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Controlled Incorporation of Ni(OH)₂ Nanoplates Into Flowerlike MoS₂ Nanosheets for Flexible All-Solid-State Supercapacitors

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In this work, self-supporting three-dimensional hierarchical nanostructured $MoS_2@Ni(OH)_2$ nanocomposites are synthesized via a facile single-mode microwave hydrothermal technique. The fabricated $MoS_2@Ni(OH)_2$ nanocomposites for supercapacitors in aqueous electrolyte exhibit higher specific capacitance and better cyclic stability than those of MoS_2 and $Ni(OH)_2$ due to the pronounced synergistic effect between MoS_2 and $Ni(OH)_2$. Further, the flexible all-solid-state supercapcitor is readily constructed by composing the PVA/KOH gel electrolyte in between two $MoS_2@Ni(OH)_2$ electrodes on the flexible PET substrates. The resulting supercapacitors can operate at high rate up to 1000~V/s, have excellent long-life cycling stability, retaining 94.2% of the initial capacitance after 9000~cycles, and mechanical flexibility during extreme bending, respectively. Thereby, the $MoS_2@Ni(OH)_2$ nanocomposites are a promising electrode materials for flexible long-life cycling all-solid-sate supercapacitors.

1. Introduction

The thin, lightweight and flexible all-solid-state supercapacitor (ASSP) devices have great potential applications in the fields of roll-up portable electronic devices,^[1] microchips^[2] and miniaturized wireless sensor networks,^[3] and so forth, owing to their many advantages of rapid recharge ability, high power density, long-life cycle and environment friendly merit.^[4–6] These outstanding performances depend largely on the electrochemical performance, microstructure and architecture of electrode materials.^[7,8] Graphene shows advantages of large specific surface area, high in-plane electrical conductivity, and so on.^[9–11] For ASSP with graphene as the electrode material, its excellent performances have been proven.^[12–14] Moreover, in recent years, the layered graphene analogues of other inorganic layered materials have been attracting significant attention because of their promising applications as electrode materials.^[15–17]

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The VS₂ layered nanosheets have been proven to have great potential application as ASSP electrodes.[15] The VOPO₄ layered nanosheets with six atomic layers is a promising material to construct a flexible ultrathin-film all-solid-state supercapacitor.[16] The GeSe2 layered nanostructures have been demonstrated to be a promising candidate for design of flexible ASSP.[17] Furthermore, among layered graphene analogues, metal disulfide MoS2 is one of the most potential candidates of inorganic analogues of graphene.[18,19] The layers of MoS₂ are formed by the covalently bonded atoms and held together by the weak van der Waals forces.[20] Recent studies have shown the excellent performances of ASSP based on MoS₂ films prepared by a low-cost spray painting technique and subsequent laser patterning.[21] The inten-

sive investigation of MoS₂ as electrode material in ASSP further promote the layered graphene analogues applied in energy storage field.

For the layered materials, for example graphene, restacking effect of the layers leads to the significant decrease of ion-accessible surface area and thus low capacitance.^[22] The restacking problem can be alleviated with insertion of conductive material, for example, carbon nanotubes, into the layers as supporting backbone.^[23] On the other hand, high capacitance has been recently obtained in Faraday pseudocapacitance electrode flexible ASSP.^[24] As supporting backbone, Faraday pseudocapacitance nanomaterial can play the role in prevention of restacking effect of layered graphene analogues and synergistic enhancement of energy storage performance.

In this work, we have prepared a novel kind of self-supporting three-dimensional hierarchical nanostructure MoS₂@ Ni(OH)₂. In this nanostructure, Ni ions can be readily embedded onto the flowerlike MoS₂ nanosheets through single mode microwave-assisted hydrothermal technique (SMMHT)^[25,26] for formation of Ni(OH)₂ nanoplates. Ni(OH)₂ nanoplates of pseudocapacitance materials serve as supporting backbone, and three-dimensional flowerlike MoS₂ nanosheets act as framework-like substrate to provide a path for ions diffusion onto the surface of pseudocapacitance materials Ni(OH)₂. The synergistic effect between MoS₂ and Ni(OH)₂ is not only able to effectively weaken the restacking effect of the MoS₂ layers, but also able to ensure the high-rate and long-life

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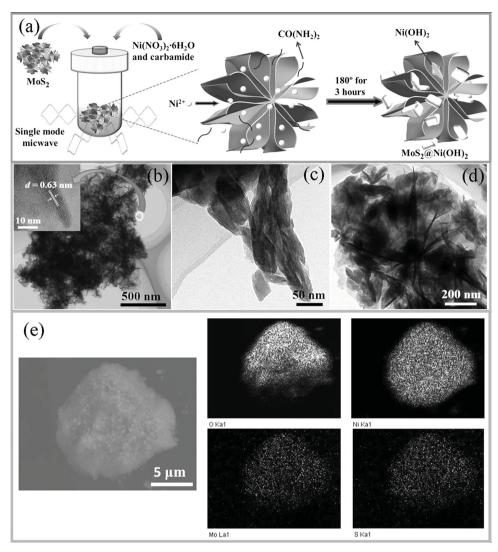


Figure 1. a) Schematic illustration for the formation of the self-supporting three-dimensional hierarchical nanostructure $MoS_2@Ni(OH)_2$ nanocomposites; TEM images of b) MoS_2 , c) $Ni(OH)_2$, and d) $MoS_2@Ni(OH)_2$ nanocomposites. e) The selected area elemental mapping of $MoS_2@Ni(OH)_2$.

charging/discharging in the practical applications of flexible ASSP as energy storage devices.

2. Results and Discussion

As illustrated in **Figure 1a**, the 3D heterostructure MoS₂@ Ni(OH)₂ nanocomposites were prepared by a facile two-step SMMHT-method. Firstly, the flowerlike MoS₂ nanosheets were fabricated through microwave irradiation in a single-mode microwave reactor. The morphology was found to depend on the reaction time (Figure S2, Supporting Information). Figures 1b gives the TEM images of the synthesized MoS₂ after the 12 h reaction. Clearly, interconnected nanosheets of MoS₂ were produced to exhibit a flowerlike shape. Inset of **Figure 2**b shows the high-resolution TEM image of a MoS₂ nanosheets. The observed lattice fringes indicate the good crystallinity of MoS₂ nanosheets. It can be seen that a well-layered structure with an interlayer distance of 0.63 nm between the (002) planes.

Secondly, the flowerlike MoS₂ nanosheets were dispersed in a solution including Ni(NO₃)₂·6H₂O and carbamide (CO(NH₂)₂), and was treated at 180 °C for 3 h under SMMHT. In the absence of MoS₂, the microwave-assisted reaction produced the Ni(OH)₂ nanoplates, as revealed by the TEM images in Figures 1c. In the presence of MoS₂, interconnected nanosheets of MoS₂ serve as the substrates for the in situ growth of Ni(OH)₂ nanoplates. Figure 1d shows the TEM images of the finally obtained MoS₂@ Ni(OH)₂ nanocomposites. The interconnected nanosheets of MoS₂ still keep the flowerlike shape, and serve as the substrates for growth of Ni(OH)2 nanoplates. Some Ni(OH)2 nanoplates embedded between the flowerlike MoS2 nanosheets can be recognized. In the selected area elemental mapping of a MoS2@ Ni(OH)₂ powders as shown in Figures 1e, in addition to Mo and S, the revealed uniform distribution of Ni and O indicates the uniform attachment of Ni(OH)2 nanoplates on the flowerlike MoS₂ nanosheets with about 10 layers.

The crystallographic structures for the samples of MoS₂, Ni(OH)₂, and MoS₂@Ni(OH)₂ nanocomposites were checked

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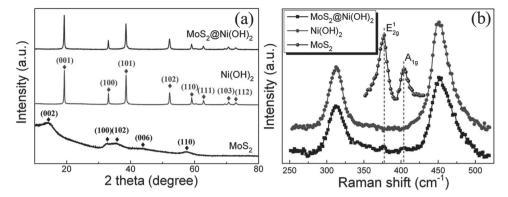


Figure 2. a) The XRD patterns and b) Raman spectrums for MoS₂, Ni(OH)₂ and MoS₂@Ni(OH)₃ nanocomposites.

by XRD measurements (Figure 2a). The XRD pattern of MoS₂ can be indexed to the hexagonal structure. The highly broadened peaks can be attributed to the small thickness of the MoS₂ nanosheets. In the Raman spectrum of the flowerlike MoS₂ nanosheets (Figure 2b), the observed Raman modes of E_{2g}^1 at 377.7 cm $^{-1}$ and $A_{1\mathrm{g}}$ mode at 404.8 cm $^{-1}$ are produced by the inplane vibration of two S atoms with opposite orientation with respect to Mo atom and the out-of-plane of S atoms, respectively. [27] It is known that the red-shift of E_{2g}^1 mode and blueshift of A_{1g} mode can be induced by increasing the number of MoS₂ layers. ^[28] From the Raman shift of MoS₂ (blue sphere), the frequency difference between the E_{2g}^1 and A_{1g} Raman shift was determined to be ≈27.1 cm⁻¹, larger than the quardrilayer of MoS₂ (24.4 cm⁻¹) reported by Li [26] but similar to 10 layers (≈27 cm⁻¹) reported by Plechinger.^[29] For the Ni(OH)₂ nanoplates, the reflection peaks match the standard peaks of β -Ni(OH)₂. In the Raman spectrum of Ni(OH)₂ nanoplates, the typical Raman mode peaks of β -Ni(OH)₂ are observed at 312 cm⁻¹ and 453 cm⁻¹, which are consistent with the results of mesoporous β -Ni(OH)₂.^[30] For the nanostructure MoS₂@ Ni(OH)₂ nanocomposites, the obtained XRD pattern is similar to that of β -Ni(OH)₂. In the Raman spectrum of MoS₂@ Ni(OH)₂, however, the typical Raman modes of E_{2g}^1 and A_{1g} for MoS₂ are clearly observed to lie between the two typical modes for β -Ni(OH)₂. No observation of the MoS₂ peaks in XRD patterns could be attributed to the ultrathin MoS₂ nanosheets covered with the Ni(OH)₂ nanoplates.

The electrochemical properties of the as-prepared MoS₂, Ni(OH)₂, and MoS₂@Ni(OH)₂ nanocomposites were separately evaluated using the typical cyclic voltammetry (CV) technique. Figure 3a shows the CV curves of MoS₂, Ni(OH)₂, and MoS₂@ Ni(OH)₂ electrodes at a scan rate of 5 mV/s in the potential window from 0 to 0.55 V. On the CV curves of MoS₂ electrode, the appearance of a pair of remarkable redox peaks indicates that the flowerlike MoS₂ nanosheets offer more sites for redox charge transfer.[31] The average specific capacitances of the asprepared MoS_2 , $Ni(OH)_2$ and $MoS_2@Ni(OH)_2$ nanocomposites were calculated to be 228 F/g, 344 F/g and 431 F/g, respectively, at a scan rate of 5 mV/s.

Figure 3b gives the galvanostatic charging/discharging curves of MoS2, Ni(OH)2 and MoS2@Ni(OH)2 nanocomposites at a current density of 2 A/g, and the charging/discharging curves at different current densities are shown in the Figure S5a-c (Supporting Information). From the discharge

curves at a discharge density of 2 A/g, the specific capacitances were calculated to be 200 and 467.3 F/g for the MoS2 and Ni(OH)2, which were larger than 30 F/g at 2A/g (bulk MoS2, 3 м KOH)[32], and approximate to 800 F/g at 2A/g (Ni(OH)2, 1 м КОН)[33] Moreover, the specific capacitances were calculated to be 516.4 F/g for the MoS₂@Ni(OH)₂ nanocomposites at a discharge density of 2 A/g. Compared to MoS₂ and Ni(OH)₂, the MoS₂@Ni(OH)₂ nanocomposites exhibit the best charge storage properties. The remarkable enhancement of the specific capacitance for MoS₂@Ni(OH)₂ nanocomposites can be mainly attributed to the architecture with synergistic effect between MoS_2 and $Ni(OH)_2$, in which the MoS_2 act not only as an active electrode material in the electrochemical reaction but also as a framework to provide more paths for insertion and extraction of ions within the Ni(OH)₂ edges.^[34]

As shown by the gray lines in Figure 3b, the sudden drop (IR drop) in current during the discharging process is associated with the internal resistance of the electrode. [35] The IR loss values of the MoS2, Ni(OH)2, and MoS2@Ni(OH)2 electrodes are shown in Figure S5d (Supporting Information). For the nanostructure MoS₂@Ni(OH)₂ nanocomposites, the IR loss lies between those of MoS2 and Ni(OH)2. The discharge capacitances of these three electrodes at different current densities are plotted in Figure 3c. Significantly, the specific capacitance of MoS₂@Ni(OH)₂ nanocomposites still retain a value of as high as 244 F/g even at 10 A/g. At the same current density, the specific capacitances of MoS₂ and Ni(OH)₂ electrodes are 123.6 F/g and 147.0 F/g, respectively. Comparatively, the self-supporting three-dimensional hierarchical nanostructure MoS₂@Ni(OH)₂ with synergistic effect exhibits the best electrochemical properties. For MoS₂, Ni(OH)₂, and MoS₂@Ni(OH)₂, Figure 3d shows the capacitance retention as a function of cyclic number at the current density of 3 A/g up to 1000 cycles. It can be observed that MoS₂@Ni(OH)₂ show significantly better capacitance retention and stability than MoS2 and Ni(OH)2. After 1000 cycles, the specific capacitance loss is just 8% for MoS₂@ Ni(OH)2, while for the Ni(OH)2 and MoS2, the loss increases up to 24% and 27.3%, respectively.

As shown in Figure 4a, the interconnected MoS₂ nanosheets are found to become scattered during the electrochemical reaction and agglomerate together as large clusters after 1000 cycles. The fast fall of specific capacitance for flowerlike MoS2 nanosheets after 200 cycles can be considered as the result of the aggregate and restacking effect of the layers (as shown

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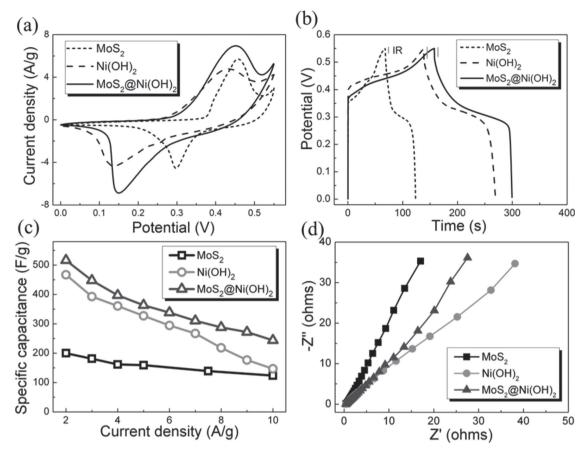


Figure 3. a) The cyclic voltammograms of MoS_2 , $Ni(OH)_2$ and $MoS_2@Ni(OH)_2$ nanocomposites electrodes in 6 M KOH electrolyte at 5 mV/s; b) Galvanostatic charging/discharging curves of MoS_2 , $Ni(OH)_2$ and $MoS_2@Ni(OH)_2$ nanocomposites electrodes at the current density of 2 A/g, the potential drop marked with the gray line is associated with the internal resistance (IR loss); c) Specific capacitance of MoS_2 , $Ni(OH)_2$ and $MoS_2@Ni(OH)_2$ nanocomposites electrodes at various current densities, corresponding to the charging/discharging measurements; d) Comparison of specific capacitance retention of MoS_2 , $Ni(OH)_2$ and $MoS_2@Ni(OH)_2$ nanocomposites electrodes with 1000 cycling.

in Figure 3d), which would inhibit the charge transport and active site accessibility during the cycling process. As revealed in Figure 4b, after 1000 cycles, partial framework of flower-like MoS_2 nanosheets were still maintained in the presence of $Ni(OH)_2$ nanoplates. In the self-supporting three-dimensional hierarchical nanostructure, $Ni(OH)_2$ nanoplates residing in the interspace between flowerlike MoS_2 nanosheets act as supporting backbones to prevent the collapse of the MoS_2 nanosheets, while the flowerlike MoS_2 nanosheets serve as a framework to inhibit the aggregation of $Ni(OH)_2$ nanoplates. Thereby, the synergistic effect of MoS_2 nanosheets and $Ni(OH)_2$ nanoplates is able to effectively weaken the agglomerating and restacking problems during the electrochemical reaction.

By using the self-supporting three-dimensional hierarchical nanostructure $MoS_2@Ni(OH)_2$, flexible ASSP (MN-ASSP) device with superior properties was fabricated on a polyethylene terephthalate (PET) substrate. Firstly, small regular pieces were cut from a large PET substrate coated with a 20 nm Pt film by using dc magnetron sputtering, and then they were covered with $MoS_2@Ni(OH)_2$ by drop-casting. As illustrated in Figure 5a–e, the classical sandwich structure MN-ASSP device was assembled from these prepared pieces by gel PVA/KOH

electrolyte. Figure 5f demonstrates that the sandwich-structure MN-ASSP device is flexible. The electrochemical performance of the MN-ASSP was characterized by cyclic voltammetry (CV) curves at scan rates from 0.005 to 1000 V/s (Figure 6). At the scan rates from 5 mV/s to 100 V/s, the obtained CV curves were close to the rectangular shape (Figure 6a-d), indicating the fast charge propagation within the electrodes. By increasing the scan rate up to 1000 V/s and above, obvious deviation from the rectangular shape is observable for the CV curves (Figure 6e,f). The area capacitance and stack capacitance were calculated from the CV curves and shown in Figure 6g. At the scan rate of 1 mV/s, 14.07 mF/cm² (in area) and 37.53 F/cm³ (in volume) were achieved. By increasing the scan rate up to 1000 V/s, the capacitances of MN-ASSP device still exhibits good rate capability. The area and stack capacitances were calculated respectively to be 3.60 mF/cm² and 9.59 F/cm³ at 10 mV/s, 329.80 $\mu F/cm^2$ and 0.88 F/cm³ at 1 V/s, 28.36 $\mu F/cm^2$ and 75.60 mF/ cm³ at 100 V/s. All of these values are superior to those of the reduced graphene film sandwich-supercapacitaors.[11] Even at an ultrafast scan rate of 1,000 V/s, the MN-ASSP device still delivers an area and stack capacitance of 6.58 μ F/cm² and 17.55 mF/cm³. Figure 6h shows the electrochemical performance at



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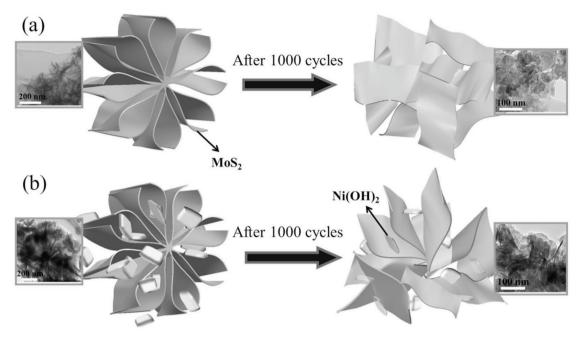


Figure 4. TEM images and schematics of a) $MoS_2@Ni(OH)_2$, nanocomposites, respectively, to show the changes in morphology between the states of pre-measurement and the 1000th cycle.

1 V/s for the MN-ASSP device with different degree of bending, which indicates the excellent flexibility and high stability of the sandwich structure device.

The cycling stability of the MN-ASSP device was examined over a large number of CV cycles at a scan rate of 1 V/s, as shown in **Figure 7a**. It is noteworthy that the capacitance

retained 94.2% of the first cycling value after 9000 cycles. The excellent cycling stability could be attributed to the self-supporting synergistic effect between MoS_2 and $Ni(OH)_2$. The volumetric energy densities and power densities of the MN-ASSP device are compared to the previously reported values for other sandwich configuration ASSP device in Figure 7b. MN-ASSP

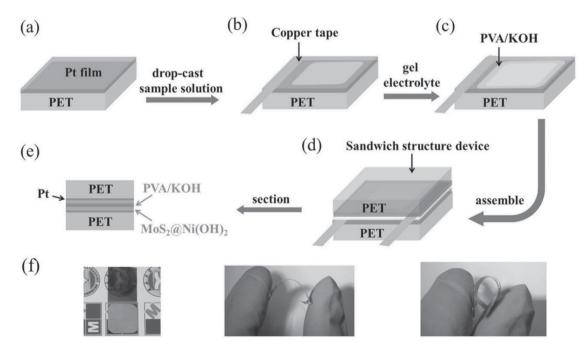


Figure 5. Schematic illustration of the fabrication process of a flexible MN-ASSP device. a) Growth of Pt film on PET by magnetron sputtering; b) Drop casting of $MoS_2@Ni(OH)_2$ solution on Pt film, and the copper tape is adhered to the edge of the device to improve the electrical contacts by silver plastic; c) Drop casting and solidification of PVA/KOH gel electrolyte; d) A sandwich structure device is assembled with two PET pieces of (c); e) Cross section of a sandwich-structure solid state supercapacitor device; f) Digital photographs of the flexible MN-ASSP.

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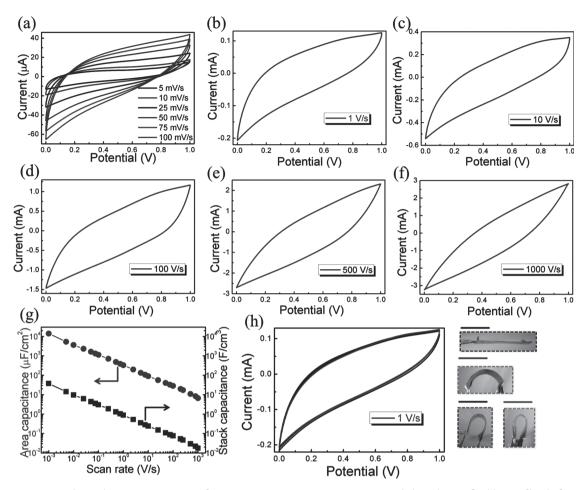


Figure 6. a) CV curves obtained at various scan rates from 5 mV/s to 100 mV/s in a PVA/KOH gel electrolyte on flexible PET film; b–f) CV curves at various scan rates ranging from 1 V/s to 1000 V/s; g) Area capacitance and stack capacitance of MN-ASSP device, which were calculated from the CV curves at different scan rates; h) CV curves at a scan rate of 1 V/s with different extent of bending: plat, weak bending, moderate degree of bending and strong bending.

shows a power density of 11.0 W/cm³ and an energy density of 5.2 mWh/cm³ in association with superior cycling stability. The MN-ASSP demonstrates energy density comparable to those of the Li-ion thin film battery, while providing about five times

higher power density than Li-ion thin film battery.^[12] Morever, the MN-ASSP has higher energy density than aluminium electrolytic capacitor, while providing similar power density.^[12] Comparing with the state-of-the-art reduced graphene sandwich

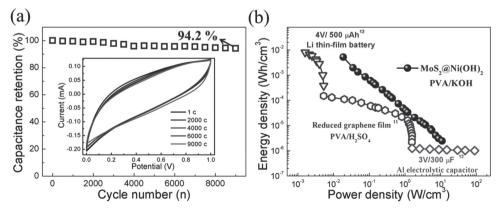


Figure 7. a) The cycling performance of MN-ASSP device at the scan rate of 1 V/s, insets shows the variation of CV curves with cycle numbers. b) The comparison of energy and power densities of $MoS_2@Ni(OH)_2$ solid-state device with Li thin-film battery, Al electrolytic capacitor and reduced graphene sandwich solid state device.

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solid state device, superior energy and power performance of the MN-ASSP should compete with graphene. [11] Therefore, the remarkable cycling stability can be attributed to the self-supporting three-dimensional hierarchical nanostructure MoS₂@ Ni(OH)₂ with synergistic effect. In the fabrication of flexible allsolid-state supercapacitors, the active material films are usually made not too thick, thus strongly limiting the loading mass of active materials.^[11] Generally, the lower mass loading of active materials can result in the observation of higher power density. As to the observed high power density for MoS₂@Ni(OH)₂ composite in the present work, in addition to the self-supporting three-dimensional nanostructure, the role of low loading mass should not be ruled out.

3. Conclusions

Self-supporting three-dimensional hierarchical nanostructure MoS₂@Ni(OH)₂ nanocomposites were synthesized via a facile single-mode microwave hydrothermal technique. Compared to the separate MoS2 and Ni(OH)2, the MoS2@Ni(OH)2 nanocomposites deliver an greatly enhanced specific capacitance of 516.4 F/g at a discharge density of 2 A/g owing to the synergistic effect between MoS2 and Ni(OH)2. Moreover, the better cycling stability of MoS₂@Ni(OH)₂ nanocomposites can be also attributed to the self-supporting architecture. The fabricated sandwich structure MN-ASSP with MoS₂@Ni(OH)₂ nanocomposites is found to have the advantages of large capacitance (14.07 mF/cm² in area, 37.53 F/cm³ in volume), excellent flexibility, high energy and power density. More significantly, the MN-ASSP device displays excellent long-time cycling stability, retaining 94.2% of the initial capacitance after 9000 cycles, respectively. These excellent electrochemical performances indicate the great potential applications of the self-supporting three-dimensional hierarchical nanostructure MoS₂@Ni(OH)₂ flexible ASSP in energy storage field for small, light-weight and flexible electronic devices.

4. Experimental Section

Synthesis and Characterization of MoS₂, Ni(OH)₂ and MoS₂@Ni(OH)₂: Three electrode materials were prepared under microwave irradiation in a single-mode microwave reactor (NOVA-II, Preekem of Shanghai, China). Typically, 15 mg sodium molybdate (Na₂MoO₄·2H₂O) and 30 mg thioacetamide (C_2H_5NS) were dissolved into 10 mL aqueous solution with magnetic stirring, and the solution was immerged into a specialized glass tube at 180 °C for 12 h. After naturally cooling down to room temperature, the intermediate products were collected and washed with deionized water, and then dried in vacuum at 60 °C. Finally, the flowerlike MoS₂ nanosheets were obtained. The Ni(OH)₂ electrode material was synthesized by the same method. The Ni(OH)₂ nanoplates was produced by immerging the solution of 0.05 M Ni(NO₃)₂·6H₂O and 0.1 м carbamide (10 mL solution) into a vessel at 180 °C for 3 h. The fabrication process of $MoS_2@Ni(OH)_2$ nanocomposites is illustrated in Figure 1a. The prepared flowerlike MoS2 nanosheets (1.2 mg) was firstly dispersed in 10 mL solution including 0.05 M Ni(NO₃)₂·6H₂O and 0.1 M carbamide (CO(NH₂)₂, and then put under irradiation of a single-mode microwave at 180 °C for 3 h. In the reaction process, nickel ion and carbamide could easily entry into the interspaces between the MoS₂ nanosheets, and their reaction leads to the formation of Ni(OH)₂ nanoplates on the MoS₂ nanosheets. Finally, the MoS₂@ Ni(OH)₂ nanocomposites were collected and washed with deionized water, and dried in vacuum at 60 °C. Powder X-ray diffraction (XRD) measurements were performed with Cu-K α radiation ($\lambda = 1.5406$ Å, Rigaku SmartLab in Japan). The morphologies of the samples were characterized by scanning electron microscopy (SEM, HITACH S-4800 and Phenom Pro) and transmission electron microscopy (TEM, IEM 2010). The electrochemical measurements were carried out on CHI-660E electrochemical workstation (China, Shanghai). The cyclic voltammetry (CV) and charging/discharging techniques were employed to investigate electrochemical performance of electrodes. Electrochemical impedance spectroscopy measurements were carried out in the range of 0.01 Hz to 100 kHz with ac amplitude of 5 mV.

Electrochemical Tests of the Three-Electrode Supercapacitor System: The electrochemical performances of MoS2, Ni(OH)2 and MoS2@Ni(OH)2 nanocomposites electrodes were measured in 6 м КОН electrolyte. The test system was a standard three-electrode configuration, including an Hg/HgO electrode as reference electrode and a platinum foil as counter electrode. As the working electrodes, the mixture containing 80 wt% electrode materials, 15 wt% acetylene black and 5 wt% polymer of vinylidene fluoride (PVDF) were agglutinated on the continuous nickel foam with a proper pressure. All the electrodes were dried under vacuum at 80 °C for 12 h prior to measurement.

Electrochemical Tests of the All-Solid-State Supercapacitors: The preparation of PVA/KOH electrolyte was performed as follows: 3 g PVA was dispersed into 30 mL deionized water, and then heated to 85 °C under continually stirring until clear solution was obtained. In the cooling-down process, the concentrated KOH (3.36 g) solution was dropped into the viscous solution under sufficiently stirring until a clear solution was obtained. The sandwich structure devices of MoS₂@ Ni(OH)₂ were assembled in the following way: A large PET substrate was coated with 20 nm Pt film by using dc magnetron sputtering, and it was then cut into small regular pieces. These regular PET pieces were coated with the MoS₂@Ni(OH)₂ solution by drop-casting with the average thickness of 3.7 μ m, and the copper tapes were adhered by silver plastic to one of their edges. The PVA/KOH electrolyte was then spread onto the MoS₂@Ni(OH)₂ electrodes. Finally, a classical sandwich structure device was obtained with two of these prepared PET pieces being pressed together and the excess water being vaporized out.

Supporting Information

Supporting Information is available from the Wiley Online Library or from the author.

Acknowledgements

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