

Process for the preparation of an ultrapure hydrogen peroxide solution by ion exchange in beds having defined h/d ratios.

5 The use of hydrogen peroxide for advanced technology applications or applications in the food industry, in hygiene or health requires increasingly pure products which must meet a growing number of increasingly tight specifications. In particular, the
10 demands of users are turning towards hydrogen peroxide solutions in which the content of each metal impurity is less than one part per billion (ppb) and preferably less than 500 parts per trillion (ppt). In the following account, such solutions will be known as
15 ultrapure hydrogen peroxide solutions.

 It is well known, according to the prior art, that it is possible to remove certain impurities by passing the solution through a bed of ion-exchange adsorbents. Mention may be made, for example, of
20 functionalized polymers of polystyrene/divinylbenzene type, silicas or aluminosilicates, in particular the varieties containing controlled micropores, such as zeolites, or active charcoals; these solids carry functional groups capable of complexing either cations
25 or anions. Mention may be made, as examples of functional groups capable of complexing cations, of the carboxylic, sulphonic, phosphonic, hydroxide, amine oxide or phosphine oxide groups or alternatively of cyclic or open polyoxaalkyls, such as, for example,
30 ethylene oxide polymers. Mention may be made, as examples of functional groups capable of complexing anions, of the quaternary ammonium or phosphonium groups. These adsorbents can also be obtained by polymerization of a monomer carrying a functional
35 group, for example poly(methacrylic acid)s, phosphonic acids, polyvinylpyridines, polyvinylpyrrolidones, poly(vinyl alcohol)s, saponified polylactones and copolymers containing these units. The adsorbents which

are the most often described are polystyrene gels or crosslinked polystyrenes possessing sulphonic $\text{-SO}_3\text{H}$ or trimethylammonium $(\text{CH}_3)_3\text{N}^+$ functional groups.

Many combinations have been provided, such as,
5 for example, anionic resin followed by cationic resin or cationic resin followed by anionic resin or alternatively anionic resin followed cationic resin followed by cationic + anionic "mixed bed". Additions to the inter-stage phases are also described, such as,
10 for example, the addition of acid in order to modify the pH or the addition of chelating agents, such as aminomethylenecarboxylic or aminomethylenephosphonic derivatives.

It is well known to the person skilled in the
15 art that the use of anion-exchange adsorbents presents great difficulties when employed for the purification of hydrogen peroxide. In particular, the hydroxide form, under which these products are generally available industrially, cannot be used directly because
20 of its excessively high basicity, resulting in significant decomposition of hydrogen peroxide. Many publications describe the use of adsorbents exchanged by carbonate or bicarbonate ions, which are less basic, in order to limit the decomposition of hydrogen
25 [lacuna], without, however, eliminating it completely.

The subject of the present invention is a process for the preparation of an ultrapure hydrogen peroxide solution, characterized in that it comprises at least one sequence which includes successively
30 passing the solution to be purified through at least one bed of cation-exchange adsorbents (CEA) and at least one bed of anion-exchange adsorbents (AEA) and characterized in [lacuna] the beds of adsorbents each exhibit a height to diameter ratio of greater than 3.

35 The subject of the present invention is in particular a process as defined above, in which the said ratio is, in particular, between 5 and 10 and, more particularly, approximately 6.

The hydrogen peroxide solution throughputs, expressed as volume of solution/hour passed per volume of bed of adsorbent, can vary between 0.5 and 100, preferably from 1 to 50 and more particularly from 10 to 30. The hydrogen peroxide solution to be purified according to the present invention is a technical aqueous solution having a concentration of 1 to 70% by weight and preferably of 5 to 50% by weight. The adsorbents are chosen from those which are described above.

The anion-exchange adsorbents will preferably be fed in an upward mode, whereas the cation-exchange adsorbents will preferably be fed in a downward mode. It is possible to define the geometries of the beds so that the true space velocities and/or throughputs in each adsorbent are optimized. It is also possible to operate under pressure. Preferably, a working pressure of less than 5 atm above atmospheric pressure will be chosen.

The temperature of the solution to be purified according to the process as described above is less than or equal to 30°C and preferably between -10°C and +10°C.

In a preferred alternative form of the process, at least one bed of anion-exchange adsorbents contains carboxylate ions of formula $R-COO^-$ in which R represents a hydrogen atom, an aryl radical containing from 6 to 10 carbon atoms or an alkyl radical containing from 1 to 4 carbon atoms, the said aryl and alkyl radicals being either unsubstituted or substituted by one or more fluorine atoms. Carboxylate ion of formula $R-COO^-$ is understood to mean in particular the trifluoroacetate ion or the benzoate ion, the formate ion, the acetate ion or the fluoroacetate ion, and preferably the acetate ion.

In an alternative form of the process as defined above, it comprises, upstream or downstream of sequences for passing the solution to be purified through the beds of ion-exchange adsorbents, one or

more purification stages, such as, for example, distillation, liquid extraction, crystallization, absorption, filtration, ultrafiltration, nanofiltration or reverse osmosis. If appropriate, the starting
5 solution is brought beforehand to the desired assay and then purified. Depending on the degree of purity and of dilution of the hydrogen peroxide solution to be purified, one or more of these additional stages is/are employed.

10 In a first preferred alternative form of the present invention, the technical hydrogen peroxide solution to be purified, which is at a concentration of 30% to 70% by weight, is distilled and brought to the desired assay beforehand and then purified through at
15 least two beds of ion-exchange adsorbents, according to the sequence which is the subject of the present invention.

According to a second alternative form of the purification process which is the subject of the
20 present invention, a hydrogen peroxide solution of technical quality or of so-called "food" quality, having a concentration of approximately 50 to 70% by weight, is subjected to the following pretreatment: a first distillation/concentration stage, in order to
25 obtain a condensate having a concentration of greater than 80%, plus a first purification by low-temperature crystallization and the removal of the supernatant. The crystals collected are washed, superficially dried and then melted and the solution obtained is diluted to 30
30 or 35% with deionized water of ultrapure electronic quality.

In a third preferred alternative form of the present invention, in particular if the carbon content of the hydrogen peroxide solution is a constraint
35 forming an integral part of the required specifications, a second bed of anion-exchange adsorbent [sic] can be added to the purification line in order to retain the carboxylate ions released by the

complexation of the metal impurities in the first bed of anion-exchange adsorbent [sic].

It is thus possible very easily to obtain, from a [lacuna] ordinary technical quality, a hydrogen peroxide solution of "electronic" quality containing less than 200 ppt of each of the metal cations from groups IA to VIIA (with the exception of oxygen) and from groups IB to VIII of the table of the Periodic Classification of the Elements.

Mention may be made, by way of illustration of the purification process which is the subject of the present invention, of, for example, the series of sequences: AEA (acetate)/CEA/AEA (bicarbonate) or carbonate/CEA [sic].

Another subject of the invention is a plant for the implementation of the process as defined above.

In a preferred alternative form of the present plant, the beds of anion-exchange adsorbents are fed in upward mode and the beds of cation-exchange adsorbents are fed in downward mode.

In another preferred alternative form of the plant, the latter is situated on the customer's site, such as, for example, a site for the manufacture of electronic components, and connected directly to the point of use of the hydrogen peroxide by the customer.

The following examples illustrate the invention without, however, limiting it.

EXAMPLES:

30 a) Comparative Example

A purification unit contains two columns filled respectively with 3 litres of an anion-exchange resin Dowex Monosphere A 550 UPE, which has been exchanged beforehand with a sodium bicarbonate solution and washed with water, and 3 litres of a cation-exchange resin Dowex Monosphere C 650 UPN. The diameter of the columns is approximately 11.7 centimetres, which gives a bed height of 28 centimetres, i.e. a height/diameter ratio of 2.6.

A 30% by weight aqueous hydrogen peroxide solution (solution A), obtained by diluting a 60% by weight commercial solution (solution B) with ultrapure water, is introduced with a throughput of 130 litres per hour, in upward mode, into the first (AEA) column and then, in downward mode, into the second (CEA) column; the purified solution obtained at the outlet of the (CEA) column is again passed through the same summaries [sic] according to the sequence (AEA) then (CEA). The overall time for passing the solution to be treated through a bed is consequently thus 1.2 minutes. The solution C is obtained. The concentrations in ppt in [sic] of the main critical elements are as follows:

	Na	Al	Ca	Fe
Solution A	300,000	59,000	8000	2600
Solution C	90	520	520	190

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b) Example according to the invention

By using the same equipment but operating with 7.6 litres in each of the beds, which corresponds to a height of approximately 71 centimetres and to a height of the bed/diameter ratio of approximately 6, 960 litres of a fresh batch of solution A are purified at the rate of 140 litres per hour, which corresponds to a residence time of 1.3 minutes, equivalent to that of the Comparative Example. Analysis of the critical elements gives the following results:

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	Na	Al	Ca	Fe
Solution A	476,000	77,000	16,700	5900
Solution C	65	290	53	51

These results clearly show the advantage which there is in employing the process according to the invention. It is then possible to obtain ultrapure hydrogen peroxide solutions containing less than 500 ppt of each of the metal cations from groups IA to

30

VIIA and from groups IB to VIII of the table of the Periodic Classification of the Elements.

CLAIMS

1. Process for the preparation of an ultrapure hydrogen peroxide solution, characterized in that it
5 comprises at least one sequence which includes successively passing the solution to be purified through at least one bed of cation-exchange adsorbents (CEA) and at least one bed of anion-exchange adsorbents (AEA) and characterized in that the beds of adsorbents
10 each exhibit a height to diameter ratio of greater than or equal to 5.
2. Process as defined in Claim 1, in which the said ratio is, in particular, between 5 and 10 and, more particularly, approximately 6.
- 15 3. Process as defined in either of Claims 1 and 2, comprising, upstream and/or downstream of the sequence for passing the solution to be purified through the beds of ion-exchange adsorbents, one or more purification stages, such as distillation, liquid
20 extraction, crystallization, absorption, filtration, ultrafiltration, nanofiltration or reverse osmosis, and, if desired, a prior operation in which the starting solution to be purified is brought to the [lacuna] assay.
- 25 4. Process as defined in Claim 3, in which the technical hydrogen peroxide solution to be purified, which is at a concentration of 30% to 70% by weight, is distilled and brought to the desired assay beforehand.
5. Process as defined in Claim 3, in which a
30 hydrogen peroxide solution of technical quality or of so-called "food" quality, having a concentration of approximately 50 to 70% by weight, is subjected to the following pretreatment: a first distillation/concentration stage, in order to obtain a condensate having a
35 concentration of greater than 80%, plus a first purification by low-temperature crystallization and the removal of the supernatant. The crystals collected are washed, superficially dried and then melted and the



solution obtained is diluted to 30 or 35% with deionized water of ultrapure electronic quality.

6. Process as defined in one of Claims 1 to 5, characterized in that at least one bed of anion-exchange adsorbent [sic] contains carboxylate ions of formula $R-COO^-$ in which R represents a hydrogen atom, an aryl radical containing from 6 to 10 carbon atoms or an alkyl radical containing from 1 to 4 carbon atoms, the said aryl and alkyl radicals being either unsubstituted or substituted by one or more fluorine atoms.

7. Process as defined in Claim 6, in which the $R-COO^-$ ion is the formate ion, the acetate ion, the fluoroacetate ion, the trifluoroacetate ion or the benzoate ion, and preferably the acetate ion.

8. Process according to Claim 7, characterized in that it comprises two successive sequences, the first of which includes passing the hydrogen peroxide solution to be purified through a bed of anion-exchange adsorbent [sic] containing acetate ions, followed by passing through a bed of cation-exchange adsorbents, and the second of which includes passing through a bed of anion-exchange adsorbents containing bicarbonate or carbonate ions and passing through a bed of cation-exchange adsorbent [sic].

9. Plant for the implementation of the process as described in one of Claims 1 to 8, characterized in that it is situated on the site of use of the ultrapure hydrogen peroxide solution and in particular on the site for the manufacture of electronic components.

10. Plant as described in Claim 9, in which the beds of anion-exchange adsorbents are fed in upward mode and the beds of cation-exchange adsorbents are fed in downward mode.



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