



Fourier-transform infrared spectroscopic studies on the solid electrolyte interphase formed on Li-doped spinel $\text{Li}_{1.05}\text{Mn}_{1.96}\text{O}_4$ cathode

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ABSTRACT

Fourier-transform infrared (FTIR) spectroscopy has been used to identify the solid electrolyte interphase (SEI) formed on Li-doped spinel $\text{Li}_{1.05}\text{Mn}_{1.96}\text{O}_4$ cathode. The major components in the SEI have been assigned, and the formation and evolution of the SEI over the initial charge–discharge cycle are discussed. By Fourier-transform infrared spectroscopy, it has been found that during the charge–discharge process, the SEI can be directly formed on the $\text{Li}_{1.05}\text{Mn}_{1.96}\text{O}_4$ cathode, and is mainly composed of R- CO_3Li and Li_2CO_3 . In terms of composition, it is very similar to those formed on a carbon anode. In the initial cycle, the formation of R- CO_3Li begins at 4.10 V during the charging process, and becomes more distinct with increasing charge voltage. The formation of Li_2CO_3 begins at 4.10 V during the discharge process, and becomes more distinct with decreasing discharge voltage. The SEI becomes more evident over subsequent cycles.

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1. Introduction

In 1970, Dey and Sullivan [1] found the intercalation of Li^+ into graphite to be accompanied by decomposition of the propylene carbonate (PC) used as solvent. It was reported by Fong et al. [2] that the amount of electrolyte decomposition is proportional to the specific surface area of the carbon electrode. Peled and Straze [3] and Peled [4] suggested that in practical nonaqueous battery systems, the alkali and alkaline earth metals are always covered with a surface layer, which is formed instantly by the reaction of the metal with the electrolyte and is named the solid electrolyte interphase (SEI). This is helpful in interpreting the irreversible capacity loss of the anodes during the initial cycle [5]. Though the compositions of the SEI formed on the anodes may change when different electrolytes are adopted [6–8], similar surface phenomena are observed on anode materials such as carbonaceous materials [9–23], metallic lithium [24,25], SnO [26], $\text{Li}_4\text{Ti}_5\text{O}_{12}$ [18], etc.

Chemical transformations of the electrode surfaces in lithium ion batteries between different cathodes and anodes have also been studied in recent years, and among such batteries those with LiCoO_2 cathodes and carbon anodes [27–29] have been the most extensively investigated. It was found that the SEI on the LiCoO_2 cathode

was the same species [29] as that on a carbon anode. For a lithium ion battery assembled with an $\text{LiMn}_{1.7}\text{Al}_{0.3}\text{O}_4$ cathode and a hard carbon anode [30], the SEI was formed by decomposition products derived from LiPF_6 , polymerized EC, and manganese dissociated from the $\text{LiMn}_{1.7}\text{Al}_{0.3}\text{O}_4$ cathode. For a lithium ion battery assembled with an $\text{LiNi}_{0.5}\text{Mn}_{1.5}\text{O}_4$ cathode and a graphite anode [31], it was demonstrated that proper SEI formation on the graphite anode substantially improved the electrochemical performance.

Generally, it is believed that the SEI may first be formed on the anode, then migrates with the electrolyte, and ultimately adheres to the cathode [8,32]. However, our interest has been in ascertaining whether the SEI can be formed directly on the cathode, i.e., if there is direct reaction at the cathode–electrolyte interface, and if this is similar to that at the anode–electrolyte interface. Recently, Edstrom et al. [33] used X-ray photoelectron spectroscopy (XPS) to probe the cathode-related SEI phenomena for LiMn_2O_4 , $\text{LiCoO}_2/\text{LiNi}_{0.8}\text{Co}_{0.2}\text{O}_2$, and carbon-coated LiFePO_4 . The results were related to the more familiar SEI layer formed on graphite. In the present study, Fourier-transform infrared spectroscopy has been used to identify the SEI formed on an Li-doped spinel $\text{Li}_{1.05}\text{Mn}_{1.96}\text{O}_4$ cathode. The major components in the SEI are assigned, and the formation and evolution of the SEI during the initial charge–discharge cycle are discussed.

2. Experimental

The Li-doped spinel LiMn_2O_4 was synthesized by a solid-state reaction as reported previously [34,35]. Lithium hydroxide

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(LiOH·H₂O, 97%, Beijing Reagents) and chemical manganese dioxide (CMD, 85%, MMM, Belgium) were used as the raw materials. The nominal Li/Mn ratio was selected as 0.55:1. The raw materials were mixed and ground thoroughly, preheated at 480 °C for 8 h, reground and pressed into pellets, and then sintered at 750 °C for 24 h before being cooled in air.

The actual stoichiometry of the as-prepared sample was analyzed with an ICP spectrometer (IRIS/AP, Thermo Jarrell Ash). The oxygen content was estimated from the lithium and manganese contents. By this means, the stoichiometry of the sample was determined as Li:Mn:O = 1.05:1.96:4. The crystal structure of Li_{1.05}Mn_{1.96}O₄ was determined on a Rigaku Brmax-2400 X-ray diffractometer employing Cu K α radiation. The scan range was from 10° to 100°, and the scan rate was selected as 8° min⁻¹ in steps of 0.02°.

For charge–discharge tests, cathodes were prepared by coating slurries of spinel Li_{1.05}Mn_{1.96}O₄ powder, carbon black, and cyclopentanone-dissolved poly(vinylidene fluoride) (PVDF) onto aluminum foils, resulting in a weight ratio of Li_{1.05}Mn_{1.96}O₄, carbon black, and PVDF of 85:10:5. Subsequently, the films were vacuum-dried at 55 °C for 24 h, compressed between two stainless steel plates, and then cut into small sheets of area 0.5 cm². The as-prepared cathodes were assembled into Swagelok-type secondary lithium batteries in an argon-filled glove box (MBRAUN), using lithium metal foils as the counter and reference electrodes, and 1 mol L⁻¹ LiPF₆ in a 1:1 (v/v) mixture of ethylene carbonate (EC) and diethyl carbonate (DEC) as the electrolyte (water content \leq 20 ppm). Celgard® 2300 sheets were used as separators. The charge–discharge tests were performed on a LAND CT2001A battery tester. Before the charge–discharge tests, the batteries were aged for 12 h to ensure good soakage of the Li_{1.05}Mn_{1.96}O₄ particles in the cathode by the electrolyte. To ensure the SEI is formed just at the preconcerted voltage, for instance 4.21 V, the battery was charged at a constant current density of 0.4 mA cm⁻² to 4.21 V, and then followed by a constant voltage of 4.21 V until the current decreased to 0.01 mA.

The collected Fourier-transform infrared (FTIR) spectra were the average of 100 scans obtained on an FTS-60V spectrometer (Bio-Rad) with a resolution of 4 cm⁻¹. Before recording the FTIR spectra of Li_{1.05}Mn_{1.96}O₄, the cathodes were carefully washed with DEC in the argon-filled glove box, and then transferred to a vacuum chamber to remove the solvent. Thereafter, the powders on the cathodes were collected, ground together with KBr, and then pressed into translucent pellets.

3. Results and discussion

3.1. Crystal structure of Li_{1.05}Mn_{1.96}O₄

Fig. 1 shows the XRD pattern of Li_{1.05}Mn_{1.96}O₄, which is accordance with reference [36] and indicates that the sample has a pure spinel LiMn₂O₄ phase with the *Fd3m* space group. Using the silicon peak at around 28° as a reference, the lattice parameter of Li_{1.05}Mn_{1.96}O₄ was calculated from the XRD pattern and was found to be 8.213 Å, which is very close to the 8.247 Å reported in Ref. [36].

3.2. Assignment of the SEI on Li_{1.05}Mn_{1.96}O₄

Fig. 2 shows the FTIR spectra of Li_{1.05}Mn_{1.96}O₄ cycled in 1 mol L⁻¹ LiPF₆-EC/DEC. In the spectrum of the electrolyte, three peaks, at 1018 cm⁻¹, 846 cm⁻¹, and 559 cm⁻¹, are the characteristic absorptions of LiPF₆, while the other peaks may be assigned to the absorption bands of the EC/DEC solvent mixture. In spectra B, C, and D, the absorption bands from 625 cm⁻¹ to 631 cm⁻¹ are the charac-

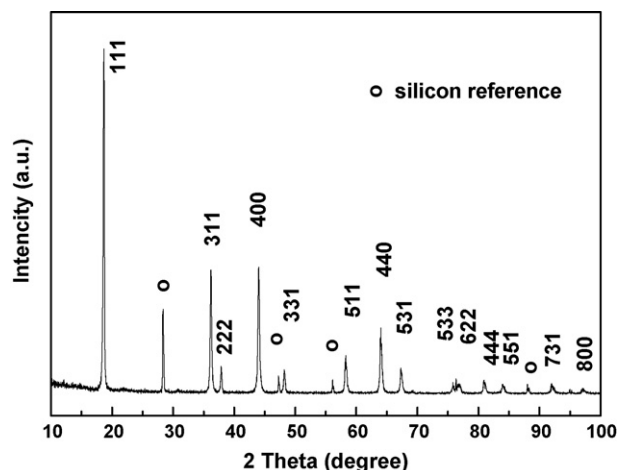


Fig. 1. XRD pattern of Li_{1.05}Mn_{1.96}O₄ synthesized via a solid-state reaction.

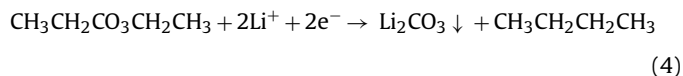
teristic vibrations of the Mn–O bonds in spinel LiMn₂O₄ [37]. The peak located at 846 cm⁻¹ displays a red-shift with increasing cycle number, as shown in Fig. 2(a), indicating partial decomposition of LiPF₆ upon cycling, as described by Eqs. (1)–(3):



However, because the vibrations of the residual electrolyte on Li_{1.05}Mn_{1.96}O₄ are very strong, the vibration of LiF at 775 cm⁻¹ is overlapped by the CO₂ asymmetric bending of the EC/DEC solvent mixture.

The assignments of all of the absorption bands of Li_{1.05}Mn_{1.96}O₄ in different cycles are listed in Table 1. The weak peak located at 901 cm⁻¹ is assigned to the CH₂ bending of the electrolyte. After the initial cycle, it becomes the shoulder peak at 841 cm⁻¹. With increasing cycle number, the electrolyte is gradually decomposed, and the absorption bands located between 897 and 901 cm⁻¹ may be assigned to a combination of CO₃ bending in R-CO₃Li (R = methyl, ethyl) and Li₂CO₃.

Li₂CO₃ displays three strong vibration bands at 1510–1505 cm⁻¹, 1453 cm⁻¹, and 868 cm⁻¹ [2]. For the Li_{1.05}Mn_{1.96}O₄ cathode after 1 cycle, only a weak peak at 1502 cm⁻¹ is detected, while for the Li_{1.05}Mn_{1.96}O₄ cathodes after 5 and 10 cycles, distinct absorption bands at 1502 cm⁻¹ and 1452 cm⁻¹ appear, as shown in Fig. 2(d). This implies that Li₂CO₃, as one of the components in the solid electrolyte interphase, is already formed in the initial cycle, and increases with further cycling. The small amount of Li₂CO₃ may originate from the decomposition of DEC [8], as described by Eq. (4):



For the LiPF₆-EC/DEC electrolyte, the decomposition of solvent is a free radical terminating reaction [8], and may follow Eq. (5) to form R-CO₃Li on an Li metal anode. However, in this study, the appearance on the cathodes of R-CO₃Li originates from different routes, as described by Eqs. (6) and (7). It is clear that all of the cycled Li_{1.05}Mn_{1.96}O₄ cathodes display a new vibration peak at 1469 cm⁻¹ in their spectra, which may be assigned to the CH(CH₃) asymmetric bending of R-CO₃Li (R = methyl, ethyl), as shown in Fig. 2(d). In Fig. 2(f), a new absorption band at 2846–2850 cm⁻¹ (due to the CH stretch of R-CO₃Li) is more compelling evidence for the formation of R-CO₃Li (R = methyl, ethyl). In addition, for the Li_{1.05}Mn_{1.96}O₄ cath-

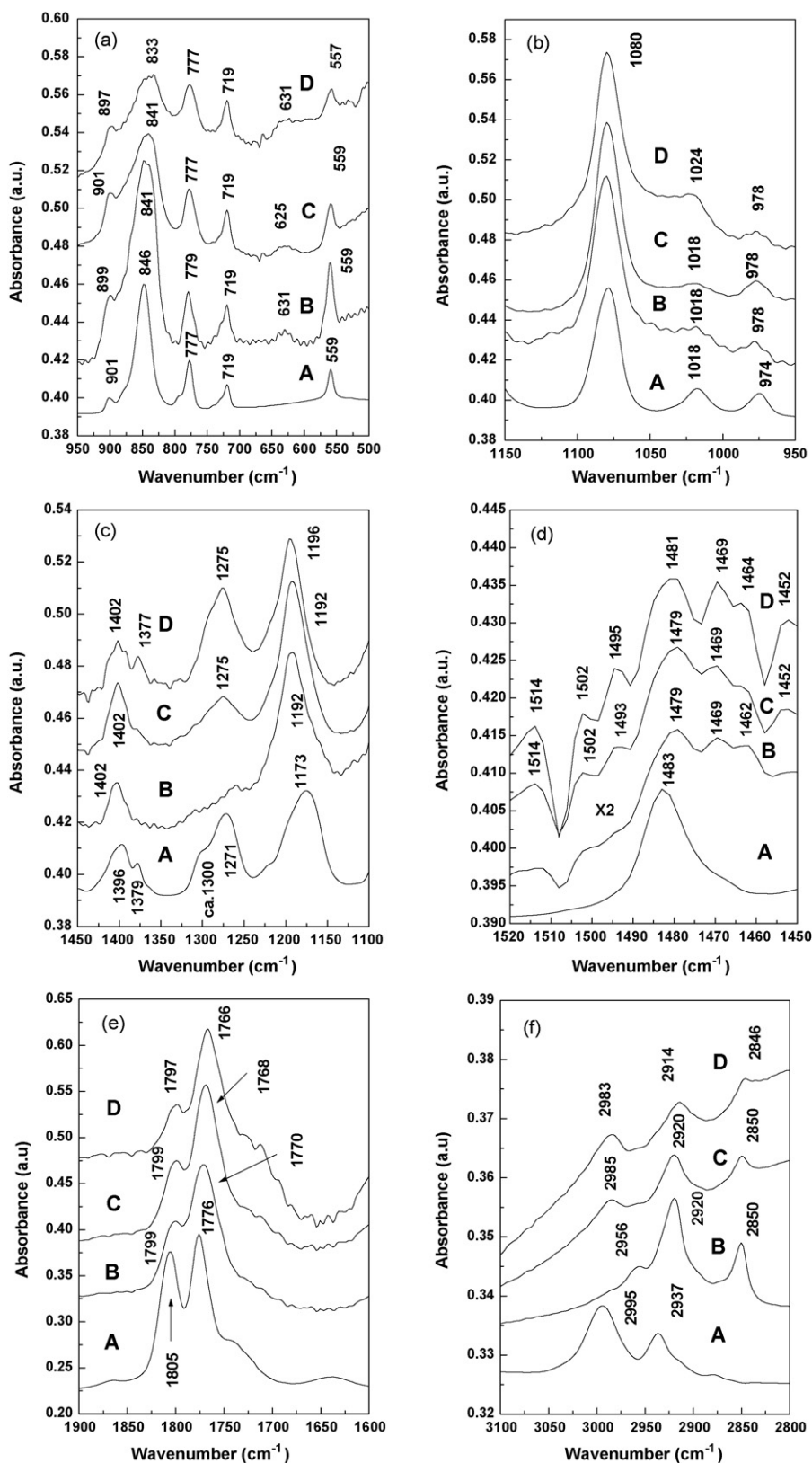


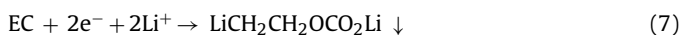
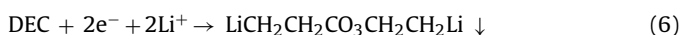
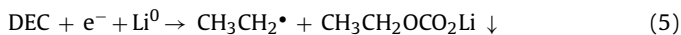
Fig. 2. FTIR spectra of $\text{Li}_{1.05}\text{Mn}_{1.96}\text{O}_4$ cathodes cycled in 1 mol L^{-1} $\text{LiPF}_6\text{-EC/DEC}$ with a current density of 0.4 mA cm^{-2} in the voltage range 3–4.5 V. The figures exhibit the adsorption bands of the cycled $\text{Li}_{1.05}\text{Mn}_{1.96}\text{O}_4$ cathodes for various regions: (a) 950–500 cm^{-1} ; (b) 1150–950 cm^{-1} ; (c) 1450–1150 cm^{-1} ; (d) 1500–1450 cm^{-1} ; (e) 1900–1600 cm^{-1} ; (f) 3100–2800 cm^{-1} . Curves A, B, C, D show 1 mol L^{-1} $\text{LiPF}_6\text{-EC/DEC}$ and $\text{Li}_{1.05}\text{Mn}_{1.96}\text{O}_4$ cathodes after 1, 5 and 10 cycles, respectively.

Table 1
FTIR vibration modes and correspondent peak positions of $\text{Li}_{1.05}\text{Mn}_{1.96}\text{O}_4$ cycled in 1 mol L^{-1} $\text{LiPF}_6\text{-EC/DEC}$.

Vibration modes	Peak positions (cm^{-1})				
	EC/DEC	LiPF_6	LiMn_2O_4	Li_2CO_3	R- CO_3Li
CH stretch	2937w, 2995w				2846–2983w
CO_2 stretch	1805s, 1776s				
CH, CH_3 asym. bend	1483m			1502w, 1402w	1495w, 1493w, 1469–1462w, 1402m
CO_2 sym. bend	1396m, 1379sh				
CH_3 sym. bend	1271s				
CO stretch	1174s, 1080s				1192–1196s, 1080–1024s
CH_2 bend	974m, 901m	1018s			
CO_3 bend		846s			
CO_2 asym. bend	777m, 719m			901–833s	901–833s
MnO_6 asym. bend		559m	631–625w		

Note: w: weak; m: middle; s: strong; sh: shoulder.

ode after 10 cycles, a projection at the shoulder of the 1080 cm^{-1} peak is seen, indicating the emergence of new absorption bands in the range $1024\text{--}1080 \text{ cm}^{-1}$. These correspond to the CO stretching of R- CO_3Li , as shown in Fig. 2(b):



3.3. Formation and evolution of the SEI in the initial charge process

In order to further understand the formation and evolution of the SEI during the charge–discharge process, six $\text{Li}_{1.05}\text{Mn}_{1.96}\text{O}_4$ cathodes were assembled in experimental batteries, and these were either charged to 4.10 V, 4.15 V, and 4.21 V, or first charged to 4.40 V and then discharged to 4.10 V, 4.00 V, and 3.95 V. The selected voltages correspond to the starts or ends of the charge–discharge plateaus, as shown in Fig. 3. Here 1 mol L^{-1} $\text{LiPF}_6\text{-EC/DMC}$ (1:1, v/v) was used as the electrolyte to minimize the effect of residual solvent in the $\text{Li}_{1.05}\text{Mn}_{1.96}\text{O}_4$ cathode, because DMC (dimethyl carbonate) is more volatile than DEC and may interfere less with the signals from the SEI. Fig. 4 shows the FTIR spectrum of 1 mol L^{-1} $\text{LiPF}_6\text{-EC/DMC}$

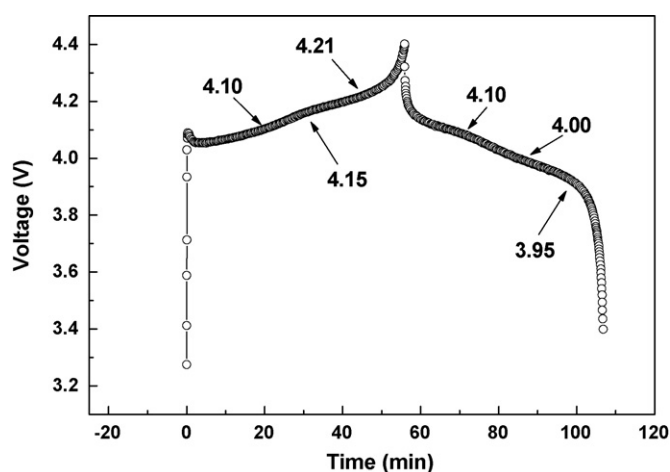


Fig. 3. The initial galvanostatic charge–discharge curves of $\text{Li}_{1.05}\text{Mn}_{1.96}\text{O}_4$ at a current density of 0.4 mA cm^{-2} . The electrolyte is 1 mol L^{-1} $\text{LiPF}_6\text{-EC/DMC}$ (1:1, v/v).

(1:1, v/v), which is very similar to that of 1 mol L^{-1} $\text{LiPF}_6\text{-EC/DEC}$ (1:1, v/v) shown in Fig. 1.

The absorptions of the $\text{Li}_{1.05}\text{Mn}_{1.96}\text{O}_4$ cathodes in different charge states are shown in Fig. 5. The absorption bands located at

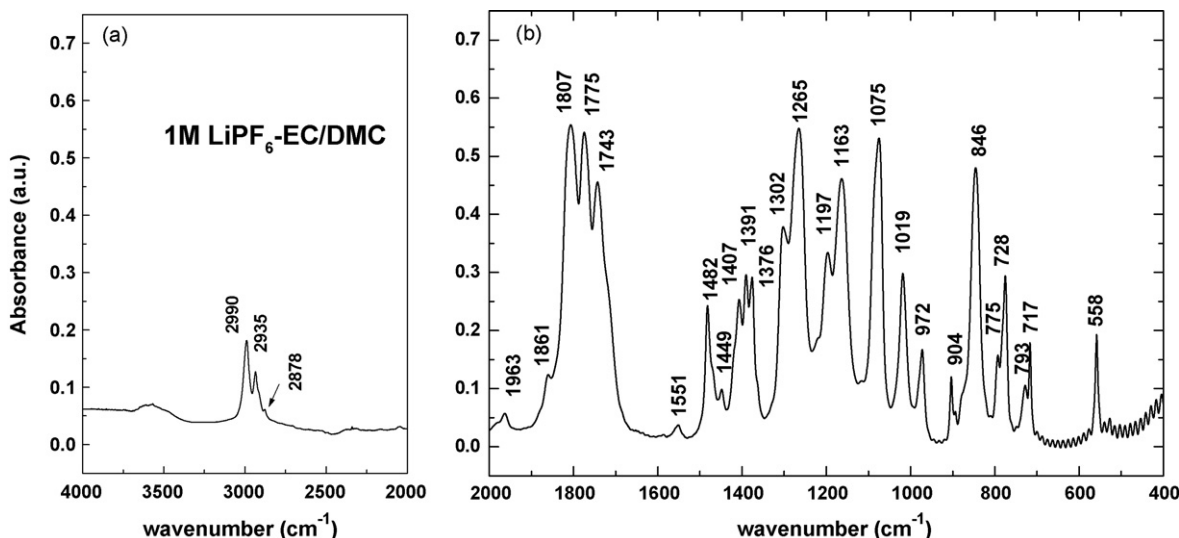


Fig. 4. FTIR spectrum of non-aqueous organic electrolyte 1 mol L^{-1} $\text{LiPF}_6\text{-EC/DMC}$ in different regions: (a) $4000\text{--}2000 \text{ cm}^{-1}$; (b) $2000\text{--}400 \text{ cm}^{-1}$.

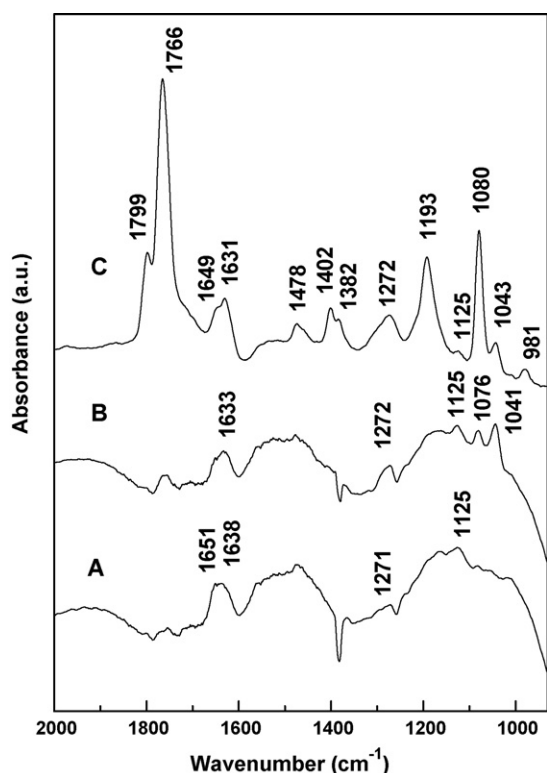


Fig. 5. FTIR spectra of $\text{Li}_{1.05}\text{Mn}_{1.96}\text{O}_4$ cathodes charged to different states in 1 mol L^{-1} $\text{LiPF}_6\text{-EC/DMC}$ (1:1, v/v): (A) 4.10 V; (B) 4.15 V; (C) 4.21 V.

$550\text{--}450 \text{ cm}^{-1}$ and $650\text{--}600 \text{ cm}^{-1}$ are the characteristic vibrations of LiMn_2O_4 [37], indicating that the spinel structure is retained during the charging process. The FTIR spectra of $\text{Li}_{1.05}\text{Mn}_{1.96}\text{O}_4$ charged from 4.10 V to 4.21 V were found to be clearly different from that of the electrolyte in Fig. 4. At 4.10 V and 4.15 V, the CO_2 asymmetric bending of $\text{R-CO}_3\text{Li}$ is identified at 722 cm^{-1} and 672 cm^{-1} , while at 4.21 V the CO_3 bending of $\text{R-CO}_3\text{Li}$ is identified at 879 cm^{-1} . For all three charge states, new absorption bands located at $1631\text{--}1651 \text{ cm}^{-1}$ are assigned to the CO_2 stretching of $\text{R-CO}_3\text{Li}$, while those located at 1271 (1272) cm^{-1} and 1125 cm^{-1} are assigned to the CO stretching of $\text{R-CO}_3\text{Li}$. When the charge voltage exceeds 4.15 V, an additional C–O–C stretching mode [38] is detected at 1041 (1043) cm^{-1} . On further charging to 4.21 V, new $\text{CH}(\text{CH}_3)$ asymmetric bending and CO stretching modes of $\text{R-CO}_3\text{Li}$ are detected at 1382 cm^{-1} and 981 cm^{-1} , respectively. This implies that some electrolyte may be gradually decomposed during the charge process, and the formation of the SEI on the $\text{Li}_{1.05}\text{Mn}_{1.96}\text{O}_4$ becomes ever more distinct with increasing charge voltage. Therefore, the FTIR vibration of $\text{R-CO}_3\text{Li}$ intensifies on going from

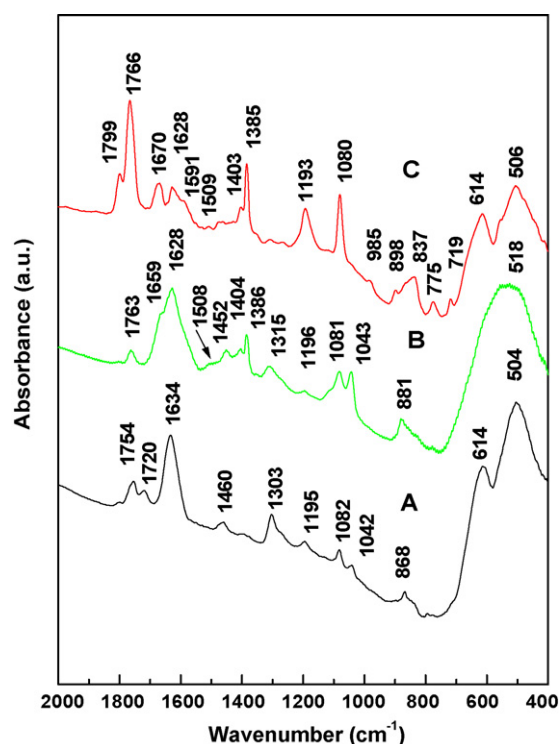
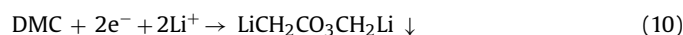
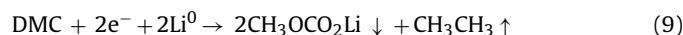
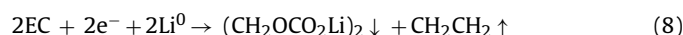


Fig. 6. FTIR spectra of $\text{Li}_{1.05}\text{Mn}_{1.96}\text{O}_4$ cathodes charged to 4.40 V and then discharged to different states: (A) 4.10 V; (B) 4.00 V; (C) 3.95 V. The electrolyte is 1 mol L^{-1} $\text{LiPF}_6\text{-EC/DMC}$ (1:1, v/v).

4.10 V to 4.21 V. Assignments of all of the absorption bands of $\text{Li}_{1.05}\text{Mn}_{1.96}\text{O}_4$ during the charge process are listed in Table 2.

According to Aurbach et al. [8,32], $\text{R-CO}_3\text{Li}$ mainly originates from reactions between the solvents and the lithium metal foil, as described by Eqs. (8) and (9). They believe that the $\text{R-CO}_3\text{Li}$ may first be formed on the lithium anode, and then migrates with the electrolyte, and ultimately adheres to the cathode. In fact, $\text{R-CO}_3\text{Li}$ may also come from the reaction of Li^+ with the solvents, as described by Eq. (10):



In this study, it has been proved that the direct formation of $\text{R-CO}_3\text{Li}$ on $\text{Li}_{1.05}\text{Mn}_{1.96}\text{O}_4$ is possible. On the other hand, it would be very difficult for even a small quantity of $\text{R-CO}_3\text{Li}$ formed on the lithium anode to migrate through the membrane to the $\text{Li}_{1.05}\text{Mn}_{1.96}\text{O}_4$ cathode in just the initial cycle.

Table 2

Comparison of FTIR peaks of surface layers on $\text{Li}_{1.05}\text{Mn}_{1.96}\text{O}_4$ at different charge states in $1 \text{ M LiPF}_6\text{-EC/DMC}$.

Charge states	Peak positions (cm^{-1})			
	EC/DMC	LiPF_6	LiMn_2O_4	$\text{R-CO}_3\text{Li}$
1 M $\text{LiPF}_6\text{-EC/DMC}$	2990–2878m, 1963w, 1807s, 1775s, 1743s, 1551w, 1482m, 1449w, 1407m, 1391m, 1376m, 1302s, 1265s, 1197m, 1163s, 1075s, 972m, 904m, 793m, 775m, 728w, 717m	1019m, 846s, 558m		
4.10 V	1754w		650–600m 550–450s	1651m, 1638m, 1272m, 1125w, 722m, 672m
4.15 V	1756w, 1076m		650–600m 550–450s	1633m, 1272m, 1125w, 1041m, 722m, 672m
4.21 V	1799s, 1766vs, 1478m, 1402m, 1193s, 1080s, 776w, 716m	850m, 557s	650–600m 550–450s	1649m, 1631m, 1382m, 1271m, 1125w, 1043m, 981w, 897m

Note: w: weak, m: middle, s: strong, vs: very strong.

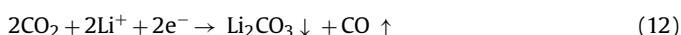
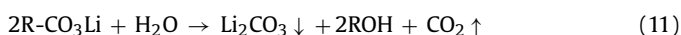
Table 3
Comparison of FTIR peaks of surface layers on $\text{Li}_{1.05}\text{Mn}_{1.96}\text{O}_4$ at different discharge states in 1 M $\text{LiPF}_6\text{-EC/DMC}$.

Discharge states	Peak positions (cm^{-1})			
	EC/DMC	Li_2CO_3	LiMn_2O_4	R- CO_3Li
4.10 V	1754w, 1720w, 1303m, 1195w, 1082w	868w	614s, 504s	1634s, 1460w, 1042w
4.00 V	1763w, 1404w, 1386m, 1196w, 1081m	1508vw, 1452w	518s	1659sh, 1628s, 1315m, 1043m, 881m
3.95 V	1799m, 1766s, 1080s, 1193s, 1385s, 1403sh, 775m, 719w,	898–837m, 1509vw	614s, 506s	1670m, 1628m, 1591sh, 985w, 898–837m

Note: w: weak; vw: very weak; m: middle; s: strong; sh: shoulder.

3.4. Formation and evolution of the SEI in the initial discharge process

The absorptions of $\text{Li}_{1.05}\text{Mn}_{1.96}\text{O}_4$ cathodes in different discharge states are shown in Fig. 6. At 4.10 V, a weak but distinct peak appears at 868 cm^{-1} . When the cathode is discharged to 4.00 V, weak peaks at 1508 cm^{-1} and 1452 cm^{-1} are detected. On further discharging to 3.95 V, absorption bands at 1509 cm^{-1} and $837\text{--}898\text{ cm}^{-1}$ can be easily identified, which may be assigned to the CO_3 bending of Li_2CO_3 . All of these characteristic peaks indicate the formation of Li_2CO_3 during the initial discharge process. As previously reported by Aurbach et al. [32,39], if there is a trace of H_2O in the electrolyte, R- CO_3Li will decompose to form Li_2CO_3 and CO_2 , as described by Eq. (11). The by-product CO_2 will then react with Li^+ to form more Li_2CO_3 according to Eq. (12). Since the discharge cathodes were carefully washed with DME, no absorption peaks due to LiPF_6 are observed in the FTIR spectra. However, the vibration modes of residual solvent can still be detected, as listed in Table 3:



Assignments of all of the absorption bands of $\text{Li}_{1.05}\text{Mn}_{1.96}\text{O}_4$ during the discharge process are listed in Table 3. Taking these together with the assignments listed in Table 2, it is evident that during the initial charge process an SEI with R- CO_3Li as the major component is formed on the $\text{Li}_{1.05}\text{Mn}_{1.96}\text{O}_4$ cathode, while during the initial discharge process the formation of Li_2CO_3 gradually becomes evident, and the co-existence of R- CO_3Li and Li_2CO_3 is detected.

4. Conclusions

With the aid of Fourier-transform infrared spectroscopy, the formation and evolution of the SEI on $\text{Li}_{1.05}\text{Mn}_{1.96}\text{O}_4$ cathode have been studied. It has been found that during the charge–discharge process, the SEI can be directly formed on the $\text{Li}_{1.05}\text{Mn}_{1.96}\text{O}_4$ cathode. It is mainly composed of R- CO_3Li and Li_2CO_3 , and is very similar to those formed on carbon anodes. In the initial cycle, the formation of R- CO_3Li begins at 4.10 V during the charge process, and becomes more distinct with increasing charge voltage. The formation of Li_2CO_3 begins at 4.10 V during the discharge process, and becomes more distinct with decreasing discharge voltage. The SEI becomes more evident in subsequent cycles.

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