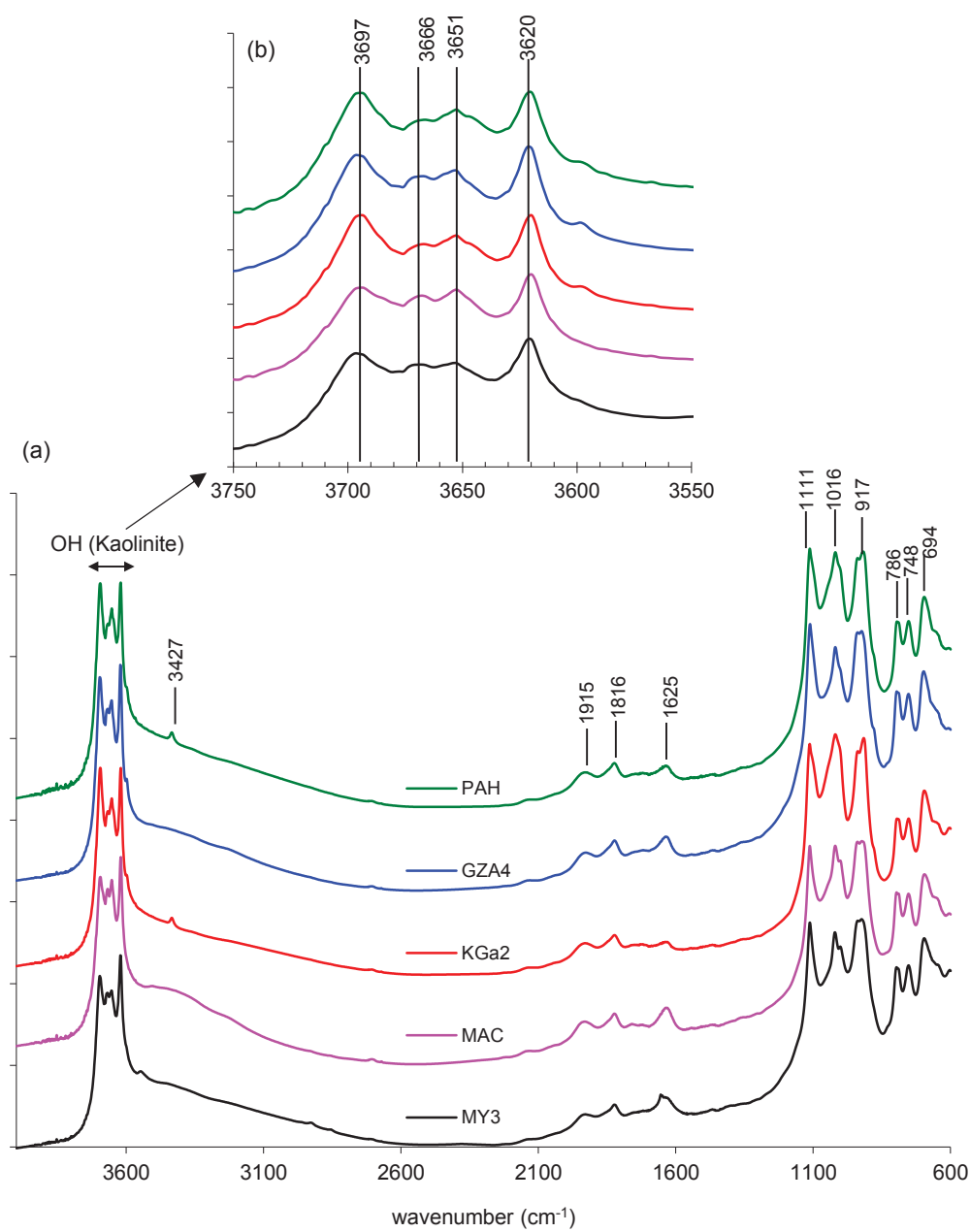


Figure 2: FTIR spectra of the kaolinite samples (a) the entire spectra (b) zooming in the OH **elongation vibration** domain.

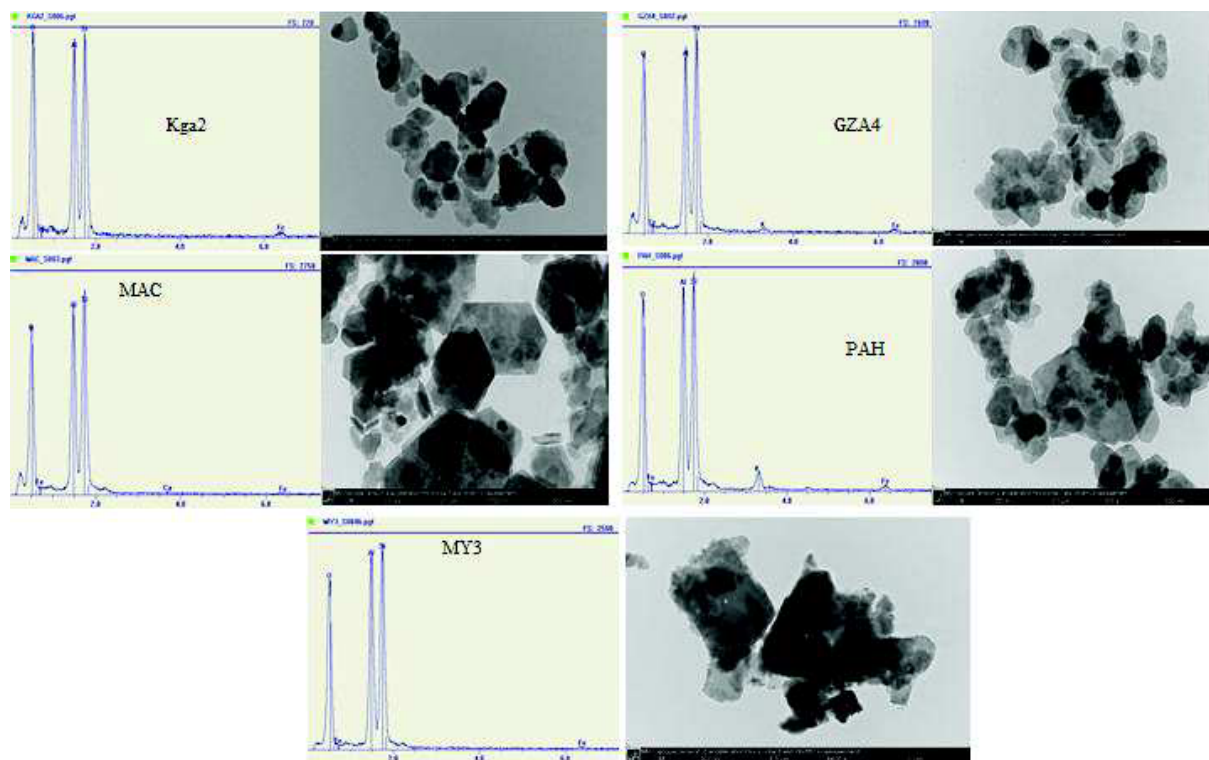
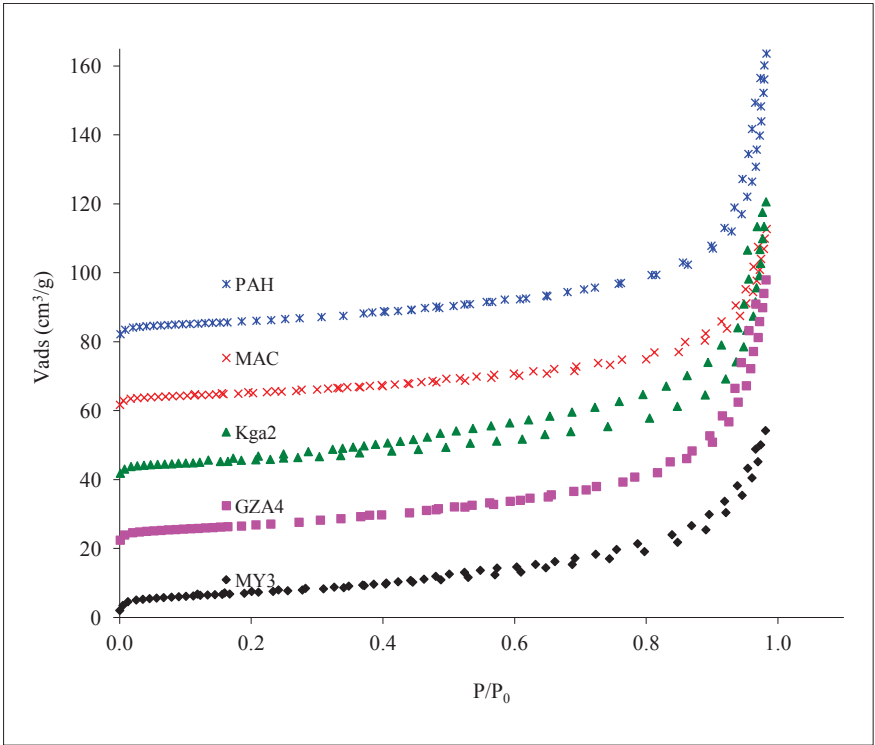


Fig. 3: TEM-EDX showing and Si/Al ratio of almost 1 for all the samples.

Figure 4
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Curves shifted of 20 cm³/g

Fig. 4: N₂ Adsorption isotherms at 77 K on the kaolinite samples

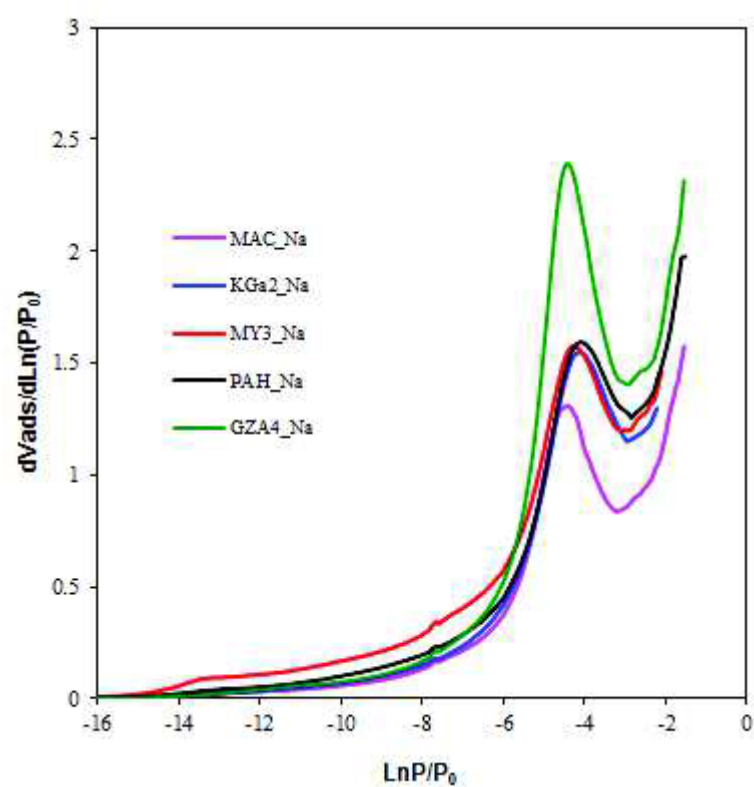


Fig. 5: Experimental derivative argon adsorption isotherms at 77 K of the Na-kaolinites

Figure 6
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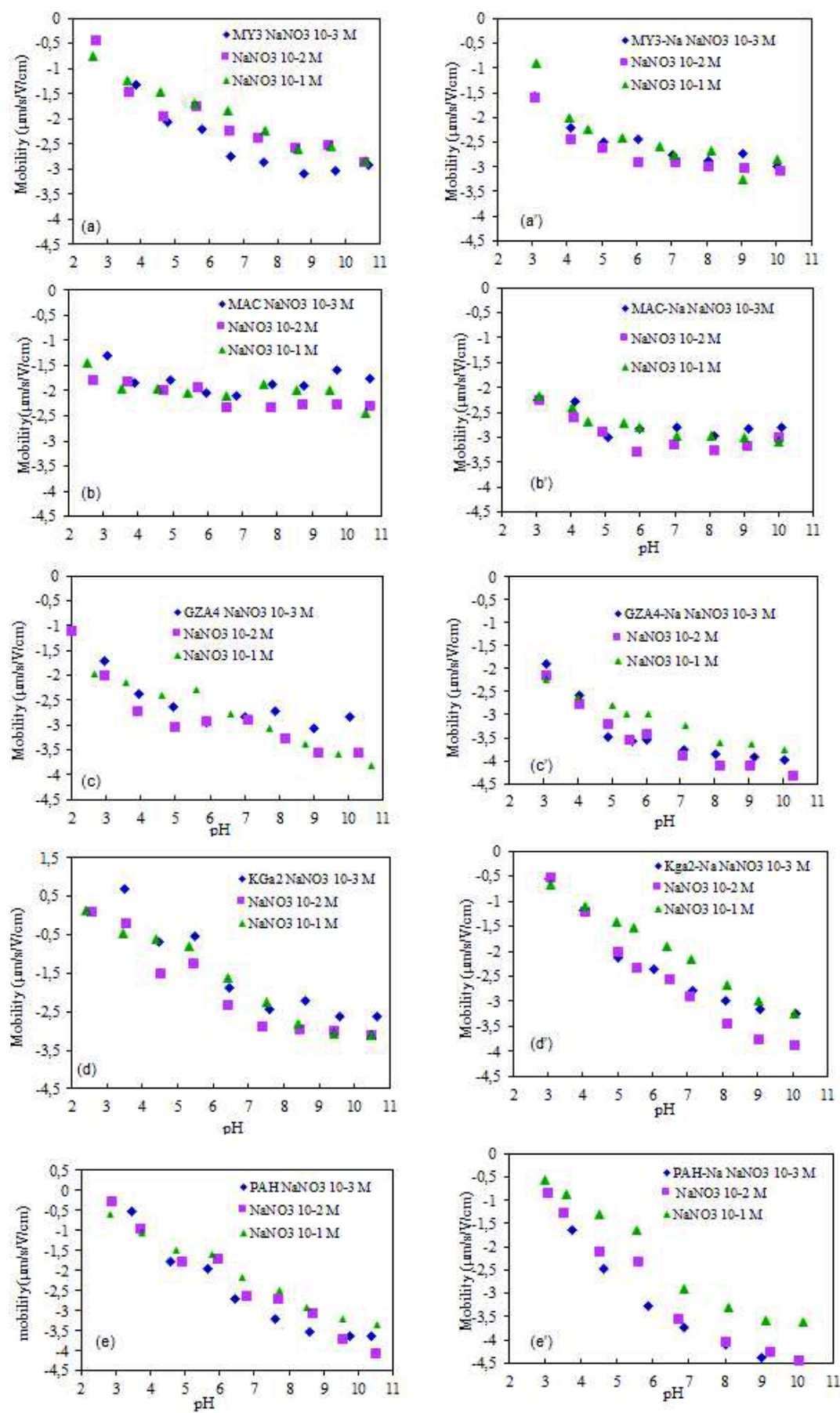


Fig. 6: Electrophoretic mobility versus pH on raw (left) and Na-Kaolinite (right) in NaNO_3 background

Figure 7

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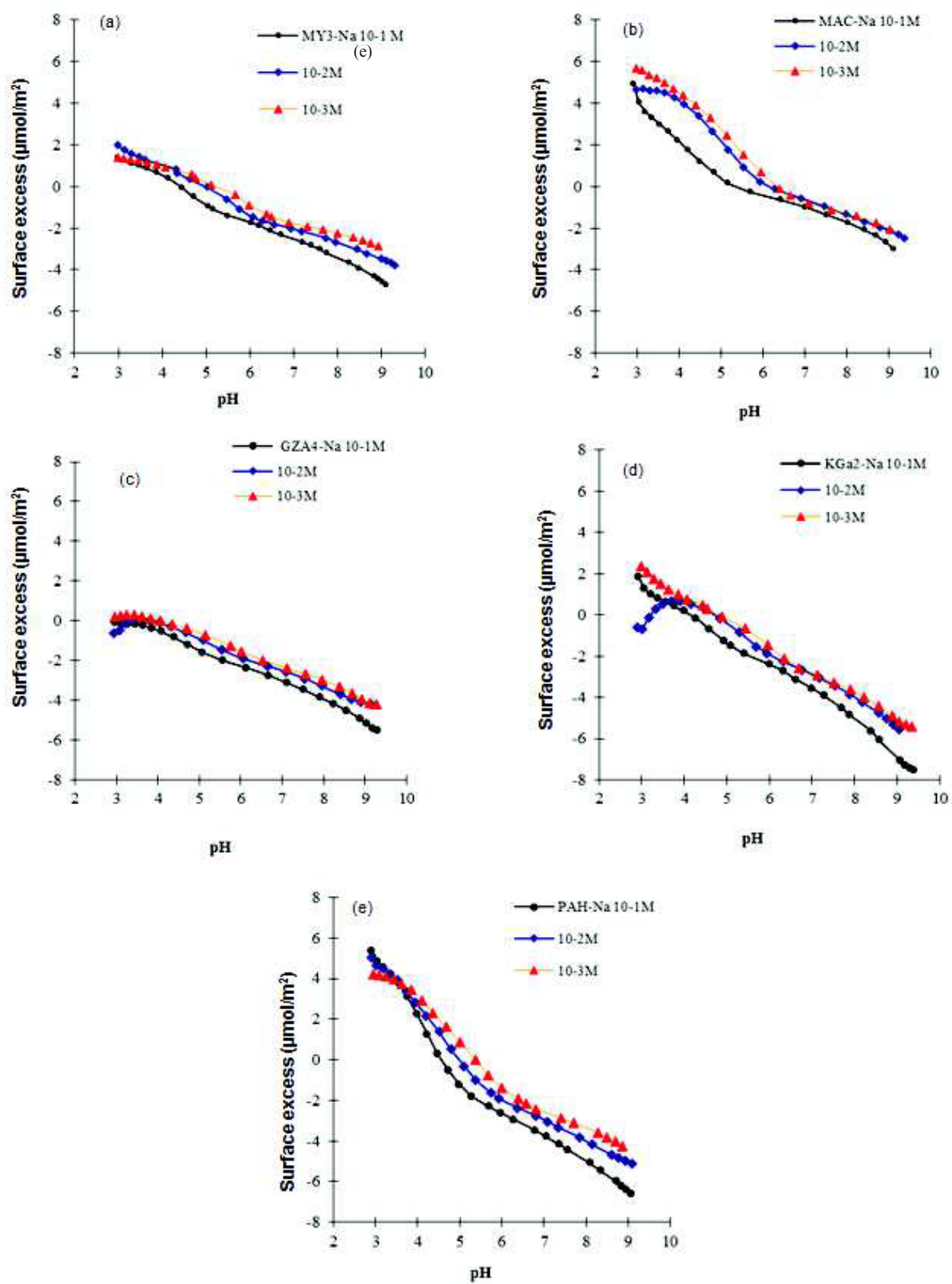


Figure 7: Apparent surface charge of the Na-exchanged kaolinite samples in NaNO_3 background, normalised to the edge surface area obtained from DIS modeling