In-situ spectroscopic studies of SOFC cathode materials

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In-situ X-ray photoelectron spectroscopy (XPS) and infrared (IR) spectroscopy studies of SOFC cathode materials will be discussed in this presentation. The mixed conducting perovskites (ABO3) containing rare and alkaline earth metals on the A-site and a transition metal on the B-site are commonly used as cathodes for solid oxide fuel cells (SOFC). However, the details of the oxygen reduction reaction are still not clearly understood. The information about the type of adsorbed oxygen species and their concentration is important for a mechanistic understanding of the oxygen incorporation into these cathode materials. XPS has been widely used for the analysis of adsorbed species and surface structure. However, the conventional XPS experiments have the severe drawback to operate at room temperature and with the sample under ultrahigh vacuum (UHV) conditions, which is far from the relevant conditions of SOFC operation. The disadvantages of conventional XPS can be overcome to a large extent with a "high pressure" XPS setup installed at the BESSY II synchrotron. It allows sample depth profiling over 2 nm without sputtering by variation of the excitation energy, and most importantly measurements under a residual gas pressure in the mbar range.

It is also well known that the catalytic activity for the oxygen reduction is very sensitive to their electrical conductivity and oxygen nonstoichiometry. Although the electrical conductivity of perovskite oxides has been intensively studied as a function of temperature or oxygen partial pressure (Po2), in-situ measurements of the conductivity of these materials in contact with the electrolyte as a SOFC configuration have little been reported. In order to measure the in-plane conductivity of an electrode film on the electrolyte, a substrate with high resistance is required for excluding the leakage current of the substrate. It is also hardly possible to measure the conductivity of cracked thin film by electrical methods. In this study, we report the electrical conductivity of perovskite $La_{0.6}Sr_{0.4}CoO_{3-\delta}$ (LSC) thin films on yttria-stabilized zirconia (YSZ) electrolyte quantitatively obtained by in-situ IR spectroscopy. This method enables a reliable measurement of the electronic conductivity of the electrodes as part of the SOFC configuration regardless of leakage current to the substrate and cracks in the film.

Keywords: Solid oxide fuel cell, spectroscopy, cathode

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Characterization of a SOFC using impedance spectroscopy and current voltage behavior analysis

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고체산화물연료전지의 전기적 성능은 직류를 인가하면서 평형 전위로 부터 과전압(Overpotential) 만큼 멀어지는 셀의 전극 전위를 측정하는 방법으로 분석할 수 있다. 하지만 이러한 직류 상태에서는 측정 시스템에 대해서 얻을 수 있는 정보가 매우 제한 적이다. 따라서 활성화 과전압 (Activation overpotential), 농도 과전압(Concentration overpotential), 저항 과전압 (Ohmic overpotential)등의 전류에 따른 변화가 전기화학의 법칙을 충실히 따른다는 가정하에 측정결과를 수식에 맞추어역으로 추정하는 회귀 분석 방법이 많이 사용되고 있다. 하지만 고성능의 셀이 될 수록 활성화 분극이나 농도 분극이 전류전압 선상에서 뚜렷하게 나타나지 않는 경우가 많고, 이러한 상태에서의 회귀 분석은 해는 무한히 많으나 하나의 해 만을 선택하게 되는 경우가 있는 것이 사실이다. 이러한 문제점은 연료전지에 직류와 교류를 동시에 인가하면서 과전압과 임피던스를 상호 비교 분석하면서 보완될 수 있다. 따라서 본 연구에서는 고체산화물연료전지의 직류 인가 상태에서 각 과전압을 간단한 수식을 이용한 회귀 분석으로 추정하고, 이를 다시 임피던스 측정 시 교류 주파수에 따라 나뉜 저항 요소들과다시 비교하면서 회귀 분석의 신뢰성을 높이는 시도를 하였다. 이러한 과정을 통해 제시된 직류 고전압 모델을 검증하는데 임피던스의 이용이 매우 효과적임을 알 수 있었다.

Keywords: SOFC, Modeling, Impedance