

DEVELOPMENT OF ANODE CATALYSTS FOR DIRECT GLUCOSE ALKALINE FUEL CELL

by

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Submitted

**in fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**

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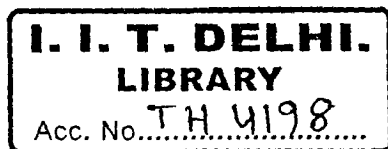


INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY DELHI

January 2012

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Dedicated to my husband
Mr. Partha Sarathi Chandra

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled **Development of anode catalysts for direct glucose alkaline fuel cell**, being submitted by **Ms. Debika Basu** to the Indian Institute of Technology Delhi is a record of bona fide research work carried out by her. She has worked under my guidance and supervision and has fulfilled the requirements, which to my knowledge, has reached the requisite standard for the submission of this thesis. The results contained in this thesis have not been submitted in part or full to any University or Institute for the award of any degree or diploma.



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Any accomplishment requires the efforts of many people and this work is not different. First of all, I would like to express my gratitude and heartiest thanks to Professor Suddhasatwa Basu for his sincere guidance and continuous encouragement. He has always shown immense patience and dedicated interest for rectifying my mistakes and improving my research skills through discussions devoting his invaluable time. I am fortunate enough to work under his supervision. He has influenced me both in academic and personal front.

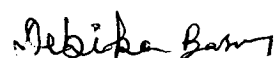
I wish to thank Dr. Anupam Shukla, Dr. K. K. Pant, Dr. Manish Sharma and Dr. V. V. Krishnan for their valuable suggestions and requisite guidance on technical issues particularly during comprehensive and synopsis seminars. I am highly thankful to the Head of the Department, Professor S. K. Gupta and Professor A. N. Bhaskarwar for offering generous help during their tenure. I sincerely acknowledge Professor A. K. Gupta, Dr. Shantanu Roy and Dr. A. K. Saroha for their valuable suggestions and supports. I am also grateful to all the faculty members for their help and cooperation whenever needed.

I wish to thank All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) for financial support during my research period. I thank all the non-teaching staffs of Chemical Engineering Department for their help and support, Centre for Polymer Science and Engineering for providing me SEM and EDX facilities and department of Physics and Chemistry for facilitating TEM and XRD of prepared catalysts.

It was a great pleasure to work with my lab-mates in Fuel Cell Lab. I am very thankful to Dr. Amit Kumar Gupta, Dr. Anand Singh, Mr. Sandip Biswas, Ms. Rajalekhmi Chockalingam, Ms. Gurpreet Kaur, Mr. Varagunapandyan N., Mr. Amandeep Jindal, Mr. Shaneeth M., Ms. Ranoo Pathak, Mr. Pankaj Kumar Tiwari, Mr. Pawan Kumar, Mr. Nalli Sanjeev and all other lab members. I would like to thank Mr. Sunder Singh especially for his great assistance in carrying out my experimental runs.

I must express my heartiest respect for my parents Mr. Deb Kumar Basu and Mrs. Santi Lata Basu who always support me and help me to take over challenges through devotion and hard work. I am grateful to my parents in law Mr. Biswanath Chandra and Mrs. Arati Chandra for their well wishes. I sincerely thank my elder brother Dr. Saugata Basu and all the members of my family and friends for giving me all kind of support whenever I need.

The research would not have been possible without the support of my husband, Mr. Partha Sarathi Chandra. I will always be thankful to him for his tremendous patience, continuous inspiration and encouragement to generate positivity and strength inside me to accomplish the ultimate goal.



(DEBIKA BASU)

ABSTRACT

With an increasing demand of pollution free and cheap energy, investigators are focusing research on fuel cell technology. Recently, investigators have started working on metal catalysed direct glucose fuel cell (DGFC) which can be used in medical implants and non-enzymatic glucose sensors and also for powering small portable electronic instruments. In the present investigation, carbon supported platinum based bi- and tri- metallic catalysts with low metal loading (ca. 15 wt. %) are synthesized and tested to determine efficiency and stability towards glucose electro-oxidation through half-cell studies. The prepared electro-catalysts are then used as anode catalysts by fabricating DGFC with aqueous solution of KOH as electrolyte.

Electro-catalysts e.g., PtAu/C, PtBi/C, PtRu/C, PdPt/C, PtPdAu/C and PtPdBi/C are synthesized by aqueous phase reduction technique using NaBH₄ as reducing agent. The physical characterizations confirm the formation of nano-sized metal particles on carbon substrate and indicate that the presence of metal by wt. is 21% in PdPt/C and PtRu/C, 15% in PtPdAu/C and PtPdBi/C and 14.5% in PtAu/C and PtBi/C catalysts. The efficiency, stability and the rate of poisoning of the prepared catalysts are determined along with commercial PtRu/C for glucose electro-oxidation using cyclic voltammetry (CV) and chronoamperometry (CA) techniques. The charge transfer coefficient, α_a , for glucose electro-oxidation is estimated as 0.4 for PtAu/C, 0.26 for PtPdAu/C and 0.24 for PtBi/C from CV analyses. Chronoamperometry is conducted to find out the performance stability and the rate of poisoning of the anode catalysts. The long term poisoning rate found from CA analyses is lowest for PtPdAu/C (0.0037 % s⁻¹) followed by PtAu/C (0.0046 % s⁻¹).

The glucose-KOH solution is placed in between the electrodes in batch mode of operation. Commercial activated charcoal is used as cathode catalyst in DGFC. The cell performance is recorded by measuring current density and voltage (i-V) at varying operating conditions e.g., glucose and KOH concentrations, temperature, anode catalyst type and catalyst loadings. The DGFC performance decreases beyond 1.5 M KOH concentration and 40 °C temperature. The highest specific current and power density (specific peak power density: 2.22 mW cm⁻² mg⁻¹) is obtained for 0.3 M glucose in 1 M KOH solution at 3 mg cm⁻² PtAu/C anode catalyst loading at 30 °C. The longevity test of DGFC with commercial PtRu/C and prepared PtAu/C suggests that the DGFC performance can be improved by washing and re-feeding the cell with fresh glucose-KOH solution at regular intervals. The ohmic and charge transfer resistances of DGFC are obtained through impedance analyses for different anode catalysts and at different operating conditions. The lowest charge transfer resistance is observed for DGFC with PtAu/C anode.

A mathematical model is developed for DGFC considering activation, ohmic and concentration overpotentials for predicting cell voltage at a given current density. The model predicts experimental data on i-V characteristics fairly well for different anode catalysts e.g., PtAu/C, PtPdAu/C and PtBi/C, different anode loadings and different glucose and KOH concentrations.

Based on the experimental and theoretical analyses, PtAu/C found to be most suitable anode catalyst for DGFC in terms of cell performance, longevity and stability of the catalyst.

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