



Preparation of porous Ni-Fe-Sn electrode by electrodeposition and its electrocatalytic behavior of oxygen evolution

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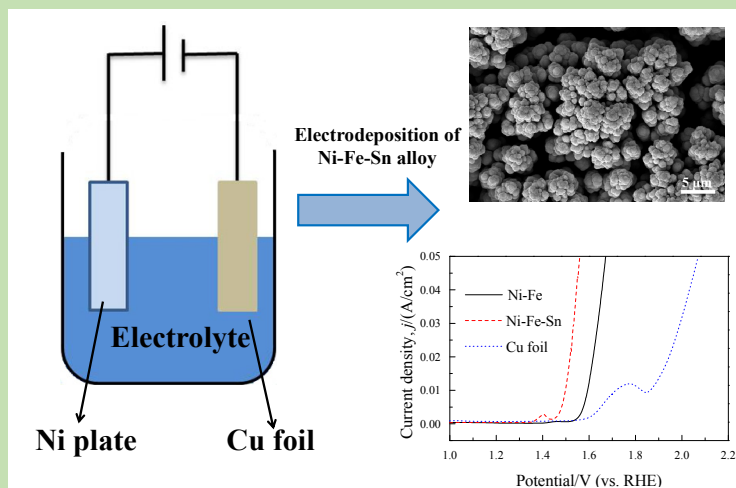
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Abstract: Oxygen evolution reaction (OER) is one of the core reactions in the field of electrochemistry and subjected to a lot of studies for many years. But it is still one of the most complicated electrochemical processes and of practical importance. Specifically, the development of efficient and low-cost non-precious catalyst for the OER is still a key challenge for the renewable energy research community. In this study, electrodeposited porous nickel-iron-tin (Ni-Fe-Sn) alloy on Cu foil as an efficient OER electrocatalyst in alkaline medium was introduced. The obtained alloy was analyzed by scanning electron microscopy (SEM) with energy dispersive spectroscopy (EDS), X-ray diffraction (XRD), respectively. The OER electrocatalytic performance of Ni-Fe-Sn alloy was investigated by linear sweep voltammetry (LSV), cyclic voltammetry (CV), electrochemical impedance spectroscopy (EIS), and chronoamperometry (CP) in 30wt% KOH solution. In addition, the Ni-Fe-Sn alloy was further tested as anodes for alkaline water electrolysis during at least 12 h with good stability. The results showed that the obtained Ni-Fe-Sn alloy was composed of Ni₃Sn₂ and FeNi₃ phases. The EDS result of Ni-Fe-Sn alloy showed the existence of three elements (Fe, Ni and Sn). SEM images displayed that the surface of the Ni-Fe-Sn alloy had porous structure, which provided more active sites for the OER. OER measurements demonstrated that the Ni-Fe-Sn alloy was highly effective for the OER with a low overpotential of 261 mV to reach 10 mA/cm² and a small Tafel slope of 69.9 mV/dec. The excellent electrocatalytic activity, long-term stability and facile preparation method enabled Ni-Fe-Sn alloy to be a viable candidate for its widespread use in various water-splitting technologies. The better OER activity of Ni-Fe-Sn alloy in comparison to Ni-Fe alloy originated from higher electrochemical active surface area (ECSA) and the improved mass/electron transport capability due to synergetic effect between Ni, Fe and Sn.

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Key words: Ni-Fe-Sn alloy; oxygen evolution reaction; water splitting; electrodeposition



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电沉积制备多孔 Ni-Fe-Sn 合金电极及其析氧性能

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摘要: 采用直流电沉积法在铜箔表面合成了多孔结构的 Ni-Fe-Sn 合金, 用扫描电子显微镜、X 射线能谱仪和 X 射线衍射仪对合金的微观组织形貌和相态进行了表征, 用电化学工作站测试了合金电极在碱性环境中的析氧性能。结果表明, Ni-Fe-Sn 合金电极主要由 Ni_3Sn_2 和 FeNi_3 相组成, 电极表面形成了多孔结构。在 30wt% KOH 溶液中, Ni-Fe-Sn 合金的析氧过电位仅为 261 mV(电流密度 10 mA/cm²), Tafel 斜率为 69.9 mV/dec。电极在 10 mA/cm² 电流密度下能稳定工作 12 h 以上, 具有良好的电化学稳定性。

关键词: Ni-Fe-Sn 合金; 析氧反应; 电解水; 电沉积

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1 前言

氢能因具有能量密度高和清洁无污染等优点, 被视为一种理想的能源载体^[1-3]。大规模、低成本地生产氢气是开发和利用氢能的重要前提。在众多的制氢技术中, 电解水制氢具有原料来源广泛、操作简单、产品纯度高和无污染等优势, 已成为最具应用前景的制氢方法之一, 产氢量已达全球产氢量的 4%。水电解制氢过程中, 由于存在阴、阳极析氢和析氧过电位, 极大地增加了槽电压, 增加了成本^[4]。水电解过程中, 阳极析氧反应(OER)比阴极析氢反应(HER)缓慢, 其过电位比 HER 高 200~300 mV, 降低阳极的析氧过电位可一定程度上降低水电解成本^[5]。贵金属析氧催化剂(RuO_2 和 IrO_2)具有优异的析氧催化性能, 但其储量较低且价格昂贵, 难以大规模工业应用。研发廉价高效的析氧催化剂具有重要的科学意义和实际应用价值。

过渡金属(Ni, Fe 和 Co)在碱性溶液中具有较高的析氧催化活性和良好的稳定性, 在水电解工业中广泛用于阳极材料^[6]。由于 Ni 和 Fe 存在极强的协同效应, Ni-Fe 合金具有较好的 OER 活性^[7,8]。Michele 等^[9]发现掺杂锡(Sn)元素可提高 Fe_2O_3 的导电性和降低界面电荷转移电阻, 从而提高材料的析氧性能。Mani 等^[10]发现在 FeHP 中掺杂 Sn 后, 其析氧过电位由 442 mV(电流密度 $j=10 \text{ mA/cm}^2$)降到 359 mV, 原因是掺杂 Sn 提高了电子转移速度, 进而提高了材料的析氧催化活性。本工作采用直流电沉积法在铜箔表面制备 Ni-Fe-Sn 合金, 考察了合金在 30wt% KOH 溶液中的析氧催化性能, 探讨了析氧反应的动力学机理。

2 实验

2.1 材料与试剂

NaOH、十二水磷酸三钠($\text{Na}_3\text{PO}_4 \cdot 12\text{H}_2\text{O}$)、 Na_2CO_3 、 Na_2SiO_3 、 $\text{NiSO}_4 \cdot 6\text{H}_2\text{O}$ 、 $\text{FeSO}_4 \cdot 7\text{H}_2\text{O}$ 、 $\text{SnCl}_2 \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$ 、 H_3BO_3 、NaCl 和柠檬酸三钠($\text{Na}_3\text{C}_6\text{H}_5\text{O}_7 \cdot 6\text{H}_2\text{O}$)均为西陇化工股份有限公司产品。铜箔(广州骏丰铜铝业有限公司), 镍片(东莞市峰创金属材料有限公司)。

2.2 实验设备与分析仪器

直流稳压电源(100 V 10 A, 东莞市峰创金属材料有限公司), SHJ-2D 水浴恒温磁力搅拌器(金坛市西城新瑞仪器厂), KQ2200E 超声波清洗机(昆山市超声仪器有限公司), CHI660B 电化学工作站(上海辰华公司)。

2.3 合金电极的制备

2.3.1 基体材料预处理

以纯铜箔(纯度 99.9%, 10 mm×10 mm×0.5 mm)为阴极、大面积镍片为阳极。电沉积前用砂纸对铜箔打磨抛光, 再用热碱进行化学除油(热碱配方见表 1, 温度 70℃, 保温时间 3 min), 用 10wt% 盐酸酸洗活化, 用去离子水冲洗干净, 烘干备用。

表 1 碱洗除油配方

Table 1 Formulation of alkaline degreasing				
Agent	NaOH	$\text{Na}_3\text{PO}_4 \cdot 12\text{H}_2\text{O}$	Na_2CO_3	Na_2SiO_3
Concentration/(g/L)	15	60	25	15

2.3.2 镀液组成及工艺条件

采用单阳极单阴极体系在铜箔表面合成 Ni-Fe-Sn 合金, 镀液配方为: 100 g/L $\text{NiSO}_4 \cdot 6\text{H}_2\text{O}$, 25 g/L $\text{FeSO}_4 \cdot 7\text{H}_2\text{O}$, 10 g/L $\text{SnCl}_2 \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$, 20 g/L H_3BO_3 , 35 g/L NaCl 和 70 g/L $\text{Na}_3\text{C}_6\text{H}_5\text{O}_7 \cdot 6\text{H}_2\text{O}$, pH 值为 4.0。电沉积的电流密度为 20 mA/cm², 温度为 40℃, 时间为

60 min。所制样品用去离子水冲洗干净,自然晾干后备用。

2.4 合金电极的物理性能和电催化性能

用 ZEISS EVO18 型扫描电子显微镜(SEM, 德国卡尔蔡司公司)观察 Ni-Fe-Sn 电极表面的微观形貌。采用 X'Pert Powder 多功能 X 射线衍射仪(XRD, 荷兰 PANalytical 公司)分析电极表面的物相组成,管电压 40 kV,管电流 30 mA,铜靶,波长 0.15418 nm,扫描范围 $2\theta=10^\circ\sim 80^\circ$,步长 0.05° ,时间间隔 1 s。

用电化学工作站对 Ni-Fe-Sn 合金电极进行电化学测试,工作电极为 Ni-Fe-Sn 合金电极,参比电极为饱和甘汞电极(SCE),辅助电极为铂电极,电解液为 30wt% KOH 溶液。采用线性扫描(LSV)曲线测试电极的析氧催化活性,扫描速度 2 mV/s。电化学阻抗测试(EIS)频率范围为 $10^5\sim 10^{-2}$ Hz,振幅 5 mV,测试电压为 1.5 V (vs. RHE)。采用恒电流计时电位法(Chronopotentiometry, CP)在 10 mA/cm² 电流密度下测试其稳定性,测试电位 E (vs. RHE)= E (vs. SCE)+0.059pH+0.197 V,过电位 $\eta=E$ (vs. RHE)-1.23 V(理论分解电压)。

3 结果与讨论

3.1 电极表面微观结构

图 1 为 Ni-Fe 和 Ni-Fe-Sn 合金的 XRD 谱。由图可见, Ni-Fe-Sn 合金中 $2\theta=43.46^\circ$, 50.52° 和 74.20° 的峰分别为 FeNi₃ (pdf: 38-0419) 相的(111), (200)和(220)晶面, $2\theta=30.5^\circ$ 处为 Ni₃Sn₂ (pdf: 07-0256) 相的(101)晶面。与 Ni-Fe 合金的 XRD 谱对比可知, Sn 成功掺杂在 Ni-Fe 合金电极中。

图 2 为 Ni-Fe-Sn 合金电极的能谱,质量比 Ni:Fe:Sn=51.88:1.79:46.81,表明 Ni, Fe 和 Sn 元素均已成功沉积进入电极中。

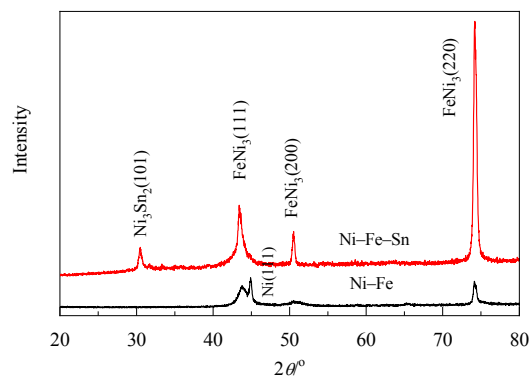


图 1 Ni-Fe-Sn 和 Ni-Fe 合金的 XRD 谱
Fig.1 XRD patterns of Ni-Fe-Sn and Ni-Fe alloys

图 3 为 Ni-Fe 合金和 Ni-Fe-Sn 合金电极的 SEM 照片。由图可知,相同放大倍数下 Ni-Fe 合金电极的表面平整,但存在裂纹, Ni-Fe-Sn 合金电极形成了多孔结构,原因是其具有较高的析氢催化活性,在电沉积制备过程中电极表面大量析氢未及时排出,在镀层表面大量富集形成了气泡,破裂后导致电极表面呈多孔结构^[11,12],可增加材料的比表面积,有利于提高电极析氧催化性能。

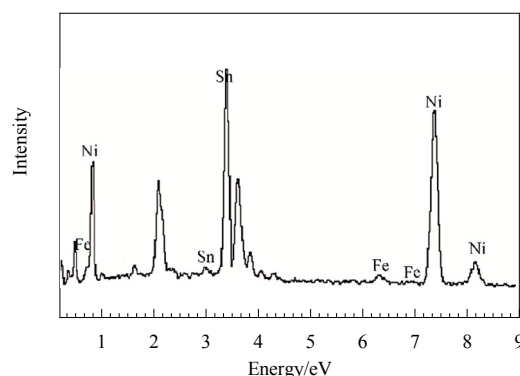
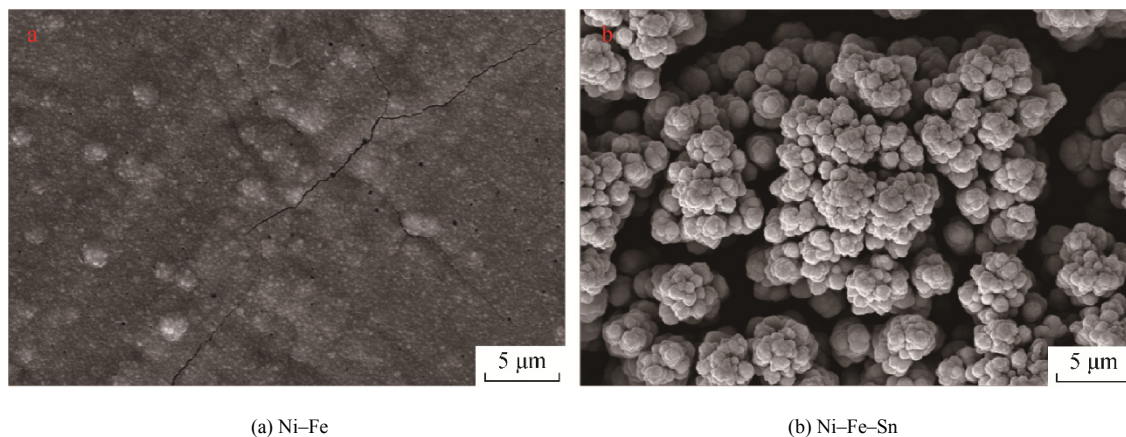


图 2 Ni-Fe-Sn 合金电极的能谱
Fig.2 EDS spectrum of Ni-Fe-Sn electrode



(a) Ni-Fe (b) Ni-Fe-Sn

图 3 Ni-Fe 和 Ni-Fe-Sn 合金电极的 SEM 照片
Fig.3 SEM images of Ni-Fe and Ni-Fe-Sn electrodes

3.2 电极的电催化活性

图4为Ni-Fe-Sn和Ni-Fe合金电极作为析氧催化剂的电化学性能。由图4(a)可知,相同电压下Ni-Fe-Sn合金的电流密度比Ni-Fe合金大,表明掺杂Sn可增加Ni-Fe合金的析氧催化活性。电流密度为10 mA/cm²时,Ni-Fe-Sn和Ni-Fe合金的过电位分别为261和365 mV。为更好解释Ni-Fe-Sn和Ni-Fe合金电极的催化动

力学行为,根据Tafel公式^[13] $\eta = b \log j + a$ (其中 η 为过电势, b 为Tafel斜率, j 为电流密度)推算了Tafel斜率。一般 b 越小,反应本征动力学越快,催化性能更优。从图4(b)可知,Ni-Fe-Sn和Ni-Fe合金电极的Tafel斜率分别为69.9和89.5 mV/dec,因此Ni-Fe-Sn合金电极的本征催化动力学较快,比Ni-Fe合金的析氧催化活性高。

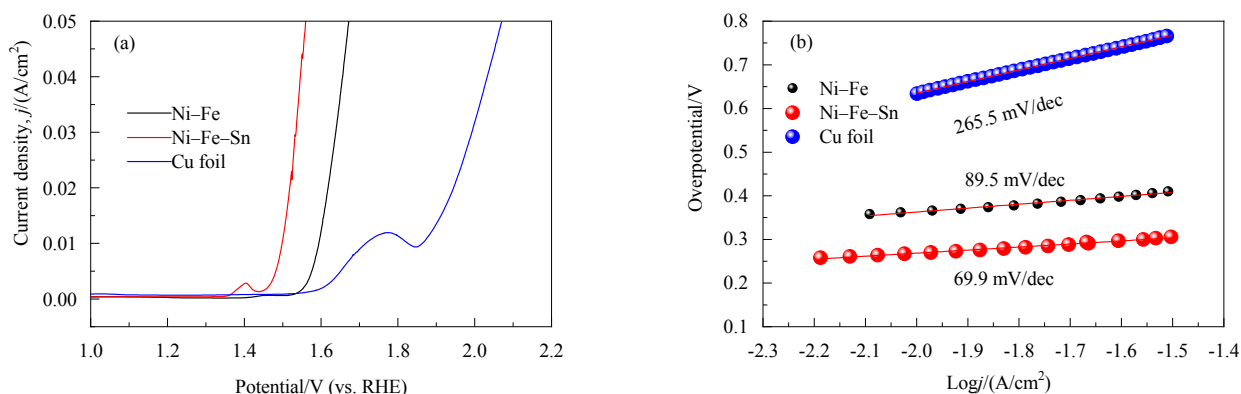


图4 Ni-Fe和Ni-Fe-Sn合金在30wt% KOH溶液中的析氧极化曲线和相应塔菲尔曲线

Fig.4 Polarization curves of the Ni-Fe-Sn and Ni-Fe alloy electrodes in 30wt% KOH solution at 25°C and the corresponding Tafel curves of the electrodes

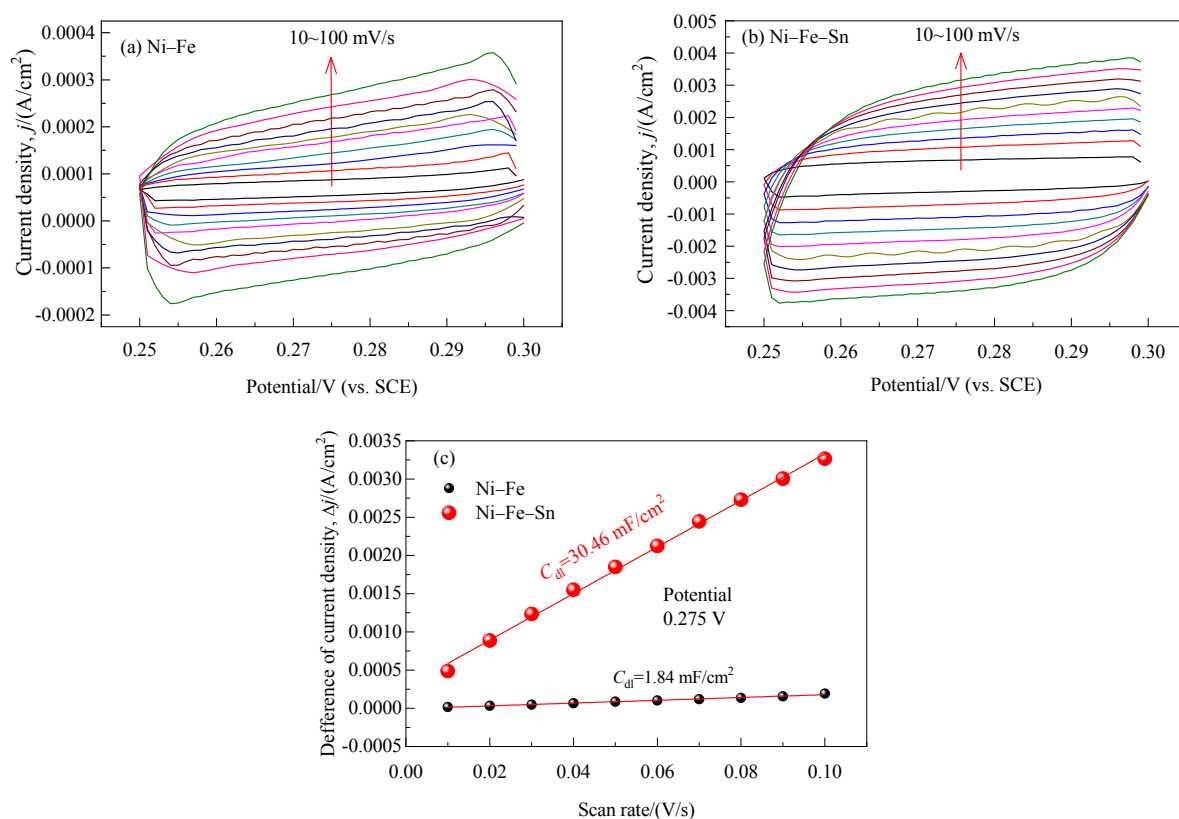


图5 不同扫面速度下合金电极的循环伏安曲线和阴极电流密度差

Fig.5 Cyclic voltammograms and difference of current density between anode and cathode of alloy electrodes under different scan rates

电极催化性能与电极比表面积有直接关系^[14,15], 比表面积越大, 催化活性越大, 双电层电容(C_{dl})取决于电极表面积。采用循环伏安法测试电化学双电层电容, 估算电极活性表面积。图 5(a)和 5(b)为 Ni-Fe 和 Ni-Fe-Sn 合金电极在电压 0.25~0.30 V(vs. SCE)下的循环伏安曲线, 扫描速率 10~100 mV/s。图 5(c)为合金电极的阳极电流密度(j_a)和阴极电流密度(j_c)的差值($\Delta j=j_a-j_c$)与扫描速率的关系。斜率的一半即为双电层电容(C_{dl})。由图可知, Ni-Fe-Sn 和 Ni-Fe 电极的 C_{dl} 分别为 30.46 和 1.84 mF/cm²。假设平滑金属表面的平均微分电容约为 20 μ F/cm², 则电极的活性比表面积 $ECSA=C_{dl}/20$, 电极的粗糙因子 $R_f=ECSA/S_{app}$, S_{app} 为电极的几何面积。电极的比表面积及相对粗糙因子如表 2 所示, 可见 Ni-Fe-Sn 合金的活性表面积为 Ni-Fe 合金的 16.5 倍, 与图 2 结果一致。

为进一步研究 Ni-Fe-Sn 合金电极析氧反应的动力学特征, 测试了 Ni-Fe 和 Ni-Fe-Sn 合金电极在 30wt%

KOH 溶液中的电化学交流阻抗(EIS)谱。图 6(a)为 Ni-Fe 和 Ni-Fe-Sn 合金电极在 1.6 V (vs. RHE)电压下的交流阻抗。采用 ZsimpWin 软件拟合^[16], 模拟等效电路 (EEC)如图 6(b)所示(R_s 为溶液电阻, 反应电阻 R_{ct} 与圆弧半径有关), 一般圆弧半径越大, 电极上析氢电阻越大, 析氢反应越不易发生。拟合参数见表 3, 由表可知, Ni-Fe-Sn 和 Ni-Fe 合金电极的 R_{ct} 分别为 1.06 和 3.97 Ω , 表明 Sn 可使电极中的电子传输速率变快, 使电极具有较高的析氢催化活性, 与图 4(a)的结果一致。

表 2 电极的比表面积及相对粗糙因子
Table 2 The real areas and roughness factors of the electrodes

Alloy electrode	Electrochemical double-layer capacity $C_{dl}/(\text{mF}/\text{cm}^2)$	Electrochemical surface area, ECSA/ cm^2	Roughness factor, R_f
Ni-Fe-Sn	30.46	1523	1523
Ni-Fe	1.84	92	92

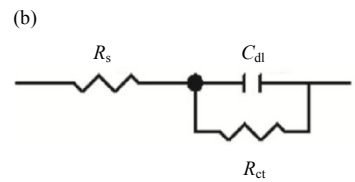
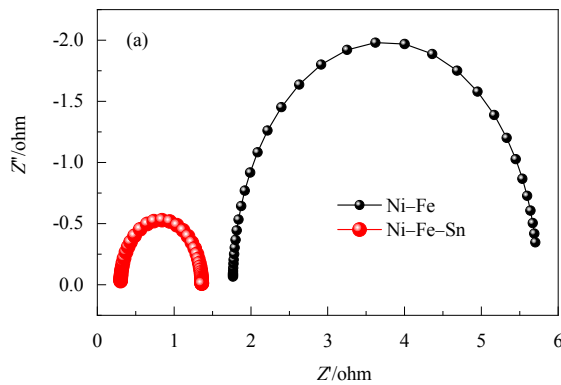


图 6 Ni-Fe-Sn 和 Ni-Fe 电极的交流阻抗和等效电路
Fig.6 Impedance spectra of Ni-Fe-Sn and Ni-Fe electrodes and electric equivalent circuit

表 3 等效电路拟合的电极电化学阻抗谱参数
Table 3 EIS fitted parameters of the electrode equivalent circuit

Electrode	Solution resistance, $R_s/(\Omega/\text{cm}^2)$	Charge transfer resistance, $R_{ct}/(\Omega/\text{cm}^2)$	Double-layer capacity, $C_{dl}/(\text{mF}/\text{cm}^2)$
Ni-Fe	1.765	3.97	24.6
Ni-Fe-Sn	0.302	1.06	5.72

电化学稳定性是催化剂能否实际应用的主要参数之一^[17,18]。Ni-Fe-Sn 合金电极的稳定性如图 7 所示。由图可知, 在 30wt% KOH 溶液中, Ni-Fe-Sn 电极在 10 mA/cm² 的电流密度下能持续工作 12 h, 电压基本恒定, 电化学稳定性良好, 具有良好的推广应用前景。Ni-Fe-Sn 合金电极优异的析氧催化性能可归因于其具有多孔结构, 极大地增加了比表面积, 表面的活性位点增加, 从而催化性能提高; Ni-Fe-Sn 合金电极的导

电性好, 加快了电子转移速度, 从而加快了析氧反应速率。

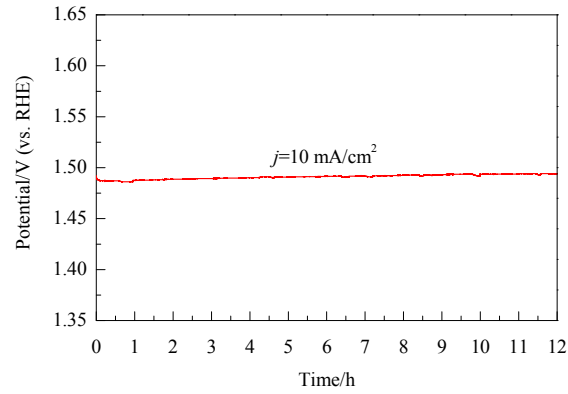


图 7 Ni-Fe-Sn 电极在 30wt% KOH 溶液中的恒电流电解曲线
Fig.7 Galvanostatic electrolysis curve of Ni-Fe-Sn electrode in 30wt% KOH solution

4 结论

采用电沉积法在铜箔表面合成了多孔的 Ni-Fe-Sn 合金电极, 对合金的微观组织形貌和相态进行了表征, 用电化学工作站测试了合金电极在碱性环境中的析氧性能, 得到如下结论:

(1) 在 30wt% KOH 溶液中, Ni-Fe-Sn 合金电极的析氧过电位仅为 261 mV (电流密度 10 mA/cm²), Tafel 斜率为 69.9 mV/dec。Ni-Fe-Sn 合金电极优异的析氧催化性能主要源于掺杂 Sn 后电极的比表面积增加和电子传输速率提升。

(2) 在 30wt% KOH 溶液中, Ni-Fe-Sn 电极在 10 mA/cm² 的电流密度下能持续工作 12 h, 电压基本恒定, 电化学稳定性良好。

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