
Hyebin Lim, Sungcheol Kim, Doohwan Lee

Abstract: We studied effects of nitrogen and oxygen atomic co-functionalization of graphite felt (GF) by ammoxidation reactions for the electrode of vanadium redox flow battery (VRFB).

Ammoxidative surface reactions of the pristine-GF with NH$_3$/O$_2$ results in effective N and O co-doping dominantly with kinetically relevant N and O functional groups; pyridinic-N, pyrrolic-N, and hydroxyl with high site densities. The N and O co-functionalization gives rise to greater reaction kinetics for both half-cell reactions than the conventional electrodes doped only with O functional groups (O-GF). The high electrocatalytic properties of N-GF afford greater voltage and energy efficiencies in VRFB than the O-GF electrode at high current density (110 mA cm$^{-2}$) with high charge/discharge capability owing to the significantly reduced overpotential. These results suggest the contributions of N and O co-functionalization of carbon electrode for facilitation of vanadium redox kinetics and the high effectiveness of the simple and scalable ammoxidation-based functionalization protocol.

Keywords: Carbon electrode; Surface functionalization; Ammoxidation treatment; Nitrogen doping; Oxygen doping; Vanadium redox flow battery