Opening and Closing of Nanocavities under Stress in Soft Nanocomposites: A Real Time Small Angle X-ray Scattering (SAXS) Observation

HUAN ZHANG, JORDAN DE CREVOISIER, Soft Matter Science and Engineering, ESPCI-PolyTech-CNRS-UPMC, Paris, France, ARTHUR SCHOLZ, Materials Research Laboratory, UCSB, 93106-5121 CA, U.S.A., FABIEN VION-LOISEL, Michelin, EDWARD J. KRAMER, Departments of Materials and Chemical Engineering, UCSB, 93106-5050, COSTANTINO CRETON, Soft Matter Science and Engineering, ESPCI-PolyTech-CNRS-UPMC, Paris, France — Cavitation occurring at the nanometer length scale has been recently demonstrated conclusively in rubbers\textsuperscript{1}. Real time SAXS with synchrotron radiation is employed to probe the structure changes in carbon black filled styrene-butadiene rubber (SBR) under uniaxial tension. The scattering invariant $Q(\lambda)$, where $\lambda$ is the extension ratio, increases sharply, which we attribute to void formation, above a critical true stress ($\sim 25$ MPa) that is roughly independent of both filler content and crosslinking density. During step-cycle tests $Q$ decreases on unloading to $Q_0$, its value before any testing, and does not increase again until $\lambda$ exceeds the maximum previous $\lambda = \lambda_{\text{max}}$, showing that the voids close upon unloading and only reappear upon reloading when $\lambda > \lambda_{\text{max}}$ (Mullins effect). We attribute the increase of the scattering invariant once $\lambda$ exceeds $\lambda_{\text{max}}$ to the creation of new voids rather than to the reopening of old ones. The scattering of the voids in the region $q < 0.1$ nm$^{-1}$ can be separated from that of the carbon black particles and provides information on average void size and shape.

Costantino Creton
ESPCIPolyTech-UPMC-CNRS

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