

PROCESS FOR THE PURIFICATION OF HYDROGEN PEROXIDE

The present invention relates to a process for the purification of aqueous solutions of hydrogen peroxide in order to remove cations and organic acids therefrom.

Aqueous hydrogen peroxide has many industrial uses and, in the case of the electronics field, must exhibit a high purity and must therefore be rid of its cations and organic acids.

The methods of purification described to date refer to distillation, treatment on ion exchange resins, as in French Patent Application FR 1 043 082, treatment on exchange resins to which chelating agents are added, in French Patent Application FR 2 624 500 and to a reverse osmosis process, as in US Patent 4 879 043.

However, these methods are not entirely satisfactory for the removal of some impurities such as especially the ferric Fe^{+++} or aluminic Al^{+++} ions.

The present invention proposes to remedy these disadvantages.

The subject-matter of the invention is a process for the purification of aqueous solutions of hydrogen peroxide, characterized in that one or more macroligands are added to the said solution and the resulting mixture is forced through an ultrafiltration membrane.

Aqueous solutions of aqueous hydrogen peroxide which are usually employed in electronics assay at from 30 to 35 % by weight. The invention can, however, be applied to solutions assaying at up to 75 % by weight. Macroligands are added to these aqueous solutions; the subject-matter of the invention is especially a process in which the macroligands contain one or several functional groups chosen from carboxylic, sulphonic and phosphonic groups or nitrogen-containing functional groups such as aromatic or nonaromatic amine functional groups or N-oxidized amine functional groups.

Aqueous hydrogen peroxide to which the ligand(s) has (have) been added is then forced under

pressure through an ultrafiltration membrane. The membrane is of an oxidation-resistant nature of the fluoropolymer type (PTFE, PVDF, PFA) and with a cut-off threshold adapted to the polymers employed. The working pressure is from 1 bar to a few bars, in general 3 to 4 bars; the subject-matter of the invention is particularly a process in which the ultrafiltration membrane is a membrane made of fluoropolymer, especially of polyvinyl difluoride (PVDF), of polytetrafluoroethylene (PTFE) or of polyfluoroalkoxy (PFA).

The results of the tests developed in the examples mentioned below show that results lower than 10 ppb (parts per billion) are obtained for the Fe^{+++} and Al^{+++} ions when the macroligands are chosen from the 4-vinylpyridine homopolymer, the styrene/4-vinylpyridine 2/8 and 1/9 copolymers, acrylic phosphate/sulphonate copolymers ($\text{Mw} = 500\ 000$), acrylic phosphate copolymer ($\text{Mw} = 500\ 000$) and polyvinylphosphonic acid ($\text{Mw} = 30\ 000$), this choice constituting a preferred alternative form of the present invention.

Besides the good results obtained, an advantage of this process consists in it being possible for this method of purification to be used upstream or downstream of other purification stages.

Another subject-matter of the invention is a process for the manufacture of unstabilized ultrapure hydrogen peroxide from the crude product prepared according to the methods known to a person skilled in the art, such as, for example, the autooxidation of anthraquinone or of its derivatives, anodic oxidation of the $\text{SO}_4^{--}/\text{HSO}_4^-$ couple, cathodic reduction of oxygen or the direct synthesis, optionally including one or more purification stages chosen from distillation, passing over ion exchange resins, passing over a column of adsorbents, especially of zeolites, or reverse osmosis, characterized in that it additionally includes at least one ultrafiltration stage according to the process as defined above.

The ultrapure hydrogen peroxide thus produced corresponds to the standards imposed by the users, especially the manufacturers of electronics components.

Another aspect of the present invention relates to a plant for the production of unstabilized ultrapure hydrogen peroxide, characterized in that it includes

- a) a hydrogen peroxide synthesis unit,
- b) a unit for purification of the crude hydrogen peroxide obtained in stage a), comprising at least one ultrafiltration stage according to the process, and
- c) a storage vessel for the hydrogen peroxide purified in b), making it possible to absorb the variation in the final user's consumption, and characterized in that the said plant is situated on the same site as the final user of the said purified hydrogen peroxide and especially on the site of a factory for the manufacture of electronics components.

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

EXAMPLE 1

A 70% strength aqueous hydrogen peroxide of industrial quality originating from the anthraquinone process was diluted to 30 % and had added to it 0.25 % of acrylosulphonic copolymer of $M_w = 4500$. This solution was then ultrafiltered on a Filtron® mini-ultrasette equipped with a 50 cm² polyethersulphone membrane at a rate of 1 dm³/min of retentate and 1.3 cm³/min of filtrate.

Results (in ppb)

	K	Fe	Al	Ni	Cr	Mn	Sn
30 % H ₂ O ₂	17	123	124	13	22	2	7800
Filtrate	8	12	13	<4	5	<0.2	40

EXAMPLE 2

0.25 % by weight of polyvinylphosphonic acid of $M_w = 30\ 000$ is added to a 30% strength by weight aqueous hydrogen peroxide of electronics quality. The solution is then ultrafiltered on a Filtron 3K mini-ultrasette at a rate of $1.5\text{ dm}^3/\text{min}$ of retentate and $0.7\text{ cm}^3/\text{min}$ of filtrate.

Results (in ppb)

	K	Cu
30 % H_2O_2	0.95	0.94
Filtrate	0.45	0.21

EXAMPLE 3

0.25 % by weight of 4-vinylpyridine homopolymer is added to industrial aqueous hydrogen peroxide. The resulting solution is ultrafiltered on 1K membrane.

Results (in ppb)

	Si	Fe	Al	Cr	P	Sn
30 % H_2O_2	10 300	127	407	23	22 200	7700
Filtrate	1680	3	<9	16	11 600	100

EXAMPLE 4

Operating in a manner similar to Example 3, and employing as macroligands a styrene/4-vinylpyridine 2/8 copolymer and the 1/9 copolymer, following results are obtained :

	Fe	Al	Cr	P	Sn
30 % H_2O_2	70	140	17	23 800	7400
Filtrate	<4	<9	<4	11 200	<20

EXAMPLE 5

Operating as in Example 1, employing the macroligands cited below, the following results are obtained:

	K	Fe	Al	Cr	Mg
30% industrial H ₂ O ₂	12	56	95	20	50
A	<8	16	40	<4	24
B	<8	8	<9	<4	14
C	<8	3	25	<4	30
D	<8	4	15	<4	2

A: acrylic/sulphonate copolymer

B acrylic/phosphate/sulphonate copolymer

Mw = 500 000

C: acrylic/phosphate copolymer Mw = 500 000

D: polyvinylphosphonic acid Mw = 30 000.



- 6 -

CLAIMS

1. Process for the purification of aqueous solutions of hydrogen peroxide, characterized in that one or more macroligands are added to the said solution and the resulting mixture is forced through an ultrafiltration membrane.
2. Process according to Claim 1, in which the macroligands contain one or several functional groups chosen from carboxylic, sulphonic and phosphonic groups or nitrogen-containing functional groups such as aromatic or nonaromatic amine functional groups or N-oxidized amine functional groups.
3. Process according to either of Claims 1 and 2, in which the ultrafiltration membrane is a membrane made of fluoropolymer, especially of PVDF, PTFE or PFA.
4. Process according to Claim 2, in which the macroligand is chosen from 4-vinylpyridine homopolymer, the styrene/4-vinylpyridine 2/8 and 1/9 copolymers, acrylic/phosphate/sulphonate copolymers (Mw = 500 000), acrylic phosphate copolymer (Mw = 500 000) and polyvinylphosphonic acid (Mw = 30 000).
5. Process for the manufacture of unstabilized ultrapure hydrogen peroxide from the crude product, optionally including one or more purification stages chosen from reverse osmosis, distillation, passing over ion exchange resins or passing over a column of adsorbents, especially of zeolites, characterized in that it additionally includes at least one ultrafiltration stage according to the process as defined in one of Claims 1 to 4.
6. Plant for the production of unstabilized ultrapure hydrogen peroxide, characterized in that it includes
 - a) a hydrogen peroxide synthesis unit,
 - b) a unit for purification of the crude hydrogen peroxide obtained in stage a), comprising at least one ultrafiltration stage according to the process as defined in one of Claims 1 to 4, and



- 7 -

c) a storage vessel for the hydrogen peroxide purified in b), making it possible to absorb the variation in the final user's consumption, and characterized in that the said plant is situated on the same site as the final user of the said purified hydrogen peroxide and especially on the site of a factory for the manufacture of electronics components.

7. Plant according to Claim 6, in which during stage a) the hydrogen peroxide is synthesized by autooxidation of anthraquinone or of its derivatives.