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Review of Processing Technologies for Spent Zinc Batteries

Katarína Blašková, Jarmila Trpčevská, Tomáš Vindt

Faculty of Metallurgy, Technical University in Košice, Letná 9, 042 00 Košice. Slovak Republic. E-mail: katarina.blaskova@tuke.sk, jarmila.trpcevaska@tuke.sk, tomas.vindt@tuke.sk

This paper deals with the possibility of spent portable batteries treatment with the aim of zinc recovery. Perspective of pyrometallurgical and hydrometallurgical process is described. Samples of zinc based portable batteries were submitted under the investigation. Aim of the work was to find the best conditions for zinc recovery. Experimental work focused on hydrometallurgical process was conducted. Results have shown 100 % zinc recovery

under these conditions: leaching in medium 2 M $(\text{NH}_4)_2\text{CO}_3$, addition of 20 ml of NH_4OH as reductant, leaching temperature 20°C , within 10 minutes.

Keywords: spent zinc batteries, hydrometallurgy, leaching.

1 Introduction

Batteries have become a preferred portable energy source for electronic devices including mobile phones, cameras, laptops, computers, etc., because of diverse favorable characteristic such as low weight, high energy density, good performance, and so on. Because of wide application of electronic products, the spent portable battery output has rapidly risen. It has resulted in the generation of considerable quantities of discarded waste [1]. Spent portable batteries contain various valuable metals such as zinc, nickel, cobalt, lithium and others. Because of toxic heavy metals content and corrosive electrolytes, batteries are classified as hazardous solid wastes. Recycling of valuable metals from batteries helps reduce environmental contaminations impact as well as the resource shortage [2,3].

There are several treatment routes proposed in order to recycle the metal based wastes. They are divided into three processes: Pyrometallurgical, hydrometallurgical and a mixed of both [4]. Currently, both pyrometallurgical and hydrometallurgical methods have been used in the recycling of spent batteries. The essence of pyrometallurgical treatment is recovering materials by using high temperatures. The process itself is based on extraction and purification of metals by processes involving the application of heat. When dealing with zinc based batteries, evaporation and consequent condensation of recovering metal is conducted. Process is followed by concentrating of additional agent in the rest [5]. In contrast, hydrometallurgical routes are commonly found more economical and efficient than pyrometallurgical ones. Hydrometallurgy requires a pretreatment to ensure leaching process of black powder (separated active mass from crushed and milled batteries) followed by metal recovery from the solution in the most effective way. Recycling through hydrometallurgy basically consists of the acid or base leaching of scrap to put the metals in a solution. Once in a solution, metals can be recovered by various methods [6].

Pyrometallurgical pros and cons [7]:

- + High efficiency of metal recovery
- + Desirable for big amount of batch
- + Relatively simple process.
- High investment and operating costs
- High energy consumption to ensure the melting process
- Dust generation and gas emission
- The need to ensure the detention of gas cleaning system
- Single devices are intended only for a particular metal, it is not possible to obtain various types of metal in a single device

- Profitability of process (necessity of a bigger amount of batch, which is quite difficult to obtain in every country, even in Slovakia for instance).

Hydrometallurgical pros and cons [7]:

- + Lower energy consumption for the operation
- + Lower initial investment costs
- + Zero air pollution
- + High purity metal production
- + Simple transport of liquid based commodities by pipelines
- + Flexibility of process, possibility of adapting for a small batch.
- Pretreatment to ensure leaching process
- Problem with spent solutions after leaching - corrosive environment
- Big amount of waste water
- Aggressive used chemicals (acids, alkali).

There are two types of zinc based batteries - zinc-carbon battery and alkaline battery. Zinc-carbon batteries have a carbon rod in contact with carbon and MnO_2 as cathode and a zinc case as anode. A paste of NH_4Cl and ZnCl_2 is the acid electrolyte. On the cylindrical cell the zinc electrode is usually recovered with a stainless steel jacket. A plastic or paperboard separator and an asphalt seal are usually present [8-11]. Alkaline batteries were developed after the zinc-carbon and work on the similar principles. These are usually composed of a brass rod in contact with powdered zinc as anode and a steel case in contact with carbon and MnO_2 as cathode. A paste of KOH is used as alkaline electrolyte ($\text{pH} \sim 14$). These batteries have a stable voltage, higher energy density and higher resistance than Zn - C batteries [8-12]. A mixture of anode, cathode and electrolyte material is called a black powder or active mass. The composition of black powder is dependent on type of spent batteries.

2 Experimental material and procedure

For the purpose of research, a sample of spent portable batteries was obtained from collected spent zinc batteries. After mechanical treatment 3 kg of black powder was prepared. Fig. 1 and Fig. 2 show individual parts of zinc-carbon and alkaline batteries after manual dismantling. Leaching experiments were realized using various conditions: concentration of leaching medium, temperature, and time of leaching. Based on experimental results the optimal conditions for selective zinc leaching were determined.

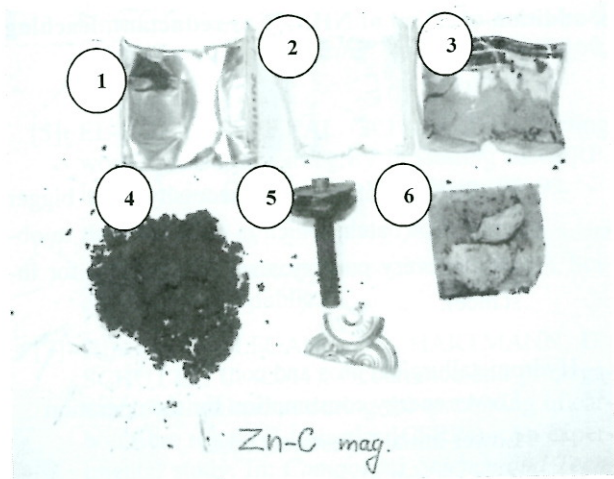


Fig. 1 Zn-C battery consist of metal cover (1), plastic foil (2), ZnCl₂, resp. NH₄Cl (3), mixture of C, Mn oxides (4), graphite rod (5) and separation paper (6).

Black powder sample was analyzed by AAS (atomic absorption spectrometry) and by XRD analyzer (X-ray diffractometer PANalytical X'pert PRO MPD), as shown in Tab. 1 and Tab. 2.

According to the Tab. 1, black powder contains almost 20 % Zn, 23 % Mn and approximately 18 % Cl.

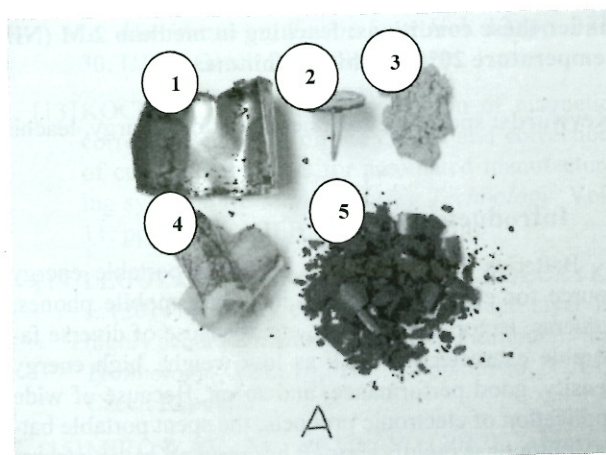


Fig. 2 Alkaline battery consist of metal cover (1), nickel-coated rod (2), Zn oxides, electrolyte (3), separation paper (4), and mixture of C, Mn oxides (5).

Tab. 1 Chemical analysis of black powder

Element	Amount [%]
Zn	19.68
Mn	23.05
Fe	0.88
K	0.93
Cl	17.71

Tab. 2 Phase composition of black powder

Ref. Code	Score	Compound Name	Chemical Formula
00-048-1066	37	Zinc Hydroxide	Zn(OH) ₂
00-036-1451	32	Zinc Oxide	ZnO
00-036-0791	16	Potassium Hydroxide Hydrate	KOH ! H ₂ O
00-007-0155	16	Zinc Chloride Hydroxide Hydrate	Zn ₅ (OH) 8Cl ₂ ! H ₂ O
00-039-0697	11	Potassium Oxide	KO ₂
00-028-1468	9	Zinc Manganese Oxide	ZnMn ₂ O ₄
00-022-0720	6	Manganese Chloride	MnCl ₂
00-042-1316	4	Manganese Oxide	MnO ₂
00-023-0064	1	Carbon	C

As shown in Tab. 2, XRD phase analysis confirms presence of zinc in phase as Zn(OH)₂, ZnO, ZnMn₂O₄ a Zn₅(OH)₈Cl₂.H₂O. The presence of mentioned phases was confirmed also by L. R. S. Veloso and al. [13], I. De Michelis and al. [14], de Souza and al. [15] a. Freitas and al. [16].

3 Experimental results

With purpose to achieve a maximum zinc extraction, series of experiments where performed as it is shown in Tab. 3. The best achieved results are depicted in Fig. 3.

Tab. 3 Summarization of leaching experiments

Medium	Reductant [ml]	Concentration of medium [M]	Temperature[°C]	Leaching time [min]
(NH ₄) ₂ CO ₃	-	1, 2, 3	20	60
	-	1, 2, 3	40	60
	-	1, 2, 3	60	60
(NH ₄) ₂ CO ₃	10 ml NH ₄ OH	2, 3	20	60
	20 ml NH ₄ OH	2, 3		60

Tab. 4 The result of XRD phase analysis of the solid residue after leaching.

Ref. Code	Score	Compound Name	Scale Factor	Chemical Formula
00-025-0284	33	Carbon	0.730	C
01-071-2499	22	Zinc Manganese Oxide	0.706	ZnMn ₂ O ₄

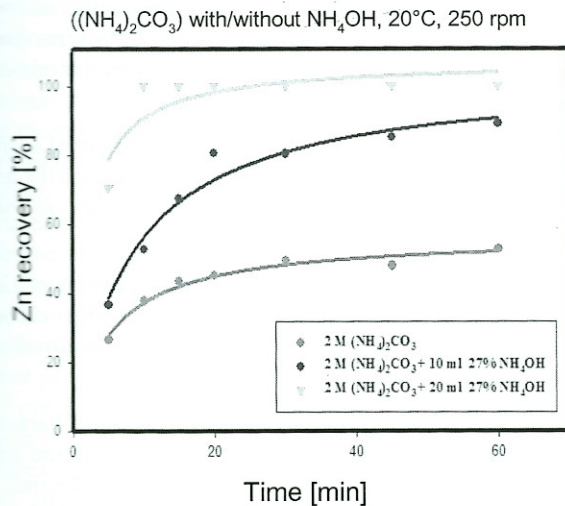


Fig. 3 Kinetics curves of zinc extraction at temperature of 20 °C in 2 M (NH₄)₂CO₃ with and without addition of NH₄OH.

It was determined that the amount of leached zinc in ammonium carbonate medium depends on both concentration and leaching time. Effect of temperature was negligible. The use of concentrated ammonium carbonate (3 M) at temperature of 20 °C results in zinc leaching (64 %). It can be seen clear increase of zinc recovery (89 %) after adding 10 ml of NH₄OH as it is shown in Fig. 3. Addition of 20 ml of agent led to 100 % Zn extraction.

After leaching of black powder the solid residue was submitted to XRD analysis. The result is shown in Tab. 4.

XRD analysis showed that the Zn in solid residual is in form of ZnMn₂O₄ compound also called hetaerolite. It follows that Zn leached out from the black powder into the solution from the ZnO a Zn(OH)₂ phases. Sample was submitted to annealing at temperature of 600 °C, 700 °C and 850 °C. The sample after annealing can be seen in Fig. 4. The temperature of 850 °C led to decomposition of hetaerolite phase. After the decomposition ZnO and MnO phases were determined by XRD analysis as showed in Tab. 5.



Fig. 4 Annealed sample

Tab. 5 The results of XRD phase analysis of annealed sample.

Ref. Code	Score	Compound Name	Scale Factor	Chemical Formula
01-075-0625	60	Manganese Oxide	0.727	MnO
00-026-1077	46	Carbon	0.487	C
01-079-0208	22	Zinc Oxide	0.081	ZnO
00-006-0540	13	Manganese Oxide	0.058	Mn ₂ O ₃

4 Conclusion

The performed researches confirm the applicability of ammonium compounds for the leaching of zinc-bearing waste materials. It was examined the influence of a number of parameters on the process of leaching. The optimization of the leaching process, carried out under laboratory conditions allowed to determine the parameters such as time, temperature, concentration of (NH₄)₂CO₃, amount of NH₄OH addition as a reductant, at which the process takes place at the maximum efficiency. The optimal conditions for selective Zn extraction seems to be leaching in 2 M (NH₄)₂CO₃ with addition of 20 ml 27 % NH₄OH at temperature 20 °C, leaching time 10 minutes. The obtained results show that it is possible to reduce the zinc content in the black powder to less than 1% by suggested hydrometallurgical process. The solution after leaching process and suitable subsequent treatment can become a source of valuable metal.

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The Impact of Sr Content on Fe - Intermetallic Phase's Morphology Changes in Alloy AlSi10MgMn

Kamil Borko, Eva Tillová, Mária Chalupová

Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, University of Žilina, Univerzitná 8215/1, 010 26 Žilina. Slovak Republic. E-mail: kamil.borko@fstroj.uniza.sk

The effect of modification (with AlSr10) on the microstructure of hypoeutectic AlSi10MgMn cast was systematically investigated. The samples were studied in as cast state without Sr (0 % Sr) and after modification (0.05 % Sr; 0.1 % Sr and 0.15 % Sr). Iron is added to Al-Si alloy to increase hot tear resistance and to reduce die sticking, but can change the solidification characteristics by forming pre- and post-eutectic β -Al₅FeSi phase or other Fe-rich phases, which can be very detrimental to the mechanical properties of the final cast part. A combination of different analytical techniques (light microscopy upon black-white etching; scanning electron microscopy (SEM) upon deep etching and energy dispersive X-ray analysis (EDX); quantitative phase analyse upon Image analyzer NIS Elements 3.0) were therefore been used for the microstructure study. The results show that the addition of Sr into AlSi10MgMn cast alloy modified eutectic silicon as well as Fe-intermetallic phases and improves mechanical properties (ductility, strength).

Keywords: aluminium cast alloy, microstructure, Fe-rich phases and morphology

1 Introduction

Aluminium alloys with high silicon contents exhibit high strength, low thermal expansion and high wear resistance. These qualities, together with their excellent castability and reduced density, make these alloys very interesting for the automotive industry where they can

successfully replace cast iron parts in heavy wear applications [1, 2]. AlSi10MgMn is a hypoeutectic aluminium alloy wherein the aluminium solid solution precipitates from the liquid as the primary phase in the form of a dendritic network followed by a eutectic reaction. This alloy contains about 50 volume % eutectic phases [3].