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# Characterizations on the structural and electronic properties of thermal lithiated Li<sub>0.33</sub>MnO<sub>2</sub>

Y.J. Wei<sup>a</sup>, H. Ehrenberg<sup>b</sup>, K.B. Kim<sup>c,\*</sup>, C.W. Park<sup>d</sup>, Z.F. Huang<sup>a</sup>, C. Baehtz<sup>e</sup>

- <sup>a</sup> College of Materials Science and Engineering, Jilin University, Changchun 130023, China
- <sup>b</sup> Institute for Complex Materials, IFW Dresden, Helmholtzstr. 20, D-01069 Dresden, Germany
- <sup>c</sup> Division of Material Science and Engineering, Yonsei University, 134 Shinchon-dong, Seodaemoon-gu, Seoul 120-749, Republic of Korea
- <sup>d</sup> Center for Advanced Batteries, Korea Electronics Technology Institute, Republic of Korea
- e Deutsches Elektronensynchrotron (DESY), Notkestr. 85, D-22607 Hamburg, Germany

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#### ABSTRACT

A 3V cathode material for lithium ion batteries,  $Li_{0.33}MnO_2$ , was synthesized by solid-state reaction. Two Mn crystallographic positions,  $Mn_{(1)}$  and  $Mn_{(2)}$ , were determined by X-ray diffraction analysis. The  $[Mn_{(2)}O_6]$  octahedron had a lower symmetrical degree than that of  $[Mn_{(1)}O_6]$ , which was attributed to the geometrical effects of the non-symmetrical environment around  $Mn_{(2)}$ .  $Li_{0.33}MnO_2$  delivered a reversible discharge capacity  $\sim$ 140 mA h g<sup>-1</sup>. In situ synchrotron diffraction clearly showed a reversible phase transition of  $Li_{0.33}MnO_2$  during electrochemical process. The analysis of X-ray absorption near edge spectroscopy observed the conversion of  $Mn^{4+}$  to  $Mn^{3+}$  with  $Li^+$  intercalation into  $Li_{0.33}MnO_2$ , accompanied by the formation of more severely distorted  $[MnO_6]$  octahedron.

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### 1. Introduction

Lithium ion batteries have been extensively used in portable electronics such as laptop computers, cellular phones, camcorders and cordless tools (4C-market). They are also considered as potential energy storage devices for future hybrid electric vehicles (HEVs) and electric vehicles (EVs). Most of the commercial lithium ion batteries use LiCoO<sub>2</sub> as the cathode materials. But, the high cost and toxic properties, along with the safety problems hamper the applications of LiCoO<sub>2</sub> in large-scale lithium ion batteries. In recent years, great efforts have been devoted to develop alternative cathode materials to replace LiCoO<sub>2</sub>. Manganese based oxides are among the most attractive candidates because of their economical and environmental advantages. Scientists have developed many kinds of Mn oxides, which could be sorted by 3V (such as  $LiMnO_2$ ) [1,2], 4V (such as  $LiMn_2O_4$ ) [3,4] and 5V (such as LiMn<sub>1.5</sub>Ni<sub>0.5</sub>O<sub>4</sub>) [5,6] cathode materials in the light of discharge potentials.

The thermal lithiated MnO<sub>2</sub> (EMD), Li<sub>0.33</sub>MnO<sub>2</sub>, is one of the 3 V cathode materials, which delivers a reversible discharge capacity of 140–190 mA h g<sup>-1</sup> [7]. The crystal structure of Li<sub>0.33</sub>MnO<sub>2</sub> has been determined by X-ray diffraction and confirmed in the subse-

quent works by Raman scattering and Fourier transform infrared spectroscopy [8,9]. Most of the former works were focused on the

## 2. Experimental

 $Li_{0.33}MnO_2$  was prepared by the conventional solid-state reaction. For the first step,  $MnO_2$  (EMD, Aldrich) powder was pretreated at  $250\,^{\circ}C$  for  $5\,h$  to remove any adsorbed and chemically bonded water. Then,  $MnO_2$  and  $LiNO_3$  (99.5%, Junsei) were

synthesis and electrochemical properties of Li<sub>0.33</sub>MnO<sub>2</sub>. However, it is still ambiguous on the structural changes of Li<sub>0.33</sub>MnO<sub>2</sub> during electrochemical process. Besides this, there is still no report on the electronic properties of as-prepared and electrochemically lithiated Li<sub>0,33</sub>MnO<sub>2</sub>. We have developed recently an in situ battery cell installed on synchrotron diffraction facilities, using which we studied the structural evolution of stoichiometric thermal lithiated MnO<sub>2</sub>, orthorhombic LiMnO<sub>2</sub>, during electrochemical process. We reported for the first time that orthorhombic LiMnO2 transforms to a metastable phase during the first cycle before it eventually transforms to spinel LiMn<sub>2</sub>O<sub>4</sub> [10]. This novel result has not been observed by normal laboratory X-ray diffraction. This indicates that we can obtain high sensitive experimental data by synchrotron radiation, which may lead to finding of new knowledge on material properties. In the present study, high-energy synchrotron techniques, including X-ray diffraction (XRD) and X-ray absorption spectroscopy (XAS) were employed to give clear information on the structural and electronic properties of the as-prepared and electrochemically cycled Li<sub>0.33</sub>MnO<sub>2</sub>.

<sup>\*</sup> Corresponding author. Tel.: +82 2 365 7745; fax: +82 2 312 5375. E-mail address: kbkim@yonsei.ac.kr (K.B. Kim).

weighed in a Li:Mn molar ratio of 0.33, and ball milled to ensure their homogeneous mixing. The resultant mixture was heat treated at  $360\,^{\circ}\text{C}$  for  $20\,\text{h}$  at the ambient condition to obtain the final product.

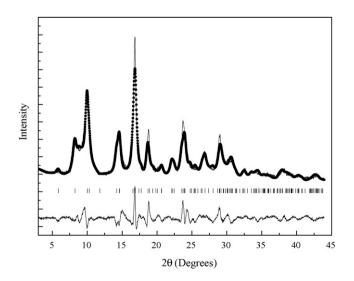
The crystal structure of the material was studied on a STOE STADI/P X-ray powder diffractometer using a monochromic Mo K $\alpha$ 1 radiation ( $\lambda$  = 0.7093 Å). The  $2\theta$  step for data collection was  $0.02^{\circ}$ . Rietveld refinement was applied for data analysis using the WinplotR package [11]. The morphology of the material was examined by scanning electron microscopy (SEM, FEI-Company SIRION<sup>TM</sup>). The microstructure of the material was studied by high-resolution transmission electron microscopy (HRTEM) with a JEOL (JEM-2100F) field emission transmission electron microscopy at an acceleration voltage of 200 kV.

A three-electrode electrochemical cell with a Li foil and a Li wire as the counter and reference electrodes was used for the charge–discharge cycling experiment. The working electrode was composed of a mixture of  $Li_{0.33}MnO_2$  (86 wt.%), carbon black (8 wt.%), and poly-vinylidenefluoride (PVDF, 6 wt.%) dissolved in *N*-methylpyrrolidone (NMP). The electrolyte was a solution of 1 mol  $L^{-1}$  LiClO<sub>4</sub> dissolved in propylene carbonate (PC). The battery cell was cycled on a WonA Tech WBCS-300 battery cycler. The electrochemical experiment was performed in an argon filled glove box with  $H_2O$  and  $O_2$  concentrations below 1 ppm.

In situ X-ray diffraction was performed in the transmission mode at the powder diffraction beamline B2 of the Deutsches Elektronensynchrotron (DESY) in Hamburg, Germany. For the in situ XRD measurements, we used a dedicated Swagelok-type cell as described elsewhere [12]. A wavelength of  $\lambda$  = 0.47189 Å was selected by a double-crystal Si(111) monochromator. The diffraction data were recorded using the on-site readable image-plate detector OBI [13]. The Mn K-edge X-ray absorption near edge spectroscopy (XANES) was performed in the transmission mode at the beamline 7C at Pohang Light Source (PLS), Korea. Internal reference for the energy calibration was used for a Mn metal foil at each scan. No energy drifts of the monochromator were observed during the experiments. The normalization of the absorption data was performed using the WINXAS'97 package [14].

#### 3. Results and discussions

Fig. 1 shows the powder X-ray diffraction pattern of the  $\text{Li}_{0.33}\text{MnO}_2$  sample. The broad and weak diffraction peaks indicate a small coherent domain size of the material. The mean coherent domain size of the material was about 10 nm estimated by the Scherer formula [15]. The Rietveld refinement of the diffraction data was carried out based on the monoclinic structure model (space group C/2m) as suggested by Aurbach and coworkers [8]. The refinement parameters are listed in the Table 1. Fig. 2 is a sketch of the crystal structure of  $\text{Li}_{0.33}\text{MnO}_2$  constructed by the refinement parameters. It is seen from the figure that the crystal structure of  $\text{Li}_{0.33}\text{MnO}_2$  is composed of an ordered arrangement of  $[1 \times 2]$  and  $[1 \times 1]$  tunnels. The Li ions were believed to reside in the  $[1 \times 2]$  holes since they are much larger than the  $[1 \times 1]$  ones. The arrangement of the  $[\text{MnO}_6]$  octahedron within the hexagonal close-packed oxygen lattice provided two different sites for Mn ions, named  $\text{Mn}_{(1)}$ 

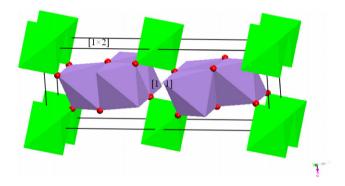


 $\textbf{Fig. 1.} \ \ \text{Rietveld refinement result of the X-ray diffraction data of Li}_{0.33} \text{MnO}_2.$ 

**Table 1**Rietveld refinement structural parameters of the Li<sub>0.33</sub>MnO<sub>2</sub> material

Phase	Atom	Atom position	Atom position		
		x	у	Z	
	Mn <sub>(1)</sub>	0	0	0	
	$Mn_{(2)}$	0.342	0	0.477	
Li <sub>0.33</sub> MnO <sub>2</sub>	O <sub>(1)</sub>	0.058	0	0.339	
	O <sub>(2)</sub>	0.412	0	0.183	
	O <sub>(3)</sub>	0.239	0	0.770	

Cell parameters: a = 13.798 (5) Å; b = 2.839 (6) Å; c = 4.925 (2) Å;  $\beta$  = 88.3°.  $R_p$  = 4.82%;  $R_{wp}$  = 6.29%;  $R_{exp}$  = 1.38%.



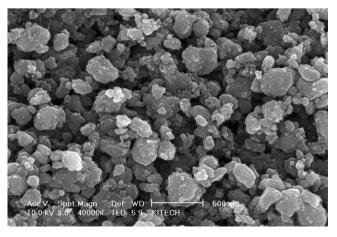
**Fig. 2.** Sketch of the crystal structure of  $\text{Li}_{0.33}\text{MnO}_2$ . The red balls represent the "O" atoms. The regions in green and purple represent the  $[\text{Mn}_{(1)}\text{O}_6]$  and  $[\text{Mn}_{(2)}\text{O}_6]$  octahedron, respectively. The  $[1\times2]$  and  $[1\times1]$  tunnels are marked in the figure.

**Table 2** Mn–O bond lengths of the [MnO<sub>6</sub>] octahedron in Li<sub>0.33</sub>MnO<sub>2</sub>

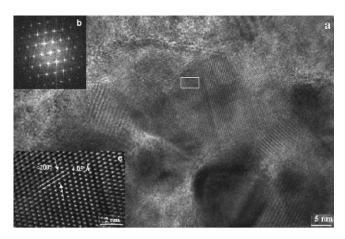
	Bond	Number	Bond length (Å)
$[Mn_{(1)}O_6]$	$Mn_{(1)}-O_{(1)}$ $Mn_{(1)}-O_{(2)}$	2 4	1.88 2.06
[Mn <sub>(2)</sub> O <sub>6</sub> ]	$\begin{array}{l} Mn_{(2)} - O_{(1)} \\ Mn_{(2)} - O_{(2)} \\ Mn_{(2)} - O_{(3)} \\ Mn_{(2)} - O_{(3)} \end{array}$	2 1 2 1	2.19 1.72 2.20 2.00

and  $Mn_{(2)}$ , respectively. Table 2 lists the Mn–O lengths of the [MnO $_6$ ] octahedron in  $Li_{0.33}MnO_2$ . It indicates that the [Mn( $_2$ )O $_6$ ] octahedron had a lower symmetrical degree than that of [Mn( $_1$ )O $_6$ ]. The low symmetrical degree of the [Mn( $_2$ )O $_6$ ] octahedron was attributed to the geometrical effects of the non-symmetrical atomic environment around the Mn( $_2$ ) site.

Fig. 3 shows the SEM image of the Li<sub>0.33</sub>MnO<sub>2</sub> sample. SEM shows that the material was composed of irregular shaped and



**Fig. 3.** SEM image of the Li<sub>0.33</sub>MnO<sub>2</sub> material.



**Fig. 4.** (a) HRTEM image of the Li<sub>0.33</sub>MnO<sub>2</sub> material. (b) Selected-area electron diffraction pattern (SAED) of an individual domain particle. (c) HRTEM image of an individual domain particle.

sized particles. The geometric particle size ranged randomly from several tens to hundreds nanometers. The HRTEM image presented in Fig. 4(a) clearly shows that the material was polycrystalline. The mean coherent domain size determined from HRTEM was about 10 nm, which is consistent with that estimated by Scherer formula. The selected-area electron diffraction pattern (SAED) shown in Fig. 4(b) indicates that the domain particles were well crystallized. The lattice fringe of 4.05 Å in the HRTEM image (Fig. 4(c)) corresponds to the (200) plane, which is consistent with the X-ray diffraction result.

Fig. 5 displays the typical discharge–charge potential profiles of Li<sub>0.33</sub>MnO<sub>2</sub>. The material showed an open circuit potential at  $\sim\!3.4$  V. When the material was discharged to 2.0 V, the capacity was determined as 168 mA h g $^{-1}$ , corresponding to 0.59 mol of Li intercalation into Li<sub>0.33+x</sub>MnO<sub>2</sub> according to the reaction:

$$Li_{0.33}MnO_2 + 0.59Li^+ + 0.59e^- = Li_{0.92}MnO_2$$

Therefore the composition of the cathode material after the first discharge was  $\rm Li_{0.92}MnO_2$ , which was close to the ideal composition (LiMnO<sub>2</sub>) of fully lithiated Li<sub>0.33</sub>MnO<sub>2</sub>. The potential profiles were characterized by a single discharge plateau centered at  $\sim\!2.9\,\rm V$  and a charge plateau centered at  $\sim\!3.1\,\rm V$ . The shape of the potential profiles did not change much with cycling, highlighting the good reversibility of the material. The discharge capacities versus cycle numbers of the material were plotted in Fig. 6. It is shown that the

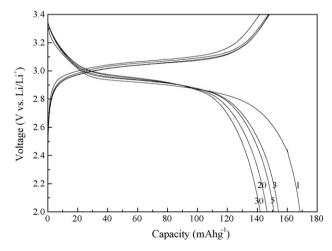


Fig. 5. Typical discharge-charge potential profiles of the  $Li_{0.33}MnO_2$  material.

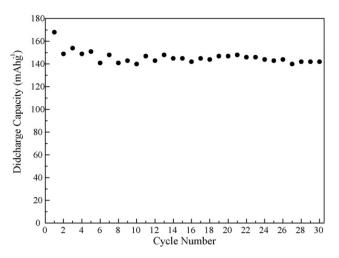


Fig. 6. Discharge capacities vs. cycle numbers of the Li<sub>0.33</sub>MnO<sub>2</sub> material.

material delivered a reversible discharge capacity of  $140 \,\mathrm{mA}\,\mathrm{h}\,\mathrm{g}^{-1}$  over  $30 \,\mathrm{cycles}$ .

Even though the crystal structure of Li<sub>0.33</sub>MnO<sub>2</sub> has been well established, it is still ambiguous on the structural changes of this material during electrochemical process. Ohzuku et al. [16] assumed that the material's structure was practically unchanged during Li intercalation. However, the voltage plateau near 2.9 V on the discharge potential profile clearly indicates a phase transition and the coexistence of two phases. Aurbach and coworkers [17] observed different XRD patterns of the fully electrochemically lithiated Li<sub>0.33</sub>MnO<sub>2</sub> with respect to that of the as-prepared Li<sub>0.33</sub>MnO<sub>2</sub>. They attributed this to a phase transition occurring in the cathode material as Li intercalation. In order to examine the structural changes more clearly, we collected the in situ XRD patterns of Li<sub>0.33</sub>MnO<sub>2</sub> during the first discharge-charge cycle, which are shown in Fig. 7. At the first sight, these diffraction patterns are poorly recognized, reflecting the long-range disordering or poor crystallinity of the material. During the discharge process (Li intercalation), all of the diffraction peaks shifted towards lower  $2\theta$  angles. This corresponds to an expansion in the material lattice with Li intercalation. Besides this, the diffraction peaks at  $2\theta \approx 15.8^{\circ}$  progressively weakened and eventually disappeared at the end of discharge. At the same time, a new diffraction appeared at  $2\theta \approx 18.7^{\circ}$ , and its intensity increased gradually with Li interca-

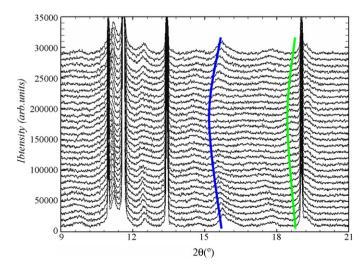
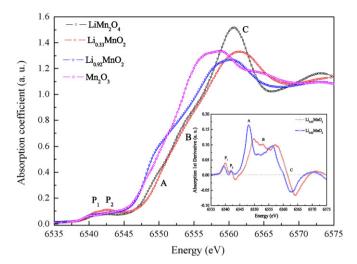


Fig. 7. In situ diffraction patterns of  $Li_{0.33}MnO_2$  during the first discharge-charge cycle



**Fig. 8.** Mn K-edge XANES of  $\text{Li}_{0.33}\text{MnO}_2$  and  $\text{Li}_{0.92}\text{MnO}_2$ , along with those of  $\text{LiMn}_2\text{O}_4$  and  $\text{Mn}_2\text{O}_3$ . The insert pattern is the first derivatives of the XANES profiles of  $\text{Li}_{0.33}\text{MnO}_2$  and  $\text{Li}_{0.96}\text{MnO}_2$ .

lation. These observations clearly indicate a structural transition occurring in the cathode material, which transformed to a new phase at the end of discharge process. However, it was still an intrinsic challenge to determine the crystal structure of this newly formed phase based on the current poor diffraction patterns. The evolution of the diffraction patterns was reversed in the subsequent charge process. The diffraction pattern after the first charge fits well with that of the as-prepared Li<sub>0.33</sub>MnO<sub>2</sub> again, indicating the reversibility of this structural transition during electrochemical process.

The Mn K-edge XANES is very sensitive to the local symmetry of Mn as well as to the associated charge of Mn itself. Fig. 8 displays the Mn K-edge XANES of the as-prepared Li $_{0.33}$ MnO $_2$  and the electrochemically lithiated Li $_{0.33}$ MnO $_2$  (Li $_{0.92}$ MnO $_2$ ), together with those of LiMn $_2$ O $_4$  and Mn $_2$ O $_3$  as the reference materials. The edge jump position for the as-prepared Li $_{0.33}$ MnO $_2$  was higher than that of LiMn $_2$ O $_4$ . This is consistence with the fact that the Mn oxidation state of Li $_{0.33}$ MnO $_2$  (Mn $_3$ .67+) is higher than that of LiMn $_2$ O $_4$  (Mn $_3$ .5+). The XANES shifted towards lower energies with Li intercalation, which corresponds to the decrease of the Mn oxidation state. It is noticeable that the edge jump position of Li $_{0.92}$ MnO $_2$  was slightly higher than that of Mn $_2$ O $_3$ . This is reasonable because the Mn oxidation state of Li $_{0.92}$ MnO $_2$  (Mn $_3$ .08+) is a little bit larger than +3.

The double pre-edge peaks  $P_1$  and  $P_2$  on the Mn K-edge XANES are well known to be due to a formally forbidden  $1s \rightarrow 3d$  structural transition, which is dipole allowed if the full local  $O_h$  symmetry is decreased. The split in the pre-edge peaks originates from the separation of the degenerated 3d levels under the effect of an octahedral crystal field.  $P_1$  and  $P_2$  have been assigned to the  $1s \rightarrow 3d_{eg}$  and  $1s \rightarrow 3d_{t2g}$  transitions, respectively [18]. From the first derivations of XANES, the energy difference between  $P_1$  and  $P_2$ ,  $\Delta E(P_2 - P_1)$ , was determined as 2.0 eV and 2.8 eV for  $\text{Li}_{0.33}\text{MnO}_2$  and  $\text{Li}_{0.92}\text{MnO}_2$ , respectively. The large  $\Delta E(P_2 - P_1)$  value of Li<sub>0.92</sub>MnO<sub>2</sub> reflects a broad splitting between the Mn  $d_{t2g}$  and  $d_{eg}$  levels. No significant change was observed in the peak intensity of  $P_2$  with Li intercalation in contrast to the considerable decrease of  $P_1$ . This can be explained by the Mn 3d electronic configurations. Firstly, both Mn<sup>4+</sup> and Mn<sup>3+</sup> ions have half filled  $d_{t2g}$  orbitals. A change in  $Mn^{4+}$  and  $Mn^{3+}$  concentrations in Li<sub>x</sub>MnO<sub>2</sub> does not cause a significant change in the probability of 1s  $\rightarrow$  3d<sub>t2g</sub> transitions. However, the higher Mn<sup>3+</sup> concentration in lithiated Li<sub>0.33</sub>MnO<sub>2</sub> leads to filling more electrons in the  $d_{eg}$  orbital. This would decrease the probability of  $1s \rightarrow 3d_{eg}$ transitions, therefore, result in a weak  $P_1$  signal.

The three features of "A", "B" and "C" on the Mn K-edge XANES are assigned to the dipole allowed  $1s \rightarrow 4p$  transitions, among which "A" corresponds to the  $1s \rightarrow 4p_z$  transition of the Mn ions with a shakedown process followed by a ligand to metal charge transfer (LMCT) [19]. The intensity and position of "A" provides a measure for the local structure around the Mn ions. A stronger signal of "A" in  $\text{Li}_{0.92}\text{MnO}_2$  could be attributed to the more severely distorted [MnO<sub>6</sub>] octahedron, because the distortion facilities the LMCT and hence the shakedown process. In addition, it was reported that the distortion of the [MnO<sub>6</sub>] octahedron also facilitates the feature "A" shifting towards lower energies [20]. In this study, the energy positions of "A" were determined at 6550 eV and 6548 eV for the as-prepared  $\text{Li}_{0.33}\text{MnO}_2$  and lithiated  $\text{Li}_{0.92}\text{MnO}_2$ , respectively, which is concordant to the increase of the [MnO<sub>6</sub>] distortion with Li intercalation.

#### 4. Conclusions

In this work we prepared a Li<sub>0,33</sub>MnO<sub>2</sub> powder using conventional solid-state reaction. The material had a monoclinic structure with an ordered arrangement of [1  $\times$  2] and [1  $\times$  1] tunnels, and two different Mn sites. The [Mn<sub>(2)</sub>O<sub>6</sub>] octahedron had a lower symmetrical degree than that of [Mn<sub>(1)</sub>O<sub>6</sub>], which could be attributed to the geometrical effects of the non-symmetrical environment around Mn<sub>(2)</sub>. In situ X-ray diffraction clearly showed a reversible phase transition for Li<sub>0,33</sub>MnO<sub>2</sub> during electrochemical process. However, the crystal structural of this newly formed phase has not been resolved because of the poor diffraction patterns. Li intercalation into Li<sub>0,33</sub>MnO<sub>2</sub> led to the conversion of Mn<sup>4+</sup> to Mn<sup>3+</sup>, which was accompanied by the formation of more severely distorted [MnO<sub>6</sub>] octahedron.

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