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SADRŽAJ CONTENT

The significance and role of Sarafix as an external fixator in orthopedics Fehim Korać	9
Novel Immunomodulatory and Anti-inflammatory Nano Amorphous Calcium Phosphate@Chitosan Oligolactate coatings on titanium substrate for potential medical and dental use Miroslav Pavlović, Marijana R. Pantović Pavlović	22
The influence of Zn content on the activity of PtZn catalysts in methanol electrooxidation reaction Dragana Milošević, Sanja Stevanović, Dušan Tripković², Ivana Vukašinić, Vladan Čosović, Nebojša Nikolić	49
Nebojša D. Nikolić, Jelena D. Lović, Dragana Milošević, Sanja I. Stevanović Nucleation and growth of tin dendrites from alkaline electrolyte	57
Stability tests investigations for PtZn/C catalyst in methanol, ethanol and formic acid electrooxidation reaction Sanja Stevanović, Dragana Milošević, Dušan Tripković, Nebojša Nikolić	64
The pseudo-capacitance of hydrous RuO ₂ accompanied by mass changes Milica Košević, Marija Mihailović, Vladimir Panić	73
Microwave-assisted synthesis of Pt-alloy catalysts for successful methanol oxidation reaction in fuel cells Sanja Stevanović, Dragana Milošević, Dušan Tripković, Nebojša Nikolić	81
Steel tank,s roof examination by combined RMS and MFL method, rehabilitation of the tank and rehabilitation of tank base Željko Krivačević, Dejan Grgić, Saša Stojanović, Aleksandar Pešić	87
Innovative Technologies for Fire Protection, Review of Existing Methods, and Perspectives for Future Development Glorija Šćepanović, Darko Vuksanović	98
Ecological assessment of the state of the Zeta river based on abundance of microplastics in sediment Neda Bošković, Željko Jaćimović, Oliver Bajt	106
Changes in the content of chlorophyll in grapevine leaves when using pesticides Milica Vujić, Zorica Leka, Nedeljko Latinović	115
Amperometric determination of the effect of terpenes on the activity of acetylcholinesterase Safija Herenda, Almina Ramić, Edhem Hasković	124

Electrochemical techniques for organic pollutants removal from wastewater Aleksandra Porjazoska Kujundziski, Dragica Chamovska	129
EXTRACTS FROM BLACK ELDERBERRY FLOWERS (SAMBUCUS NIGRA L.) AS POSSIBLE CORROSION INHIBITOR Nebojša Vasiljević, Vladan Mičić, Milorad Tomić, Marija Mitrović, Tijana Bojagić	136
DEPOSITION OF SILVER COATINGS ON METALLIC AND NON-METALLIC MATERIALS Bojan Gorančić, Marija Mitrović, Stana Stanišić, Nenojša Vailjević, Milorad Tomić	147
Solar power plants in Montenegro and their impact on the environment D. Vuksanović, D. Radonjić, J. Šćepanović	161
Influence of selective collection of waste on the quality of lechate wastewater J. Šćepanović, M. Milačić, D. Vuksanović, D. Radonjić	171
INFLUENCE OF W-t-E ON CO ₂ REDUCTION ON NATIONAL LEVEL IN MONTENEGRO AND SLOVENIA Filip Kokalj, Radoje Vujadinović, Jasmina Četković, Miloš Žarković, Niko Samec	179
DALMATIAN SAGE POST-DISTILLATION WASTE MATERIAL AS VALUABLE SOURCE OF BIOACTIVE COMPOUNDS Biljana Damjanović-Vratnica, Nina Tepavčević, Slađana Krivokapić, Svetlana Perović	194

Mikrotalasna sinteza platinskih legura za uspesnu oksidaciju metanola u gorivnim spregovima

Microwave-assisted synthesis of Pt-alloy catalysts for successful methanol oxidation reaction in fuel cells

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Izvod

Ova studija je fokusirana na pronalaženje novih na ina sinteze katalizatora na bazi platine koji pokazuju dobru efikasnost za reakciju oksidacije metanola. Nano estice PtZn, PtSn i PtSnZn su sintetizovane koriš enjem polirol metode uz pomo mikrotalasnog zagrevanja i deponovane na ugljeni nu podlogu Vulcan XC-72R. Elektrohemijsko ponašanje sintetizovanih katalizatora je ispitivano koriš enjem cikli ne voltametrije i hronoamperometrijske tehnike. Fizi kohemijska svojstva dobijenih katalizatora su okarakterisana transmissionom elektronskom mikroskopijom (TEM), termogravimetrijskom analizom (TGA) i energetsko disperzivnom spektroskopijom (EDS). Prema TEM analizi svi katalizatori imaju male estice prili no sli ne veli ine izme u 1 i 3 nm. Dobijeni rezultati su potvrdili uspešnu sintezu katalizatora na bazi Pt. Dodavanje Zn i Sn u Pt katalizator zna ajno poboljšava aktivnost oksidacije metanola u pore enju sa Pt/C referentnim katalizatorom. Testovi stabilnosti tako e dokazuju slabije trovanje i ukazuju na bolju stabilnost i ve u toleranciju na CO intermedijere. Uo ena visoka kataliti ka aktivnost i dobra stabilnost u reakciji oksidacije metanola sintetizovanih katalizatora mogu se pripisati veoma efikasnoj mikrotalasnoj sintezi i dobro izbalansiranom sadržaju Zn i Sn kao legiraju ih metala.

Klju ne re i: Platinski katalizatori; Elektooksidacija metanola; Mikrotalasna sinteza;

Abstract

This study is focused on novel ways for creating Pt alloy catalysts that are more effective for the methanol oxidation reaction. PtZn, PtSn and PtSnZn nanoparticles were produced using the microwave assisted polyol method and were supported on high surface area carbon Vulcan XC-72R material. The electrochemical behaviour of synthesized catalysts was investigated utilizing the cyclic voltammetry and chronoamperometric technique. To determine the

catalyst's physicochemical characteristics, transmission electron microscopy analysis (TEM), energy dispersive spectroscopy (EDS) and thermogravimetric analysis (TGA) were used. According to TEM analysis all catalysts have small particles of rather similar size between 1 and 3 nm. The obtained results confirmed the successful synthesis of Pt-based catalyst. Addition of Zn and Sn to Pt significantly improves methanol oxidation activity in comparison to Pt/C benchmark catalyst. Stability tests also prove the lower poisoning and indicate better stability and higher tolerance to CO-like intermediaries. The observed high catalytic activity and good stability in the methanol oxidation reaction of synthesized catalyst can be ascribed to the very efficient microwave synthesis and well-balanced content of Zn and Sn as alloying metal.

Keywords: *Platinum Catalysts; Methanol Electrooxidation; Microwave Synthesis;*

Introduction

Fuel cells with methanol (DMFC) as fuel are very promising sources of energy for stationary and portable electrical devices primarily due to their high efficiency and low emissions of pollutants, low operating temperature, high energy density, non-toxic and environmentally friendly characteristics. However, their wider commercial use is limited by factors such as: the high cost of the precious metal in the electrocatalyst (for example, Pt) and poor operational durability, i.e. rapid degradation of the catalyst. Also, pure Pt catalysts are easily poisoned by strongly adsorbed species such as CO_{ads} intermediate produced by methanol oxidation during the electrocatalytic reaction. In order to reduce the cost of catalysts and improve their performance, many strategies have been initiated, most of them based on the synthesis of platinum catalysts in which platinum is alloyed with cheaper metals such as Ru[1], Sn[2], Ni[3], Zn [4] etc.. These metals can improve catalyst activity by facilitating the oxidation of highly adsorbed species blocking the platinum surfaces formed during the oxidation reaction of highly adsorbed carbon intermediates at much lower potentials compared to platinum. In this work PtZn/C, PtSn/C and PtSnZn/C catalysts were synthesized by microwave-assisted polyol method and their electrochemical activity and stability was tested for methanol electrooxidation reaction.

Experimental

Catalyst preparation

PtZn, PtSn and PtSnZn nanoparticles were synthesized by microwave assisted polyol method. To obtain these catalysts, 0.5 ml of 0.05 M H₂PtCl₆ solution and 25 ml of ethylene glycol were mixed with 0.5 ml 0.05 M ZnSO₄ solution for

PtZn/C catalyst and 0.5 ml 0.05 M SnCl₂ for PtSn/C catalyst. In order to obtain the PtSnZn/C catalyst, the same amount of platinum and ethylene glycol were mixed with 0.25 ml 0.05 M ZnSO₄ and 0.25 ml 0.05 M SnCl₂ solutions. The reduction reaction was carried out by microwave irradiation at 700 W for 90 s. After microwave heating, the colloidal solution was mixed with 20 ml of Vulcan XC-72R carbon water suspension and 150 ml 2 M H₂SO₄ for 3 h. The final suspension was filtered by vacuum pump and the solid residue was rinsed with high purity water. The solid product was dried for 3h in an N₂ atmosphere at 160 °C. The metal loading for all catalysts was adjusted to 20 mass %.

Physicochemical characterisations

PtZn/C, PtSn/C and PtSnZn/C catalysts were investigated by the thermogravimetric (TGA) and differential thermal (DTA) analyses performed in the range of 30-1000 °C range on a SDT Q600 TGA/DSC instrument (TA Instruments). The chemical composition of all catalysts were obtained by a scanning electron microscope (SEM) Tescan VEGA TS 5130 MM supplied with energy-dispersive X-ray spectroscopy (EDS) detector INCAPentaFET-x3, Oxford Instruments. Transmission electron microscope (TEM) JEM-1400 with an accelerating voltage of 120 kV was employed for detailed characterization of the morphology of the produced catalyst.

Electrochemical characterisations

The electrocatalytic activities of catalysts were examined in 0.5 M H₂SO₄ + 0.5 M CH₃OH solution. Catalysts stabilities were examined by long-term potential cycling and chronoamperometric method. The specific catalyst activities are normalized in relation to the values of platinum mass loading. AUTOLAB potentiostat / galvanostat PGStat 128N (E CO Chemie, The Netherlands) was employed for electro-chemical measurements.

Results and discussion

PtZn/C, PtSn/C and PtSnZn/C catalysts were analysed by the TGA/DTA analysis, and EDX examination. The results for TGA and EDX were presented in Table 1.

Table 1. TGA and EDS analyses for PtZn/C, PtSn/C and PtSnZn/C catalysts.

Catalyst	Metal content from TGA (mass %)	The Pt:Zn atomic ratios	
		Nominal (mass %)	EDS (mass %)
PtZn/C	27.68	75 : 25	87 : 13
PtSn/C	19	50 : 50	54 : 46
PtSnZn/C	22.87	63 : 21 : 12	70 : 21 : 9

TGA analysis determined for the PtZn/C and PtSnZn/C catalysts slightly higher value of residual mass in comparison to the nominal value and it can be attributed to the presence of ZnO in the catalyst which can increase the reaction extent during the heating procedure.

According to the TEM study, the particle sizes of all catalysts were fairly similar, the observed catalyst particles have diameters of 1.63 ± 0.3 nm for PtZn/C catalyst, 2.5 ± 0.8 nm for PtSn/C catalyst and 1.8 ± 0.4 nm for PtSnZn/C catalyst.

Methanol oxidation

The activities of the *as prepared* PtZn/C, PtSn/C and PtSnZn/C catalysts for methanol oxidation reaction were evaluated from potentiodynamic measurements (Fig. 1).

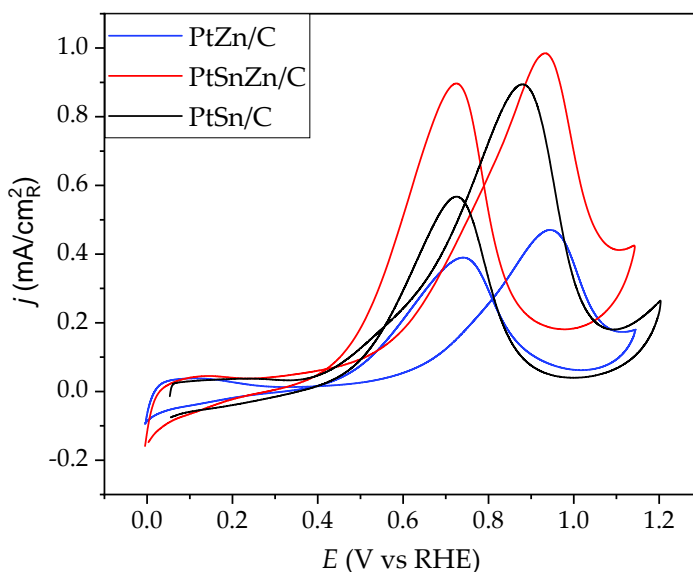


Fig. 1. Potentiodynamic measurements of the *as prepared* PtZn/C, PtSn/C and PtSnZn/C catalysts for 0.5 M CH₃OH electrooxidation reaction.

Based on the electrochemical tests related to the PtZn/C, PtSn/C and PtSnZn/C catalysts, the best performance showed the PtSnZn/C catalyst. The maximum forward activities of all catalysts are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Summary of maximum forward activity for synthesised PtZn/C, PtSn/C and PtSnZn/C catalysts.

Catalyst	$J_{max}(\text{mA}/\text{cm}^2_{\text{R}})$
PtZn/C	0.47
PtSn/C	0.88
PtSnZn/C	0.99

Analyzing the CVs from Fig.1 it can be noticed that for methanol oxidation reaction for all catalysts, peak current in forward (anodic) scan is higher than in reverse (cathodic) scan. Since the peak in reverse scan is due to removal of intermediates formed during the forward scan than the ratio between peak currents in the forward and backward scan (j_f/j_b) can be used to define the catalyst tolerance to carbonaceous species [5]. As a matter of fact, a higher ratio corresponds to a lower j_b peak, which suggests that less unwanted CO molecules adsorbed on the catalyst surfaces. This ratio is highest for PtSn/C catalysts for methanol electrooxidation reaction and suggests higher resistance versus poisoning intermediate products. Compared with commercial Pt/C E-TEK catalysts and Pt-Sn-Zn catalysts reported in the literature, our PtSnZn/C catalysts showed greater activity for the methanol electrooxidation reaction [6-9]. All values for j_f/j_b ratio are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3. Summary values of j_f/j_b of PtZn/C, PtSn/C and PtSnZn/C catalysts for methanol electrooxidation reaction.

Catalyst	J_f/J_b
PtZn/C	1.2
PtSn/C	1.56
PtSnZn/C	1.14

Conclusions

The microwave assisted polyol method was used to successful synthesis of carbon supported Pt-Sn-Zn catalysts with enhanced efficiency for the methanol electrooxidation reaction. The results from cyclic voltammetry experiments related to methanol oxidation reaction showed that the best catalytic activity and improved resistance ability to CO inhibition is achieved after addition of Zn and Sn to Pt catalyst. Pt-Sn-Zn/C catalysts offer the opportunity to decrease the amount of pricey noble metals in DMFC since they have superior MOR activity than commercial Pt catalysts and catalysts reported in the literature.

Acknowledgments

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