

废旧三元锂电池正极材料中有价金属的短程高值化利用研究进展

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摘要: 在碳达峰碳中和战略驱动下, 废旧三元锂电池回收已成为实现资源循环与减排目标的关键环节。传统回收工艺(如火法冶金工艺、湿法冶金工艺)存在能耗高、流程长、产品附加值低等瓶颈, 推动回收模式从“金属回收”向“材料再生”的高值化转型势在必行。近年来, 基于浸出液转化为正极材料前驱体的高值化技术路径发展迅速, 但研究相对分散, 缺乏系统性梳理与评估。为此, 论述了废旧三元锂电池的预处理、金属浸出及浸出液净化技术进展, 重点分析了共沉淀法、喷雾热解法和溶胶-凝胶法三类基于有价金属浸出液的高值化利用路径, 阐释其原理、优势及产业化挑战, 并从原料适应性、回收效率、工程放大及材料性能等方面进行综合比较。最后, 针对当前存在的工艺稳定性、经济性与规模化难题, 展望了智能调控、低碳短流程、装备创新及材料性能提升的未来发展方向, 为推动废旧锂电池高值化回收的产业化应用提供参考。

关键词: 废旧三元锂电池; 湿法冶金工艺; 有价金属提取; 高值化利用; 材料再生

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Advances in High-Value Short-Process Utilization of Valuable Metals from Spent Ternary Lithium-Ion Batteries

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Abstract: Driven by the "Dual Carbon" goals (carbon peaking and carbon neutrality), the recycling of spent lithium-ion batteries (LIBs), particularly those with ternary cathode materials ($\text{LiNi}_x\text{Co}_y\text{Mn}_z\text{O}_2$, NCM), has become a crucial step toward achieving resource circularity and emission reduction. Conventional recycling techniques, such as pyrometallurgical and hydrometallurgical processes, are often associated with high energy consumption, complex multi-step procedures, and the generation of low-value outputs, such as basic metal salts or compounds. These limitations present significant economic and environmental bottlenecks. Therefore, shifting the focus from simple "metal recovery" to high-value "material regeneration" is imperative. In recent years, promising high-value utilization routes that directly convert leaching solutions into cathode material precursors have advanced rapidly. However, research in this area remains relatively fragmented, lacking systematic consolidation and critical evaluation of the various approaches. This review begins by comprehensively examining technological progress in the pretreatment of spent ternary LIBs, metal leaching, and leachate

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purification. It then focuses on analyzing three primary high-value utilization pathways based on metal-rich leachates: co-precipitation, spray pyrolysis, and sol-gel methods. For each pathway, the working principles, technical advantages, and key challenges for industrialization are elucidated in detail. A comparative analysis is conducted from multiple perspectives, including adaptability to complex and variable battery waste streams, recovery efficiency (balancing metal yield and product purity), engineering scalability (addressing continuous production and equipment design), and the electrochemical performance of the regenerated cathode materials. Despite their considerable promise, these high-value pathways face several common challenges: sensitivity to fluctuations in feedstock composition, which affects process robustness; a persistent trade-off between energy/reagent consumption and economic viability; technical barriers to process scaling and continuous operation; and a performance ceiling, whereby regenerated materials often merely restore rather than exceed the properties of their virgin counterparts. To overcome these challenges and accelerate the industrialization of high-value LIB recycling, future research and development should converge on several integrated directions: (1) developing intelligent, adaptive processes capable of handling complex feedstocks through real-time monitoring and machine learning; (2) innovating low-carbon, short-process technologies and integrated reaction-separation systems to minimize energy and reagent use; (3) advancing equipment design and process engineering to enable efficient, stable large-scale production; and (4) exploring intrinsic performance-enhancing strategies during recycling, such as targeted doping or microstructure engineering, to elevate the functionality and value of regenerated cathode materials beyond conventional levels. This review aims to provide a structured reference and actionable insights to facilitate the industrial adoption of high-value recycling technologies for spent lithium-ion batteries.

Keywords: Spent ternary lithium-ion batteries; Hydrometallurgical process; Valuable metal extraction; High-value utilization; Material regeneration

0 引言

在碳达峰碳中和国家战略目标的背景下,交通领域的清洁化转型已成为实现节能减排的关键路径^[1-2]。新能源汽车作为能源转型的核心载体,产业规模持续扩张,带动了动力电池装机容量的大幅提升^[3-4]。当前,我国锂电池市场呈现明显分化:动力电池占比持续扩大(2023年已超过70%),消费类电池需求趋于稳定,而储能电池则在成本下降与政策支持的双重推动下进入高速增长期^[5]。随着早期装机动力电池逐步达到使用年限,我国即将迎来大规模电池退役期^[6]。这些废旧锂电池不仅对环境保护和废物治理构成严峻挑战,同时也是一座资源丰富且亟待开发的“城市矿山”^[7]。

废旧锂电池的高效回收与高值化利用,是实现“双碳”目标与“循环经济”有机结合的重要环节。一方面,电池正极材料,特别是三元正极材料($\text{LiNi}_x\text{Co}_y\text{Mn}_z\text{O}_2$, NCM)中含有的锂、钴、镍等是宝贵的战略金属资源^[8-9]。通过回收利用,可显著降

低对原生矿产的依赖,避免高能耗、高排放的冶炼过程^[10]。另一方面,若退役电池处置不当,其内部的重金属与电解质将对土壤和水体造成长期污染,甚至引发安全事故^[11]。因此,发展先进的电池回收技术已成为保障资源安全、防治环境污染和支持产业可持续发展的关键课题。

尽管电池回收需求迫切,但目前主流的火法冶金工艺、湿法冶金工艺及火法-湿法联用工艺等传统回收路径在技术和经济性上仍存在瓶颈^[12]。火法冶金工艺简单、适用范围广,但存在能耗高、锂元素回收效率低以及熔炼过程会产生有害烟气等缺陷^[13];湿法冶金工艺的金属回收纯度高,但工艺流程冗长、化学试剂消耗大,并伴随大量高盐废水^[14];火法-湿法联用工艺可通过较为温和的反应条件提高金属回收率,但工艺复杂性和运行成本也随之增加^[15],且仍无法从根本上摆脱以生产低附加值金属化合物为终点的传统方式(图1)。这些传统路径的共同症结在于均需通过多步骤萃取与提纯将正极材料分解为单一的金属化合物,不仅增加了流程成本与环境负担,也限制

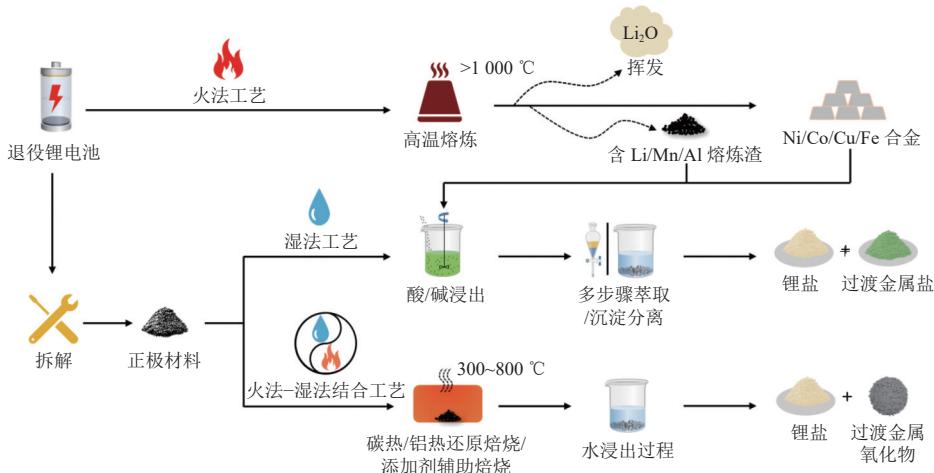


图 1 传统火法冶金工艺, 湿法冶金工艺以及火法-湿法联合工艺的具体流程

Fig. 1 Specific processes of traditional pyrometallurgy, hydrometallurgy, and pyrometallurgy-hydrometallurgy combined processes

了产品的附加值, 严重制约了回收产业的经济效益与发展动力^[16]。

为突破这一瓶颈, 学术界与产业界致力于推动废旧锂电池回收从传统的金属回收向材料再生的高值化方向升级^[17]。其核心理念在于颠覆以分解-提纯为核心的传统思路, 将回收的有价金属, 转化为具有特定组分与形貌的高性能正极材料前驱体。这种“从废料到新材料”的定向合成策略, 将回收链条的终点提升至具备高市场价值的先进电池材料, 从根本上提升回收过程的经济性和可持续性, 为实现动力电池全生命周期的绿色闭环提供了技术支撑^[18-19]。

实现这一高值化目标的关键在于将废旧锂电池正极材料的浸出液作为合成正极材料前驱体的原料, 从而省去针对每种金属的单独分离与结晶步骤^[20]。根据前驱体合成方法的不同, 主要的高值化技术路径分为共沉淀法、喷雾热解法和溶胶-凝胶法。获取满足前驱体合成要求的浸出液, 是整个高值化过程的基础。因此, 废旧锂电池的规范化预处理与目标金属的高效浸出显得尤为重要。

1 废旧锂电池预处理与有价金属浸出过程

1.1 废旧锂电池的预处理过程

预处理是废旧锂电池回收过程中的重要步骤, 以确保后续过程的安全性以及提高整体回收效率。详细的预处理包括电池放电、拆解、正极/负极材料和集流体(铝箔/铜箔)的分离等步骤^[21]。其核心环节包括:

(1) 废旧锂离子电池安全放电: 通过盐溶液

(NaCl ^[22]、 MnSO_4 ^[23]) 浸泡、低温冷冻(液氮)或短路处理消除残余电量, 降低自燃爆炸风险。

(2) 拆解与破碎: 采用物理方法将电池外壳, 正负极和隔膜拆卸分离; 或在惰性气氛或湿式环境中破碎电池, 结合筛分、磁选、涡流分选及气动分选分离金属壳体、塑料隔膜与电极组件^[24]。

(3) 电极正极材料剥离: 利用高温热解(300~600 °C)^[25]、强碱(NaOH)^[26]、有机溶剂(NMP)^[27]或绿色试剂(植酸^[28]、柠檬酸^[29])剥离铝箔集流体与正极材料, 辅以超声或芬顿氧化技术提升剥离效率。

(4) 电解质无害化处理: 采用超临界 CO_2 萃取或真空热解回收有机碳酸酯溶剂, 抑制有毒气体(HF 、 PF_5)生成^[30]。

预处理工艺的选择需在效率、成本与环保之间取得平衡, 其效果直接决定了后续浸出工序的原料品质与杂质水平。当前, 工业界已形成以自动化破碎分选和热解为核心的成熟预处理体系, 而研究方向则趋向于开发更低能耗、更少二次污染的温和剥离技术。

1.2 有价金属浸出过程

预处理之后, 通常采用浸出方式将正极材料中的所有有价金属或者目标金属溶解进入液相(图 2)。目前, 有价金属浸出过程呈现出由传统无机酸浸出向新型绿色溶剂浸出的发展趋势^[31]。

针对钴酸锂(LiCoO_2)、三元正极(NCM)等层状材料, 传统的无机酸浸出体系通常是浸出剂与还原剂的组合, 具有浸出效率高、操作简单的特点。通常使用 HCl ^[32]、 H_2SO_4 ^[33] 和 HNO_3 ^[34] 等强酸

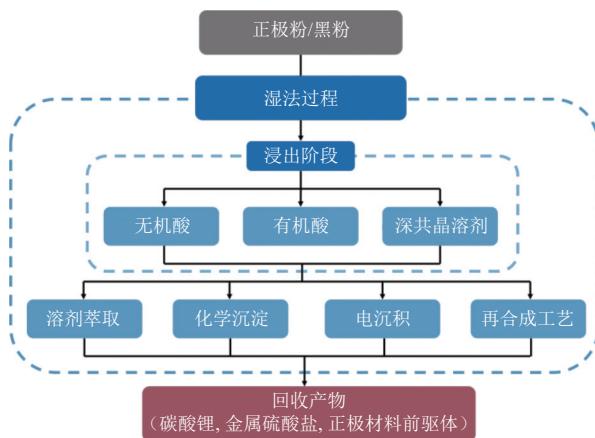


图 2 湿法冶金工艺流程图

Fig. 2 Schematic of the hydrometallurgical process for spent LIBs

或中强酸, 搭配 H_2O_2 、 $\text{Na}_2\text{S}_2\text{O}_3$ 这类还原剂。其中典型的浸出体系 $\text{H}_2\text{SO}_4\text{-H}_2\text{O}_2$ 凭借其经济性和环境友好性在工业中被广泛采用^[35]。在处理废旧三元正极材料时, 通过调控浸出条件能实现有价金属全浸出, 锂(Li)和过渡金属(Ni、Co、Mn)的浸出率均超过 99%。然而该体系存在试剂消耗大、产生酸性废水, 以及 H_2O_2 热稳定性差限制浸出动力学等缺陷。同时, 采用强无机酸浸出也会带来酸性废液及有毒废气(如 NO_x , SO_x , Cl_2 等)的排放, 腐蚀设备且对环境造成潜在危害。

有机酸因其环境友好性被提出用于回收废旧锂电池中的有价金属, 同时具备一定的功能性(抗坏血酸^[36]具有还原性, 乙酸^[37]、苹果酸^[38]、柠檬酸^[39]具有螯合特性), 能改善浸出效果。除实现 LiCoO_2 、NCM 等层状材料中有价金属的全浸出之外, 利用有机酸盐在水中溶解度的差异实现 Li 的选择性浸出, 也是一种可行方案^[40]。然而, 有机酸相对较高的试剂成本是当前产业化的主要瓶颈。此外, 有机酸浸出表现出缓慢的反应动力学, 通常需要提高浸出温度(> 80 °C)或降低固液比($< 25 \text{ g}\cdot\text{L}^{-1}$)来提高效率。

深共晶溶剂(DES)浸出是一种新兴的绿色回收技术, 通过氢键供体(如酰胺、羧酸和多元醇)和受体(如季铵盐)按一定比例形成低熔点共晶体, 同时具备良好的溶解能力和低毒性^[41]。其优势包括选择性提取(调节溶剂的组分选择性地提取目标物质)和可再生利用(通过物理或化学方法可回收和再生深共晶溶剂)。TRAN 等^[42]率先提出了氯化胆碱与乙二醇以 1:2 的摩尔比形成的深共晶溶剂, 应用于废旧锂电池中有价金属的提取。

在此基础上, 研究人员逐步探索了氯化胆碱-抗坏血酸、氯化胆碱-尿素等多种体系。然而, 传统 DES 浸出存在温度高(>140 °C)、时间长(>5 h)及体系易分解等问题^[43]。

除传统湿法冶金工艺外, 以低温焙烧-水浸为主的火法-湿法联用工艺, 通过在较低温度(300~800 °C)下引入辅助试剂进行焙烧, 将目标金属转化为溶于水的特定化合物, 仅通过水浸即可实现高效提取。该工艺核心在于焙烧过程对金属赋存形态的调控, 主要分为还原焙烧、氯化焙烧和硫酸化焙烧 3 种技术路径。还原焙烧常以碳或有机物为还原剂, 在惰性或弱还原性气氛下, 将正极材料中的过渡金属还原为单质或低价氧化物, 同时将 Li 转化为可溶的 Li_2CO_3 或 Li_2O ^[44-45]。ZHANG 等^[46]以葡萄糖为碳源在 550 °C 下处理 LiCoO_2 , 可实现 Li 与 Co 的分离, 回收率分别达 97% 和 99%。氯化焙烧是以氯化铵等试剂为主, 利用其还原性以及分解产生的氯化氢破坏金属-氧键, 将正极材料转变为水溶性氯盐, 再通过水浸提取金属^[47-48]。FAN 等^[49]采用氯化铵焙烧, 在适宜条件下将 LiCoO_2 、 LiMn_2O_4 、 $\text{LiNi}_{0.33}\text{Co}_{0.33}\text{Mn}_{0.33}\text{O}_2$ 正极材料中有价金属转化为水溶性氯化物。硫酸化焙烧则是通过添加硫酸盐(如硫酸铵^[50-51])或浓硫酸^[52], 使 Li 转化为可溶的 Li_2SO_4 , 而过渡金属转化为硫酸盐或不溶的氧化物。LIN 等^[52]通过硫酸化焙烧(浓硫酸为辅助试剂, 800 °C 下焙烧)处理废旧 $\text{LiNi}_{0.5}\text{Co}_{0.2}\text{Mn}_{0.3}\text{O}_2$, 后续常温水浸即可选择性分离出 Li。该联用工艺综合了火法反应高效和湿法分离精准的优点, 大幅减少了浸出过程的酸碱消耗与废水排放, 尤其利于 Li 的选择性回收。然而, 其工业化仍面临焙烧尾气处理以及产物杂质控制等挑战。

1.3 浸出液净化过程

在获得有价金属浸出液后, 传统的回收工艺通常需要通过一系列复杂的化学分离步骤逐一提取和纯化各种金属组分。这一过程的典型路径: 首先通过调节 pH 使铝(Al)、铁(Fe)等杂质离子水解沉淀; 随后采用硫化沉淀法选择性去除铜(Cu)等重金属; 最后通过多级溶剂萃取技术依次分离和富集镍(Ni)、钴(Co)、锰(Mn)等主要有价金属, 并采用沉淀法从残余溶液中回收 Li。这种分步萃取-沉淀工艺虽然能够获得较高纯度的单一金属盐产品, 但存在流程冗长、试剂消耗量大、废水产生量多等固有缺陷。浸出液经历了多次相

变和化学转化过程,导致最终产品的纯度下降,同时能耗和水足迹较高,经济性和环境友好性均不理想。

针对上述问题,为适应高值化再合成的需求,浸出液净化策略正朝着精准提纯的方向发展。这一策略的核心在于保留用于合成正极材料的目标金属,仅去除对后续材料合成不利的杂质元素。浸出液中的 Al、Fe、Cu 等杂质元素会显著影响正极材料前驱体的制备过程和电化学性能,需要进行深度去除^[53-55];而 Li、Ni、Co 和 Mn 作为目标元素,则根据后续合成需求保留在溶液中,无需进行多步分离。具体而言,可通过 pH 调控^[56]或引入沉淀剂(如草酸^[57],磷酸^[58],磷酸氢二铵^[59])选择性去除金属杂质 Al、Fe,而 Cu 需要采用沉淀法(引入硫化物^[60])、化学置换法(引入还原铁粉^[61])、电沉积法^[62]、溶剂萃取法^[63-64]等方式去除。这种精准提纯策略不仅大幅缩短了工艺流程,减少了试剂消耗和废液产生,更重要的是还为后续的共沉淀法、喷雾热解法等高值化再合成技术提供了合格的原料液。

这一技术转变体现了废旧锂电池回收从“金属回收”到“材料再生”的理念升级,通过简化前处理流程,将浸出过程与材料合成技术无缝衔接,为高效、经济地实现废旧锂电池组分的短程高值化利用奠定了坚实基础。

2 基于浸出液的短程高值化路径

在获取富含有价金属 Li、Ni、Co、Mn 的浸出液后,将其作为合成正极材料的前驱体溶液,通过前驱体制备技术,可以实现从金属富集液到高价值正极材料前驱体的短流程、高值化转化。与旨在修复材料晶体结构的直接再生技术不同,此类技术需要借助浸出过程将正极材料转化为离子态,可被视为间接再生技术,尤其适用于结构遭受严重破坏的正极材料。其中,最重要的正极材料浸出液再利用过程,可通过不同前驱体的合成方法进行区分,一般分为共沉淀法、喷雾热解法和溶胶-凝胶法。

2.1 共沉淀法

共沉淀法作为制备锂离子电池三元正极材料前驱体的成熟技术,因其能够实现原子级元素均匀混合与精准形貌控制,已在工业界得到广泛应用。该技术通过在反应体系中引入络合剂(如氨

水^[65],碳酸铵^[66]),与 Ni、Co、Mn 等过渡金属离子形成稳定的氨络合物,从而调控各金属离子的沉淀速率,在特定的 pH、反应温度、搅拌条件下,可获得粒径分布均匀、球形度完好的氢氧化物或碳酸盐前驱体^[67]。目前,该技术已被成功应用于废旧锂离子电池的高值化回收领域,形成了从有价金属浸出液到球形三元前驱体的完整工艺路线。

在回收体系中,共沉淀法的应用特点在于可实现过渡金属离子的协同沉淀与锂离子的高效分离。热力学数据表明, $\text{Ni}(\text{OH})_2$ 、 $\text{Co}(\text{OH})_2$ 、 $\text{Mn}(\text{OH})_2$ 的稳定区域分别为 $6.09 < \text{pH} < 14.00$ 、 $6.31 < \text{pH} < 14.00$ 、 $7.56 < \text{pH} < 14.00$,而 LiOH 直到 pH 为 13.76 时才开始沉淀^[68]。因此,通过精准调控反应体系的 pH ,使过渡金属以前驱体形式共沉淀,而锂离子保留在母液中,经简单固液分离即可得到过渡金属前驱体与富锂溶液,简化了传统回收工艺中复杂的分离步骤(图 3)。将前驱体与 Li_2CO_3 (可通过在富锂溶液中加入 Na_2CO_3 沉淀所得)充分混合后,进行高温煅烧($700\text{--}900\text{ }^\circ\text{C}$)制备正极材料。

SA 等^[69]采用传统的 $\text{H}_2\text{SO}_4\text{-H}_2\text{O}_2$ 体系浸出废锂离子电池多种正极材料的混合物,将 Ni、Co、Mn 调整至目标摩尔比并确保溶液中杂质金属(Al、Fe、Cu)浓度低于 50 mg/L,通过引入 $\text{NH}_3\cdot\text{H}_2\text{O}$ 和 NaOH 的共沉淀工艺制备 $\text{Ni}_x\text{Co}_y\text{Mn}_z(\text{OH})_2$ 前驱体。MA 等^[68]在富含目标金属的浸出液基础上,衔接共沉淀工艺,成功制备出化学计量比可控的前驱体(如 $\text{Ni}_{0.6}\text{Co}_{0.2}\text{Mn}_{0.2}(\text{OH})_2$, $\text{Ni}_{0.5}\text{Co}_{0.2}\text{Mn}_{0.3}(\text{OH})_2$, $\text{Ni}_{0.33}\text{Co}_{0.33}\text{Mn}_{0.33}(\text{OH})_2$),经烧结后获得电化学性能良好的再生正极材料。DING 等^[70]对废旧电池材料进行原位碳热还原和水浸处理,随后通过湿式磁选高效富集与净化;磁选精矿经硫酸浸出后,浸出液中杂质总含量低于 0.05%,调控 Ni、Co、Mn 达到目标化学计量比后可直接用于共沉淀合成前驱体,并最终再生出 $\text{LiNi}_{0.5}\text{Co}_{0.2}\text{Mn}_{0.3}\text{O}_2$ 材料。该再生材料初始放电容量高达 173.9 mA·h/g,在 0.5 C 倍率下循环 100 次容量保持率仍为 91.9%。

共沉淀法的优势在于工艺成熟度高、产物形貌可控、组分均匀性好,适合规模化生产。然而,其应用仍面临挑战,如工艺流程相对较长,涉及沉淀、熟化、过滤、洗涤等多个单元操作,可能导致锂的分散损失;对浸出液的纯度要求严格,共沉淀工艺对杂质离子(Al、Fe、Cu)极为敏感。研究表明,这些杂质不仅影响前驱体的成核生长与形貌

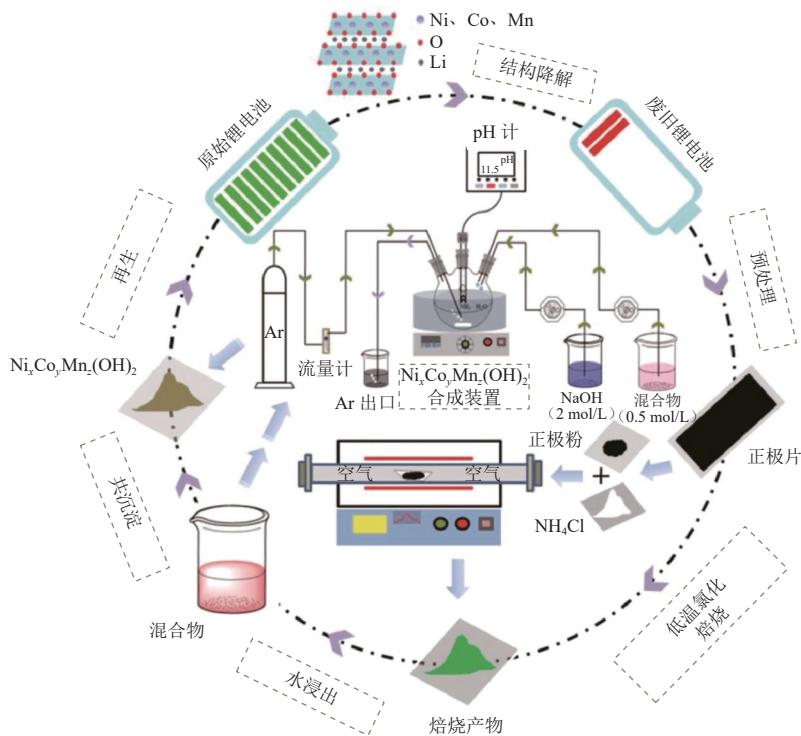


图 3 基于共沉淀法的废旧锂电池回收示意图^[68]

Fig. 3 Schematic diagram of spent lithium-ion battery recycling based on the coprecipitation method^[68]

(如 Cu^{2+} 引起颗粒细化, Fe^{3+} 抑制二次颗粒生长), 还会进入最终材料的晶格结构, 高浓度 Al^{3+} 会诱导 Li/Mn 超晶格等杂质相形成, 严重破坏材料的结构完整性, 从而劣化再生正极的电化学性能^[53, 55, 71];

此外, 氨氮废水的产生也增加了运营与环保成本。因此, 开发高效净化技术与绿色沉淀体系是推动该技术在回收领域深入发展的关键。

2.2 喷雾热解法

喷雾热解法因其工艺流程短、产物组分均匀及操作相对简便等特点, 已成为锂离子电池正极材料制备的重要技术之一, 在层状材料($\text{LiCoO}_2/\text{LiNi}_x\text{Co}_y\text{Mn}_z\text{O}_2$)^[72-73]、尖晶石型材料($\text{LiMn}_2\text{O}_4/\text{LiNi}_{0.5}\text{Mn}_{1.5}\text{O}_4$)^[74-75]以及聚阴离子型材料(LiFePO_4)^[76]的合成中展现出良好的适用性。其本质上是一种金属盐溶液经雾化、蒸发与热分解转化为氧化物固态微粒的一步式合成过程, 流程仅需几十秒^[77]。近年来, 基于喷雾热解在材料合成方面的技术积累, 研究人员逐步将其拓展至废旧锂离子电池的回收领域, 形成了独特的闭环再生路径。

在回收体系中, 喷雾热解的应用主要衍生出 2 条技术路线, 起点均为调整好化学计量比的有价值金属浸出液。路线一侧重于“优先分离”, 在过程

中实现锂与过渡金属的选择性分离与高价值前驱体的同步制备。通过精确控制热解温度(450 ~ 850 °C), 利用锂盐(如 LiCl 、 Li_2SO_4)与过渡金属盐在热稳定性和分解行为上的差异, 实现差异化热解。过渡金属转化为不溶性氧化物前驱体, 而锂盐保持可溶状态, 后续通过水浸即可实现高效分离^[78-79]。最终将氧化物前驱体与锂盐溶液沉淀所得 Li_2CO_3 充分混合后, 经高温煅烧(700 ~ 900 °C)合成正极材料。如图 4(a)所示, ZHOU 等^[78]采用氯化焙烧-喷雾热解-水浸出过程, 将废旧 $\text{LiNi}_{0.8}\text{Co}_{0.1}\text{Mn}_{0.1}\text{O}_2$ 正极材料转化为氯化锂溶液和过渡金属氧化物, 二者可直接用于合成电池级 Li_2CO_3 和再生正极材料。在适宜条件下, 可实现>88% 的 Li 浸出率, 再生的正极材料在 1 C 倍率下循环 300 次后仍保持 80% 的容量。除层状材料外, 针对废旧磷酸铁锂(LiFePO_4)正极材料, 采用 FeCl_3 作为浸出剂, 超过 99% 的 Li 在 30 min 内被选择性浸出。通过喷雾热解过程将含 Li、Fe 的浸出液转化为由 LiCl 和 Fe_2O_3 组成的热解粉体。水浸后得到高纯度 LiCl 溶液和 Fe_2O_3 浸出残渣分别可用于生产电池级 Li_2CO_3 和 LiFePO_4 正极材料(图 4(b))^[80]。

路径二倾向于“一步再生”, 利用某些有机酸

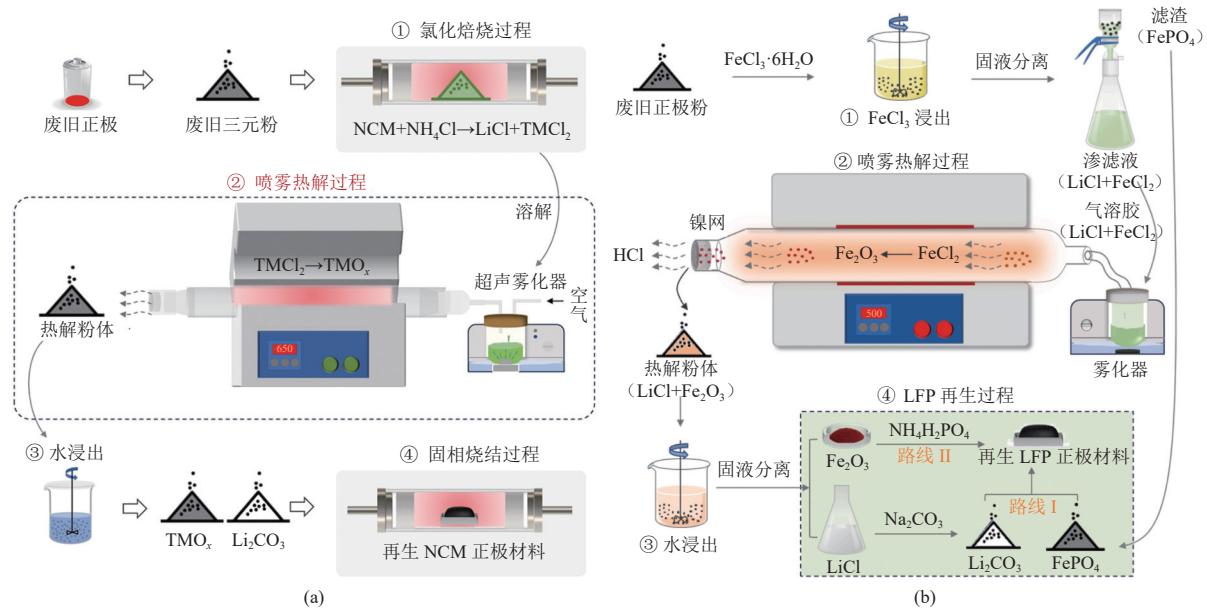


图4 (a)采用喷雾热解-水浸出工艺处理 NCM 废旧正极材料^[79], (b)基于氯化铁选择性浸出-喷雾热解工艺处理 LiFePO₄ 废旧正极材料^[80]

Fig. 4 (a) Processing spent NCM cathode materials using a spray pyrolysis–water leaching process^[79]. (b) Processing spent LiFePO₄ cathode materials using a FeCl₃ selective leaching–spray pyrolysis process^[80]

盐热分解温度较低的特性,尝试在喷雾热解过程中使锂与过渡金属共结晶,直接重构出正极材料,从而省去分离步骤。ZHENG 等^[81]通过醋酸和过氧化氢浸出废旧 $\text{LiNi}_{0.5}\text{Co}_{0.2}\text{Mn}_{0.3}\text{O}_2$ 正极材料中的目标金属离子(Li、Ni、Co、Mn),将浸出液中金属离子用相应的醋酸盐调整至目标化学计量比,通过喷雾热解实现从浸出液到再生 $\text{LiNi}_{0.33}\text{Co}_{0.33}\text{Mn}_{0.33}\text{O}_2$ 正极材料。再生正极材料初始放电容量为 157.1 mA·h/g,在 0.2 C 倍率下循环 100 次容量保持率仍高于 95%。HU 等^[82]使用磷酸和柠檬酸混合溶液浸出废旧 LiFePO_4 正极,将浸出液直接作为前驱体溶液,通过喷雾干燥工艺重新合成 LiFePO_4/C 正极材料,实现了从废旧粉末到再生产品的短流程闭环。

基于喷雾热解法的高值化路径流程短、元素分布均匀、产物价值高。然而,喷雾热解法的多路径合成方式是一柄“双刃剑”,合成目标与选择性多样化的同时,需要严格控制工艺参数,避免不同路径的交叉影响。此外,该技术还面临着以下挑战:能耗与运行成本高,高温过程对设备要求严苛;产品回收率与纯度受限,热解过程中锂可能挥发损失,且杂质或残留锂可能影响前驱体结构;存在环境风险,若使用含氯浸出剂,热解可能释放有害气体。因此,开发匹配的绿色浸出体系与优化热解工艺,是推动该技术走向产业化的关键。

2.3 溶胶-凝胶法

溶胶-凝胶法作为一种重要的材料合成技术,在制备组分均匀、结构精密的功能材料方面展现出独特优势。区别于传统的氢氧化物共沉淀法,该方法在溶液中对金属无机盐和有机络合剂(如柠檬酸)进行分子设计,通过溶液中的络合反应形成均匀的分子级溶胶体系,通过溶剂的蒸发或聚合反应构建空间网络状的凝胶(图 5(a))。此过程在原子/分子尺度上实现了各金属元素的均匀混合与固定,从而使得后续热处理过程中,离子扩散距离极短,能够在相对较低的温度下获得结晶良好、化学计量比精确的最终产物^[83]。这一优势使其在废旧电池高值化回收领域展现出独特潜力。

在回收体系中,溶胶-凝胶法能够直接利用成分复杂的浸出液,无需预先分离锂和过渡金属。具体流程:在正极材料浸出过程中采用柠檬酸^[85–86]、苹果酸^[87–88]等兼具螯合与浸出功能的试剂,通过调节 pH 形成稳定的溶胶体系。在温和加热条件下蒸干水分,溶胶逐渐转化为具有三维网络结构的凝胶。获得的干凝胶需经过分段热处理:首先在较低温度(350~500 °C)下进行焙烧,使有机组分分解;随后在较高温度(700~900 °C)下进行煅烧,促进目标晶相的形成与生长,最终得到结晶完整、结构均匀的再生正极材料。

ZHOU 等^[84]利用柠檬酸同时作为浸出剂和螯

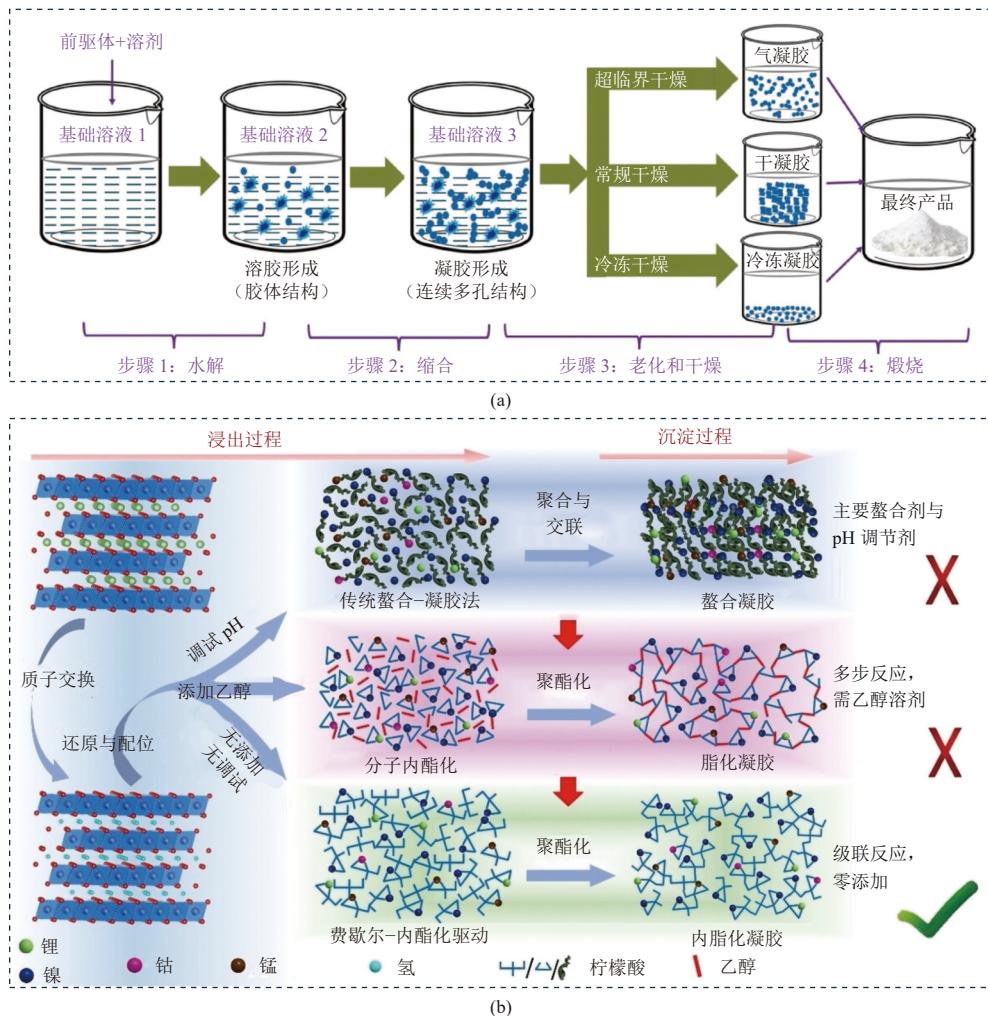


图 5 (a)不同溶胶-凝胶形成过程的示意图^[83], (b)传统溶胶-凝胶法、分子间酯化凝胶法与费歇尔-内酯化驱动策略在有价金属浸出与螯合过程中的比较^[84]

Fig. 5 (a) Schematic representation of different sol-gel processes from precursor to gel formation^[83]. (b) Comparison of traditional sol-gel method, intermolecular esterification gelation method, and Fischer-lactonization driven strategy in the leaching and chelation of valuable metals^[84]

合剂, 通过分子内酯化反应形成内酯化凝胶, 实现浸出与螯合的一步连续反应(图 5(b))。实验结果显示, Li、Ni、Co、Mn 的浸出率均超过 99%, 再生后的单晶 $\text{LiNi}_{0.5}\text{Co}_{0.2}\text{Mn}_{0.3}\text{O}_2$ 正极材料结构完整, 在 0.5 C 下循环 250 次后容量保持率达 70.6%。WANG 等^[85]利用柠檬酸同时作为浸出剂、还原剂和螯合剂, 从废旧锂离子电池中回收并通过溶胶-凝胶法再生尖晶石型锰酸锂 (LiMn_2O_4) 正极材料。MA 等^[89]采用由氯化胆碱和酒石酸组成的深共晶溶剂从废旧锂离子电池中回收 $\text{LiNi}_{0.33}\text{Co}_{0.33}\text{Mn}_{0.33}\text{O}_2$ 正极材料。研究发现, 使用乙醇作为反溶剂可以高效沉淀 Ni、Co、Mn 等有价金属(回收率>96.5%), 所得酒石酸盐沉淀可直接作为前驱体, 通过溶胶-凝胶法成功合成具有良

好层状结构和优异循环性能的再生正极材料。该研究也指出, Al、Cu 杂质会在凝胶化过程中与目标金属共沉淀, 显著损害再生正极的容量与循环性能。

该技术路径的优势在于合成温度较低、产物组分均匀性好、晶体结构可控。然而, 其产业化的主要瓶颈在于工艺存在固有缺陷, 溶胶-凝胶转变及后续干燥煅烧过程中, 体积收缩易导致材料开裂, 产物形貌与振实密度难以控制; 规模化放大难, 从实验室到工业反应器的放大过程中, 难以保证溶胶的整体均一性, 且冗长的凝胶化、干燥过程无法满足规模化回收处理量的基本要求; 全周期经济性差, 高昂的有机络合剂成本、漫长的工艺周期所带来的高能耗与低产能, 以及有机废液的处

理成本,共同削弱了其商业竞争力。因此,开发低成本络合剂、优化并缩短工艺链、设计适应放大的专用设备,是推动该技术走向产业化的前提。

3 技术路径比较与主要挑战

3.1 高值化技术路径的综合比较

共沉淀法、喷雾热解法和溶胶-凝胶法作为实现浸出液高值化转化的三大核心技术路径,在应对废旧电池原料的复杂性、满足产物性能需求及平衡经济性等方面各具特色,适用场景与瓶颈也存在区别。对三大技术路径进行系统比较,将其作为选择与优化工艺方案的基础。如表1所示,共沉淀法凭借其在大规模工业化生产中对前驱体

形貌与组分的成熟控制体系,在回收高价值三元材料、追求稳定量产时最具优势。喷雾热解法则以流程极短、元素分布均匀见长,特别适用于合成对均一性有苛刻要求(如高镍、无钴或掺杂材料)的产物,但其经济性受能耗与原料体系制约显著。溶胶-凝胶法在原子/分子尺度上实现精准合成,可赋予再生材料优异的晶体结构与电化学性能,在小批量、高性能特种正极材料的再生中独具潜力,但其工艺流程与成本难以匹配大规模回收的需求。总体而言,技术路径的选择是在原料适应性、产物性能、流程效率与综合成本之间寻求动态平衡的过程。

表1 三种高值化技术路径核心特征对比

Table 1 Comparison of core characteristics of three high-value technological pathways

比较维度	共沉淀法	喷雾热解法	溶胶-凝胶法
技术本质	浸出液pH调控化学沉淀	浸出液雾化高温热解	分子网络凝胶化
核心优势	形貌可控,工业化最成熟	极短流程,成分均匀	分子级混合,晶体质量高
锂与过渡金属分离需求	需要分离(通常先沉淀过渡金属)	路径选择(可分离也可一步再生),由热解生成锂盐热稳定性和目标材料决定	无需分离(共同形成凝胶网络)
反应过程温度(不包含后续固相烧结步骤)	低温(25~80 °C) ^[67]	中高温(450~850 °C) ^[78, 81]	低温(凝胶化: <120 °C) ^[83]
应用定位	大规模生产标准三元前驱体	可制备高均一性/复杂组分材料	再生小批量、高性能特种材料
产业化成熟度	高(已规模化应用)	中(工程放大阶段)	低(实验室研究为主)
首要产业化挑战	原料纯度要求苛刻,废水处理成本高	能耗与设备成本高昂,需控制锂挥发损失	无法连续生产,原料与试剂成本高

3.2 面临的主要挑战

尽管3种技术路径在高值化回收中展现出巨大潜力,但迈向规模化、经济化的产业应用仍面临一系列共性及个性化的挑战。

(1)原料适应性与工艺鲁棒性:废旧电池来源复杂,浸出液成分波动大。共沉淀法对杂质敏感,喷雾热解法需应对不同盐体系的热解行为差异,溶胶-凝胶法则需保证不同批次凝胶质量的稳定性。同时,3种高值化方案普遍针对层状正极材料,在聚阴离子型磷酸铁锂(LiFePO₄)正极材料回收过程中的应用还有待拓展。因此,开发具有更强杂质容忍度和更广泛适应性的工艺是关键。

(2)回收效率与材料性能权衡:高值化路径的核心目标是同时实现高的金属回收率与优异的再生材料性能,但二者在实践中往往难以兼得。例如,共沉淀中为追求前驱体形貌而精确控制沉淀

条件,可能导致溶液中的锂损失;喷雾热解中为抑制锂挥发而降低温度,可能牺牲产物结晶度。如何优化工艺窗口,在确保锂及有价金属高回收率的前提下,实现再生材料结构与电化学性能的最优化,是核心技术挑战。

(3)工程放大与连续化生产:共沉淀法面临大型反应器中传质不均导致的前驱体批次一致性难题;喷雾热解法需要解决大容量高温反应器设计、热效率提升与腐蚀防护带来的设备投资与运行维护成本增加问题;溶胶-凝胶法则受限于其固有的间歇、慢速过程,连续化生产难度极大。这些工程瓶颈直接转化为高昂的固定资产投资与单位生产成本,削弱了再生材料相对于原生材料的市场竞争力。

(4)再生材料性能与附加值瓶颈:当前多数高值化工艺的首要目标是“恢复”而非“提升”材料

性能,导致再生正极材料在电化学性能上仅能达到甚至略低于商用正极材料水平。如何突破传统性能上限,使再生材料具备独特或更为优异的性能,从而获得更高的附加值,是高值化技术摆脱低利润竞争、实现可持续发展的深层挑战。

4 总结与展望

本文系统阐述了废旧锂电池的短流程高值化回收的技术背景、核心方法与研究进展。在“双碳”目标与循环经济理念的推动下,回收策略已从传统的“提取金属”升级为“再生材料”。共沉淀法、喷雾热解法与溶胶-凝胶法为代表的浸出液短流程、高值化再生技术,通过“定向合成”策略,成功将复杂的回收体系与先进材料制备相衔接,为提升回收经济性开辟了新路径。然而,这些技术仍面临共性挑战:原料成分波动影响工艺稳定性;能耗、试剂成本与效率的平衡尚未解决;工程放大与连续化生产存在技术瓶颈;再生材料的电化学性能和附加值有限。

为突破当前瓶颈,推动高值化回收技术真正走向产业化,未来研究与实践应聚焦于以下几个深度融合的方向:

(1)面向复杂原料的智能化工艺:发展在线检测与自适应反馈控制系统,结合机器学习和过程模拟,使再生工艺能够自动识别并适应进料成分的波动,推动工艺从固定化模式向智能化、自适应复杂原料的模式转变。

(2)低碳短流程与反应-分离一体化技术:着力开发低温、低能耗的新型合成与热解技术(如微波、等离子体辅助、焦耳热),并积极探索“浸出-净化-合成”多单元集成的一体化装备与工艺,减少物料转移与中间储存环节,从根本上缩短流程,降低能耗、水耗与废物排放,提升整个回收链条的经济与环境效益。

(3)工程科学驱动的工艺放大与装备创新:针对特定技术路线的工程放大难题,开展专门的传质过程强化、反应器设计与材料学研究。例如,开发高效大型共沉淀反应器、低热损喷雾热解塔或连续溶胶-凝胶生产线,为核心工艺的规模化提供装备基础。其目标是从“工艺可行”迈向“工程高效”,通过专用装备的创新为规模化提供支撑。

(4)回收过程驱动的材料性能提升策略:未来研究应探索如何利用回收流程的特殊性,制备性能优于原生材料或具备新功能的正极材料。在共

沉淀过程中精准引入功能性掺杂元素以提升材料结构稳定性;利用喷雾热解瞬时反应的特点构建特殊微观结构(如核壳、浓度梯度);通过溶胶-凝胶法在分子层面实现均匀的表面包覆。其核心是将回收流程视为一个独特的“材料再加工”平台,通过工艺特点与参数调控实现再生材料更高的容量、更长的寿命或更好的安全性,大幅提升回收产品附加值和技术壁垒。

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