1 Introduction

Supercapacitor also called electrochemical capacitor, has become one of the most promising energy storage devices due to its long service life, great power density, high energy density, green environmental protection (Simon et al., 2008; Ma et al., 2013). Based on the charge storage mechanisms, Supercapacitors can be divided into electrical double-layer capacitor (EDLC) and pseudo-capacitor according to the charge storage mechanism. The energy storage of EDLCs is the accumulation of ionic charges which occur at the interface between the electrode and electrolyte. For the pseudo-capacitor, it is produced by the fast reversible faradic transitions of active materials, e.g., transition metal oxides, conducting electric polymers (Lu et al., 2015; Huang et al., 2013). Among these active materials, manganese oxides (MnO$_2$) are the most potential one because of their low cost, natural abundance, high theoretical capacity (1370 F/g), nontoxicity and wide operating potential window in mild electrolyte. However, bulk MnO$_2$ suffers from low electronic conductivity ($10^{-5}$-$10^{-6}$ S/cm), low ionic diffusion constant and structural susceptibility which limit their applications as active materials for supercapacitor (Zhang et al., 2014). Therefore, MnO$_2$ is usually mixed with other materials to prepare composite materials with better cycling, specific capacitance and mechanical stability.

As a graphene-like material, MoS$_2$ crystals are composed of the metal Mo layers sandwiched between two sulfur layers and stacked together by weak van der Waals interactions (He et al., 2016). Because of the intrinsic ion conductivity higher than that of the metal oxide and the theoretical specific capacitance than graphite, the electrode material used as the capacitor has been deeply studied. However, there are still a lot of limitations when MoS$_2$ is used as electrode material alone (Ma et al, 2013; Huang et al, 2013; Firmano et al, 2013).

This article is mainly study the electrochemical properties of MnO$_2$/MoS$_2$ composites.

2 Result and Discussion

2.1 X-ray diffraction

The X-ray powder diffraction (XRD, Rigaku D/max 2400, Cu K$_\alpha$) patterns of the MoS$_2$, pure MnO$_2$ and MnO$_2$/MoS$_2$ composites are shown in Fig. 1(a). It can be seen that diffraction of pure MnO$_2$ and MoS$_2$ shows a typical broad and weak reflection, which are the characteristic peak of amorphous or low-crystalline structures. The pure MoS$_2$ has the diffraction peaks at 33°, 44° and 59° can be assign to the (100), (103), and (110) planes of MoS$_2$ (JCPDS No.37-1492), respectively. The pure MnO$_2$ has the diffraction peaks at 12.5°, 25° and 37° can be assign to the (001), (002), and (100) planes of MnO$_2$ (JCPDS No.80-1098), respectively. For the MnO$_2$/MoS$_2$ composites, in addition to the diffraction peaks of MoS$_2$, there exhibits another broad reflection. This is attributed to the diffraction patterns of MnO$_2$, and the results confirm that the MnO$_2$ was successfully attached into the MoS$_2$ nanosheets layer.

2.2 Cyclic voltammetry

The CV curves of the MnO$_2$/MoS$_2$ composites electrode in 1 M Na$_2$SO$_4$ aqueous electrolyte are shown in Fig. 1(b). The shape of the CV curves are basically rectangular with the increase of scanning speed, which indicates that the samples have typical double layer capacitance characteristics. However, when the scanning speed is increased to 50 mV /s, the curve is distorted to some extent. It can be seen from the curves that some weak redox peaks appear, indicating that MnO$_2$ provides a certain amount of pseudo capacitance.
Fig. 1. XRD patterns, cyclic voltammograms and Galvanostatic charge/discharge properties of MnO₂/MoS₂ composites. (a), XRD patterns of MoS₂, pure MnO₂ and MnO₂/MoS₂ composites; (b), Cyclic voltammetry curves of MnO₂/MoS₂ composites in 1 M Na₂SO₄ aqueous electrolyte at various current densities in the potential window of -0.2 to -0.9 V; (c), Galvanostatic charge/discharge curves of MnO₂/MoS₂ composites in 1 M Na₂SO₄ aqueous electrolyte at various current densities in the potential window of -0.2 to -1 V; (d), capacitance retention of MnO₂/MoS₂ composites at different current density.

2.3 Galvanostatic charge/discharge

The galvanostatic charge-discharge curves are shown in Fig. 1(c). The charge curves are almost linear and somewhat mirror symmetrical to their discharge counterparts, suggestive of good electrochemical performance. According to the calculation formula of specific capacitance of electrode (Huang et al., 2013), the specific capacitances of the MnO₂/MoS₂ electrode at 0.5, 1, 2 and 5 A/g are 210, 167, 124 and 88 F/g, respectively. The variation of the specific capacitance with the current density is shown in Fig. 1(d). It shows that the capacitance is decreased with the increasing current density. The MnO₂/MoS₂ electrode displays a relatively good high rate behavior with 42% of its initial capacitance maintained when the current density increases to 5 A/g.

Acknowledgements

The authors acknowledge financial support from the National Natural Science Foundation of China (51274015), National Program on Key Basic Research Project (973 Program) (2014CB846000) and Test Fund of Peking University.

References


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