coking

Many reactions involving hydrocarbons and particularly those run at higher temperatures lead to the deposition on the catalyst of high molecular weight compounds of carbon and hydrogen which deactivate the catalyst. This phenomenon is called coking or fouling. Catalysts so deactivated can often be regenerated.

Source:

PAC, 1976, 46, 71 (Manual of Symbols and Terminology for Physicochemical Quantities and Units - Appendix II. Definitions, Terminology and Symbols in Colloid and Surface Chemistry. Part II: Heterogeneous Catalysis) on page 84