



US012394820B2

(12) **United States Patent**
Kamitake et al.

(10) **Patent No.:** **US 12,394,820 B2**

(45) **Date of Patent:** **Aug. 19, 2025**

(54) **POSITIVE-ELECTRODE MATERIAL AND BATTERY**

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(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 453 days.

(21) Appl. No.: **17/930,427**

(22) Filed: **Sep. 8, 2022**

(65) **Prior Publication Data**

US 2023/0006208 A1 Jan. 5, 2023

Related U.S. Application Data

(63) Continuation of application No. PCT/JP2021/010466, filed on Mar. 15, 2021.

(30) **Foreign Application Priority Data**

Apr. 2, 2020 (JP) 2020-066873

(51) **Int. Cl.**

H01M 10/0562 (2010.01)
C01F 17/36 (2020.01)

(Continued)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**

CPC **H01M 10/0562** (2013.01); **C01F 17/36** (2020.01); **H01M 4/366** (2013.01);
(Continued)

(58) **Field of Classification Search**

CPC C01F 17/36; C01G 53/50; C01P 2004/82;
C01P 2006/40; H01M 4/131;

(Continued)

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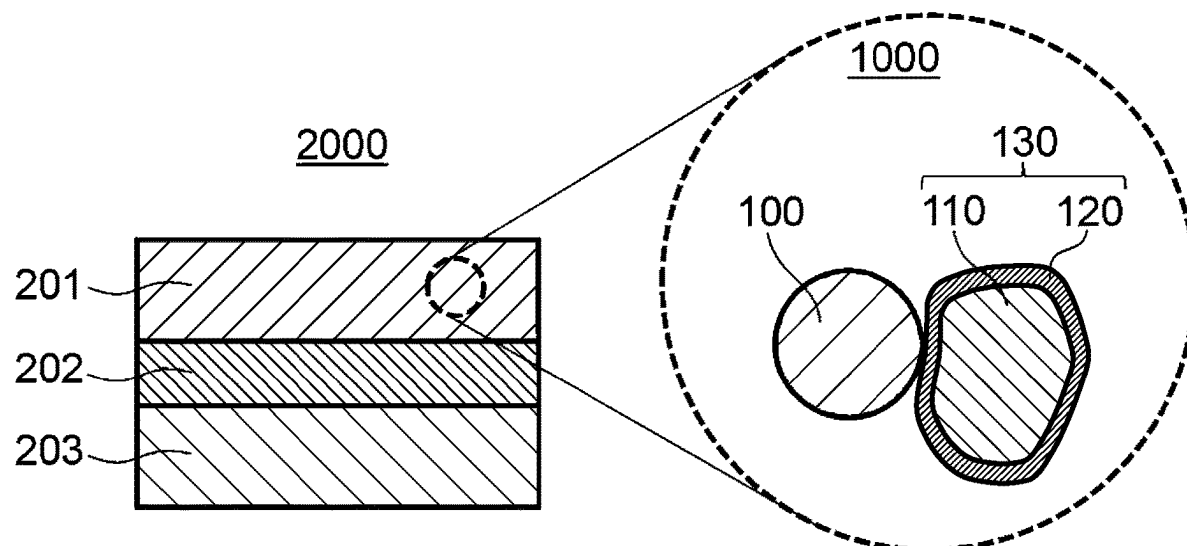
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ABSTRACT

A positive-electrode material according to the present disclosure includes a positive-electrode active material and a coating layer covering the positive-electrode active material, wherein the coating layer contains oxygen and lithium, the positive-electrode active material and the coating layer constitute a coated active material, and the ratio Li/O of the lithium content to the oxygen content in a surface layer portion of the coated active material is 0.26 or less based on the atomic ratio.

13 Claims, 1 Drawing Sheet



(51) **Int. Cl.**

H01M 4/36 (2006.01)
H01M 4/505 (2010.01)
H01M 4/525 (2010.01)
H01M 4/62 (2006.01)
H01M 4/02 (2006.01)

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(52) **U.S. Cl.**

CPC **H01M 4/505** (2013.01); **H01M 4/525**
 (2013.01); **H01M 4/62** (2013.01); **H01M**
2004/028 (2013.01); **H01M 2300/008**
 (2013.01)

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(58) **Field of Classification Search**

CPC H01M 4/366; H01M 4/505; H01M 4/525;
 H01M 4/62; H01M 10/0562; H01M
 2004/028; H01M 2300/008; Y02E 60/10
 See application file for complete search history.

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FIG. 1

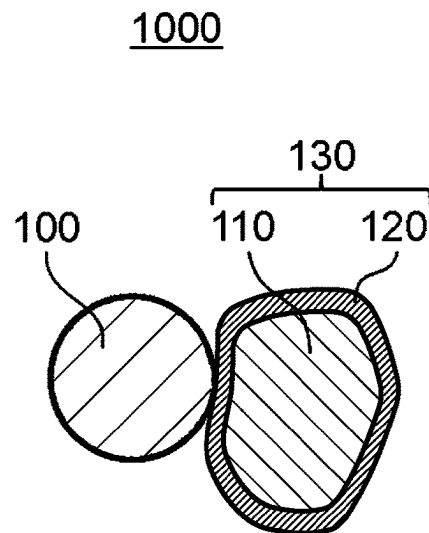
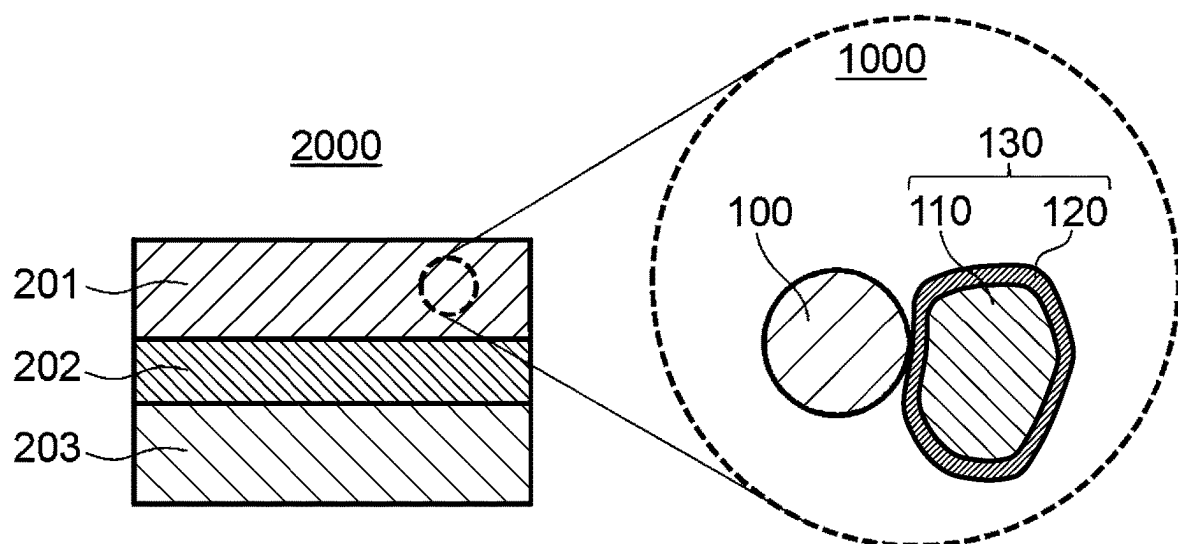


FIG. 2



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POSITIVE-ELECTRODE MATERIAL AND BATTERY

BACKGROUND

1. Technical Field

The present disclosure relates to a positive-electrode material and a battery.

2. Description of the Related Art

International Publication No. WO 2019/135322 discloses an all-solid-state battery using a positive-electrode active material coated with a coating material.

SUMMARY

In the related art, there is a demand for a battery with a further improved discharge voltage.

In one general aspect, the techniques disclosed here feature a positive-electrode material including: a positive-electrode active material; and a coating layer covering the positive-electrode active material, wherein the coating layer contains oxygen and lithium, the positive-electrode active material and the coating layer constitute a coated active material, and a ratio Li/O of a lithium content to an oxygen content in a surface layer portion of the coated active material is 0.26 or less based on an atomic ratio.

The present disclosure can improve the discharge voltage of a battery.

Additional benefits and advantages of the disclosed embodiments will become apparent from the specification and drawings. The benefits and/or advantages may be individually obtained by the various embodiments and features of the specification and drawings, which need not all be provided in order to obtain one or more of such benefits and/or advantages.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a schematic cross-sectional view of a positive-electrode material 1000 according to a first embodiment; and

FIG. 2 is a schematic cross-sectional view of a battery 2000 according to a second embodiment.

DETAILED DESCRIPTIONS

(Outline of One Aspect of the Present Disclosure)

A positive-electrode material according to a first aspect of the present disclosure includes:

- a positive-electrode active material; and
 - a coating layer covering the positive-electrode active material,
- wherein the coating layer contains oxygen and lithium, the positive-electrode active material and the coating layer constitute a coated active material, and
- a ratio Li/O of a lithium content to an oxygen content in a surface layer portion of the coated active material is 0.26 or less based on an atomic ratio.

The first aspect can improve the discharge voltage of a battery.

According to a second aspect of the present disclosure, for example, in the positive-electrode material according to the first aspect, the coating layer may contain an alkali salt. The second aspect can improve the potential stability of the coating layer and improve the discharge voltage of a battery.

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According to a third aspect of the present disclosure, for example, the positive-electrode material according to the first or second aspect may further contain a solid electrolyte. The third aspect can improve ionic conductivity at a positive electrode.

According to a fourth aspect of the present disclosure, for example, the solid electrolyte in the positive-electrode material according to the third aspect may be represented by the composition formula $\text{Li}_\alpha\text{M}_\beta\text{X}_\gamma$, where α , β , and γ may independently be more than 0, M may contain at least one element selected from the group consisting of metal elements other than Li and metalloid elements, and X may contain at least one selected from the group consisting of F, Cl, Br, and I. The fourth aspect can improve the output density of a battery. The fourth aspect can also improve the thermal stability of a battery and reduce the generation of noxious gases, such as hydrogen sulfide.

According to a fifth aspect of the present disclosure, for example, the M in the positive-electrode material according to the fourth aspect may contain yttrium.

According to a sixth aspect of the present disclosure, for example, the positive-electrode material according to the fourth or fifth aspect may satisfy $2.5 \leq \alpha \leq 3$, $1 \leq \beta \leq 1.1$, and $\gamma = 6$.

According to a seventh aspect of the present disclosure, for example, the X in the positive-electrode material according to any one of the fourth to sixth aspects may contain at least one selected from the group consisting of Cl and Br.

The fifth to seventh aspects can further improve the ionic conductivity of the solid electrolyte. This improves the output density of a battery.

According to an eighth aspect of the present disclosure, for example, the coating layer in the positive-electrode material according to any one of the first to seventh aspects may contain a lithium niobate compound. The eighth aspect can further improve the charge-discharge efficiency of a battery.

According to a ninth aspect of the present disclosure, for example, the positive-electrode active material in the positive-electrode material according to any one of the first to eighth aspects may contain Li and at least one element selected from the group consisting of Mn, Co, Ni, and Al. The ninth aspect can further increase the energy density of a battery.

A battery according to a tenth aspect of the present disclosure includes:

- a positive electrode containing the positive-electrode material according to any one of the first to ninth aspects;
- a negative electrode; and
- an electrolyte layer between the positive electrode and the negative electrode.

The tenth aspect can improve the discharge voltage of a battery.

According to an eleventh aspect of the present disclosure, for example, in the battery according to the tenth aspect, the electrolyte layer may contain a solid electrolyte with the same composition as that of the solid electrolyte contained in the positive-electrode material. The eleventh aspect can further improve the charge-discharge efficiency of a battery.

According to a twelfth aspect of the present disclosure, for example, in the battery according to the tenth or eleventh aspect, the electrolyte layer may contain a halide solid electrolyte with a composition different from that of the solid electrolyte contained in the positive-electrode material. The twelfth aspect can improve the output density and charge-discharge efficiency of a battery.

According to a thirteenth aspect of the present disclosure, for example, the electrolyte layer in the battery according to any one of the tenth to twelfth aspects may contain a sulfide solid electrolyte. The thirteenth aspect can utilize a low-potential negative-electrode material, such as graphite or metallic lithium, and can improve the energy density of a battery.

Embodiments of the present disclosure are described below with reference to the accompanying drawings.

First Embodiment

FIG. 1 is a schematic cross-sectional view of a positive-electrode material **1000** according to a first embodiment.

The positive-electrode material **1000** according to the first embodiment includes a coated active material **130** and a solid electrolyte **100**.

The coated active material **130** includes a positive-electrode active material **110** and a coating layer **120**. The coating layer **120** is located on the surface of the positive-electrode active material **110**. The coating layer **120** is a layer containing a coating material. The positive-electrode active material **110** is covered with the coating material. The coating layer **120** contains oxygen and lithium.

The ratio Li/O of the lithium content to the oxygen content in a surface layer portion of the coated active material **130** is 0.26 or less based on the atomic ratio. The phrase “surface layer portion of the coated active material **130**” refers to a portion from the outermost surface to a predetermined depth position of the coated active material **130**. The “predetermined depth position” may be a position at which composition information can be acquired by a method for analyzing a surface composition. For example, the coating layer **120** with a thickness exceeding the penetration depth of soft X-rays or an electron beam used in the composition analysis is regarded as the “surface layer portion of the coated active material **130**”. When the coating layer **120** has a smaller thickness than the penetration depth of soft X-rays or an electron beam used in the composition analysis, part of the positive-electrode active material **110** and the coating layer **120** are included in the “surface layer portion of the coated active material **130**”.

The positive-electrode active material **110** is separated from the solid electrolyte **100** by the coating layer **120**. The positive-electrode active material **110** may not be in direct contact with the solid electrolyte **100**. This is because the coating layer **120** has ionic conductivity.

Such a structure can improve the discharge voltage of a battery.

International Publication No. WO 2019/135322 discloses that an oxidative decomposition side reaction of extracting electrons from a solid electrolyte in contact with a positive-electrode active material occurs while charging and forms an oxidized layer with low lithium ion conductivity between the positive-electrode active material and the solid electrolyte, thereby increasing the interfacial resistance. It is also mentioned that a coating layer can be formed between the positive-electrode active material and the solid electrolyte to reduce the formation of the oxidized layer and reduce the increase in interfacial resistance. However, the surface composition of the coating layer is not clarified.

On the other hand, as a result of extensive studies, the present inventors have found the problem that battery operation changes the composition of a surface layer portion of a coated active material including a coating layer and a positive-electrode active material, increases the interfacial resistance, and decreases the discharge voltage. As a result

of further detailed investigation, the present inventors have found that intentionally decreasing the ratio (Li/O) of the lithium content to the oxygen content in a surface layer portion of a coated active material improves the discharge voltage.

The coating layer **120** may contain an alkali salt as a coating material. The alkali salt may be a lithium salt. A decrease in the ratio (Li/O) of the surface layer portion of the coated active material **130** results in a decrease in the lithium content of an alkali salt (for example, lithium carbonate, lithium hydrogen carbonate, lithium oxide, or lithium hydroxide) contained in the coating layer **120**. A decrease in the lithium content results in the coating layer **120** with improved potential stability. The coating layer **120** with improved potential stability further reduces the formation of an oxidized layer between the coated active material **130** and the solid electrolyte **100** and decreases the interfacial resistance in an electrode reaction. This can improve the discharge voltage of a battery.

The effect of improving the potential stability of the coating layer **120** is expected to reduce not only the formation of an oxidized layer of the solid electrolyte but also the oxidation of the electrolyte solution. Thus, the technique of the present disclosure is also effective in a battery containing an electrolyte solution.

A lithium salt may be contained in the coating layer as a by-product.

The ratio (Li/O) may be controlled by any method. For example, the coated active material **130** is heat-treated in an oxygen atmosphere and is then recovered in an atmosphere with a dew point of -30°C . or less. The oxygen atmosphere may be a pure oxygen atmosphere. The heat treatment conditions and the atmospheric conditions for taking out the coated active material **130** from the heat treatment apparatus after the heat treatment can be appropriately selected on the basis of the compositions of the positive-electrode active material **110** and the coating layer **120**.

The surface composition of the coated active material **130** may be analyzed by X-ray photoelectron spectroscopy (XPS) or electron energy-loss spectroscopy (EELS). The method for analyzing a surface composition is appropriately selected according to the composition of the coating material contained in the coating layer **120** and the coating state of the positive-electrode active material **110**. Surface composition analysis using XPS is less likely to be local analysis and can examine a relatively large area of the surface of a material. XPS is suitable as a surface composition analysis method because average surface composition information at a depth of 10 nm from the outermost surface can be acquired and because the quality control of the material is easy.

The ratio (Li/O) may be 0.01 or more and 0.26 or less. A ratio (Li/O) of 0.01 or more results in a sufficient Li content of the alkali salt. This can reduce the decrease in the Li ionic conductivity and consequently reduce the increase in the internal resistance of the positive-electrode material **1000**. The positive-electrode material **1000** with a smaller increase in the internal resistance enables a battery to operate at high output power. The ratio (Li/O) may be 0.13 or more and 0.26 or less. A ratio (Li/O) in such a range can result in a smaller increase in interfacial resistance due to an electrode reaction and can result in the coating layer **120** with high Li ionic conductivity. This further improves the discharge voltage of a battery.

The solid electrolyte **100** may be a halide solid electrolyte.

The halide solid electrolyte is represented by the following composition formula (1), for example. In the composition formula (1), α , β , and γ are independently more than 0.

M includes at least one element selected from the group consisting of metal elements other than Li and metalloid elements. X includes at least one selected from the group consisting of F, Cl, Br, and I.



The metalloid elements include B, Si, Ge, As, Sb, and Te. The metal elements include all group 1 to 12 elements of the periodic table except hydrogen and all group 13 to 16 elements except B, Si, Ge, As, Sb, Te, C, N, P, O, S, and Se. Thus, the metal elements are a group of elements that can become a cation when forming an inorganic compound with a halide.

The halide solid electrolyte may be Li_3YX_6 , Li_2MgX_4 , Li_2FeX_4 , $\text{Li}(\text{Al}, \text{Ga}, \text{In})\text{X}_4$, or $\text{Li}_3(\text{Al}, \text{Ga}, \text{In})\text{X}_6$.

Such a structure can improve the output density of a battery. Such a structure can also improve the thermal stability of a battery and reduce the generation of noxious gases, such as hydrogen sulfide.

In the present disclosure, an element represented by, for example, “(Al, Ga, In)” in the formula refers to at least one element selected from the group of elements in parentheses. More specifically, “(Al, Ga, In)” is synonymous with “at least one selected from the group consisting of Al, Ga, and In”. The same applies to other elements. The halide solid electrolyte has good ionic conductivity. The halide solid electrolyte may not contain sulfur.

In the composition formula (1), M may contain Y (=yttrium). Thus, the solid electrolyte **100** may contain Y as a metal element.

The composition formula (1) may satisfy $2.5 \leq \alpha \leq 3$, $1 \leq \beta \leq 1.1$, and $\gamma = 6$.

In the composition formula (1), X may include at least one selected from the group consisting of Cl and Br.

Such a structure can further improve the ionic conductivity of the solid electrolyte **100**. This improves the output density of a battery.

A halide solid electrolyte containing Y may be a compound represented by the following composition formula (2).



The composition formula (2) satisfies $a+mb+3c=6$ and $c>0$. In the composition formula (2), M includes at least one element selected from the group consisting of metal elements other than Li and Y and metalloid elements. m denotes the valence of M. X includes at least one selected from the group consisting of F, Cl, Br, and I. M includes at least one selected from the group consisting of Mg, Ca, Sr, Ba, Zn, Sc, Al, Ga, Bi, Zr, Hf, Ti, Sn, Ta, and Nb. More specifically, the halide solid electrolyte containing Y may be Li_3YF_6 , Li_3YCl_6 , Li_3YBr_6 , Li_3YI_6 , $\text{Li}_3\text{YBrCl}_5$, $\text{Li}_3\text{YBr}_2\text{Cl}_3$, $\text{Li}_3\text{YBr}_5\text{Cl}$, $\text{Li}_3\text{YBr}_5\text{I}$, $\text{Li}_3\text{YBr}_3\text{I}_3$, Li_3YBrI_5 , Li_3YClI_5 , $\text{Li}_3\text{YCl}_3\text{I}_3$, $\text{Li}_3\text{YCl}_5\text{I}$, $\text{Li}_3\text{YBr}_2\text{Cl}_2\text{I}_2$, $\text{Li}_3\text{YBrCl}_4\text{I}$, $\text{Li}_{2.7}\text{Y}_{1.1}\text{Cl}_6$, $\text{Li}_{2.5}\text{Y}_{0.5}\text{Zr}_{0.5}\text{Cl}_6$, or $\text{Li}_{2.5}\text{Y}_{0.5}\text{Zr}_{0.7}\text{Cl}_6$.

Such a structure can further improve the output density of a battery.

The solid electrolyte **100** may contain a sulfide solid electrolyte.

The sulfide solid electrolyte may be $\text{Li}_2\text{S}-\text{P}_2\text{S}_5$, $\text{Li}_2\text{S}-\text{SiS}_2$, $\text{Li}_2\text{S}-\text{B}_2\text{S}_3$, $\text{Li}_2\text{S}-\text{GeS}_2$, $\text{Li}_{3.25}\text{Ge}_{0.25}\text{P}_{0.75}\text{S}_4$, or $\text{Li}_{10}\text{GeP}_2\text{S}_{12}$. LiX, Li_2O , MO_q , and Li_pMO_q may be added to these. The element X in “LiX” denotes at least one element selected from the group consisting of F, Cl, Br, and I. The element M in “ MO_q ” and “ Li_pMO_q ” denotes at least one element selected from the group consisting of P, Si, Ge,

B, Al, Ga, In, Fe, and Zn. p and q in “ MO_q ” and “ Li_pMO_q ” independently denote a natural number.

Such a structure can improve the output density of a battery.

The solid electrolyte **100** may contain at least one selected from the group consisting of solid oxide electrolytes, solid polymer electrolytes, and complex hydride solid electrolytes.

Examples of the solid oxide electrolytes include NASICON-type solid electrolytes, such as $\text{LiTi}_2(\text{PO}_4)_3$ and element-substituted products thereof, (LaLi)TiO₃ perovskite solid electrolytes, LISICON-type solid electrolytes, such as $\text{Li}_{14}\text{ZnGe}_4\text{O}_{16}$, Li_4SiO_4 , LiGeO_4 , and element-substituted products thereof, garnet-type solid electrolytes, such as $\text{Li}_7\text{La}_3\text{Zr}_2\text{O}_{12}$ and element-substituted products thereof, Li_3N and H-substituted products thereof, Li_3PO_4 and N-substituted products thereof, and glasses and glass ceramics in which Li_2SO_4 , Li_2CO_3 , or the like is added to a base material containing a Li—B—O compound, such as LiBO_2 or Li_3BO_3 .

Examples of the solid polymer electrolytes include compounds of a polymer and a lithium salt. The polymer may have an ethylene oxide structure. A polymer with an ethylene oxide structure can have a high lithium salt content and can have further increased ionic conductivity. The lithium salt may be LiPF_6 , LiBF_4 , LiSbF_6 , LiAsF_6 , LiSO_3CF_3 , $\text{LiN}(\text{SO}_2\text{CF}_3)_2$, $\text{LiN}(\text{SO}_2\text{C}_2\text{F}_5)_2$, $\text{LiN}(\text{SO}_2\text{CF}_3)(\text{SO}_2\text{C}_4\text{F}_9)$, or $\text{LiC}(\text{SO}_2\text{CF}_3)_3$. The lithium salt may be a lithium salt selected from these or a mixture of two or more lithium salts selected from these.

The complex hydride solid electrolyte may be LiBH_4 —LiI or LiBH_4 — P_2S_5 , for example.

Such a structure can improve the output density of a battery.

The positive-electrode active material **110** according to the first embodiment may be a lithium-containing transition metal oxide, a transition metal fluoride, a polyanionic material, a fluorinated polyanionic material, a transition metal sulfide, a transition metal oxysulfide, or a transition metal oxynitride, for example. In particular, the use of a lithium-containing transition metal oxide as the positive-electrode active material **110** can reduce production costs and increase the average discharge voltage.

The positive-electrode active material **110** may contain Li and at least one element selected from the group consisting of Mn, Co, Ni, and Al. Such a material may be $\text{Li}(\text{NiCoAl})\text{O}_2$, $\text{Li}(\text{NiCoMn})\text{O}_2$, or LiCoO_2 .

The positive-electrode active material **110** may contain a single active material or a plurality of active materials with different compositions.

In the first embodiment, the positive-electrode active material **110** may be $\text{Li}(\text{NiCoMn})\text{O}_2$.

Such a structure can further increase the energy density of a battery.

The positive-electrode active material **110** is in the form of particles, for example. The positive-electrode active material **110** may have any particle shape. The positive-electrode active material **110** may have a particle shape, such as spherical, ellipsoidal, flaky, or fibrous.

The coating material in the coating layer **120** may be a material with low electronic conductivity. The coating material may be an oxide material, a solid oxide electrolyte, or an alkali salt.

The oxide material may be SiO_2 , Al_2O_3 , TiO_2 , B_2O_3 , Nb_2O_5 , WO_3 , or ZrO_2 , for example. The solid oxide electrolyte may be a Li—Nb—O compound, such as LiNbO_3 , a Li—B—O compound, such as LiBO_2 or Li_3BO_3 , a Li—

Al—O compound, such as LiAlO_2 , a Li—Si—O compound, such as Li_4SiO_4 , a Li—S—O compound, such as Li_2SO_4 , a Li—Ti—O compound, such as $\text{Li}_4\text{Ti}_5\text{O}_{12}$, a Li—Zr—O compound, such as Li_2ZrO_3 , a Li—Mo—O compound, such as Li_2MoO_3 , a Li—V—O compound, such as LiV_2O_5 , or a Li—W—O compound, such as Li_2WO_4 , for example.

In the first embodiment, the coating material may be a solid oxide electrolyte.

Solid oxide electrolytes have high ionic conductivity and high high-potential stability. Thus, the use of a solid oxide electrolyte can further improve the charge-discharge efficiency of a battery.

In the first embodiment, the coating layer **120** may contain a lithium niobate compound as a coating material. The coating material may be LiNbO_3 . The lithium niobate compound is a compound containing lithium, niobium, and oxygen.

LiNbO_3 has higher ionic conductivity and higher high-potential stability. Thus, the use of LiNbO_3 can further improve the charge-discharge efficiency of a battery.

In the first embodiment, the coating material may be an alkali salt.

Due to their low electronic conductivity, alkali salts can reduce the degradation of a contact interface between an active material and a solid electrolyte. Examples of the alkali salts include lithium carbonate, lithium hydrogen carbonate, lithium oxide, and lithium hydroxide. One alkali salt may be used alone, or a mixture of two or more alkali salts may be used.

The coating layer **120** may contain a mixture containing an alkali salt and a coating material other than alkali salts. The use of the mixture in the coating layer **120** may have an effect of reducing the increase in interfacial resistance or facilitate the control of the ionic conductivity of the coating layer **120**. This enables the structure of the positive-electrode material **1000** to be more widely designed.

The coating layer **120** may have a thickness of 1 nm or more and 100 nm or less.

The coating layer **120** with a thickness of 1 nm or more can prevent direct contact between the positive-electrode active material **110** and the solid electrolyte **100** and can prevent a side reaction of the solid electrolyte. This can improve charge-discharge efficiency.

The coating layer **120** with a thickness of 100 nm or less is not too thick. This can sufficiently decrease the internal resistance of a battery. This can increase the energy density of a battery. The thickness of the coating layer **120** can be determined by forming a thin piece of the coated active material **130** by ion milling or the like and observing a cross section of the coated active material **130** with a transmission electron microscope.

The coating layer **120** may uniformly cover the particles of the positive-electrode active material **110**. This can prevent direct contact between particles of the positive-electrode active material **110** and particles of the solid electrolyte **100** and prevent a side reaction of the solid electrolyte **100**. This can improve charge-discharge efficiency.

Alternatively, the coating layer **120** may cover only part of the surface of the particles of the positive-electrode active material **110**. Direct contact between portions without the coating layer **120** in the particles of the positive-electrode active material **110** improves the electronic conductivity between the particles of the positive-electrode active material **110**. This enables a battery to operate at high output power.

The solid electrolyte **100** according to the first embodiment may have any shape, for example, acicular, spherical, or ellipsoidal. For example, the solid electrolyte **100** may be in the form of particles.

For example, the solid electrolyte **100** according to the first embodiment in the form of particles (for example, spherical) may have a median size of 100 μm or less.

When the solid electrolyte **100** has a median size of 100 μm or less, the coated active material **130** and the solid electrolyte **100** can form a good dispersion state in the positive-electrode material **1000**. This improves the charge-discharge characteristics of a battery.

In the first embodiment, the solid electrolyte **100** may have a median size of 10 μm or less.

Such a structure enables the coated active material **130** and the solid electrolyte **100** in the positive-electrode material **1000** to form a good dispersion state.

In the first embodiment, the solid electrolyte **100** may have a smaller median size than the coated active material **130**.

Such a structure enables the solid electrolyte **100** and the coated active material **130** in the positive-electrode material **1000** to form a better dispersion state.

The coated active material **130** may have a median size of 0.1 μm or more and 100 μm or less.

When the coated active material **130** has a median size of 0.1 μm or more, the coated active material **130** and the solid electrolyte **100** in the positive-electrode material **1000** can form a good dispersion state. This improves the charge-discharge characteristics of a battery.

In the coated active material **130** with a median size of 100 μm or less, lithium can have a sufficient diffusion rate. This enables a battery to operate at high output power.

The coated active material **130** may have a larger median size than the solid electrolyte **100**. This enables the coated active material **130** and the solid electrolyte **100** to form a good dispersion state.

In the positive-electrode material **1000** according to the first embodiment, as illustrated in FIG. 1, a particle of the solid electrolyte **100** may be in contact with a particle of the coated active material **130**. In such a structure, the coating layer **120** is in contact with the positive-electrode active material **110**.

The positive-electrode material **1000** according to the first embodiment may contain a plurality of particles of the solid electrolyte **100** and a plurality of particles of the coated active material **130**.

In the positive-electrode material **1000**, the amount of the solid electrolyte **100** may be the same as or different from the amount of the coated active material **130**.

The term “median size”, as used herein, refers to the particle size at which the cumulative volume in the volumetric particle size distribution is 50%. The volumetric particle size distribution is measured with a laser diffraction measuring apparatus or an image analyzer, for example.

Next, a method for producing the positive-electrode material **1000** is described below.

First, a powder of the positive-electrode active material **110** is prepared. The powder of the positive-electrode active material **110** is synthesized by a solid phase method, for example. In the solid phase method, a plurality of raw powders are mixed and heat-treated to produce a powder of the positive-electrode active material **110**. Furthermore, powders of the positive-electrode active material **110** with various compositions are commercially available and are readily available.

The coating layer **120** is then formed on the surface of the particles of the positive-electrode active material **110**. The coating layer **120** may be formed by any method. The coating layer **120** may be formed by a liquid phase coating method or a gas phase coating method.

For example, in the liquid phase coating method, a precursor solution of an ion-conducting material is applied to the surface of the positive-electrode active material **110**. To form the coating layer **120** containing LiNbO_3 , the precursor solution may be a mixed solution (sol solution) of a solvent, a lithium alkoxide, and a niobium alkoxide. The lithium alkoxide may be lithium ethoxide. The niobium alkoxide may be niobium ethoxide. The solvent is an alcohol, such as ethanol, for example. The amounts of lithium alkoxide and niobium alkoxide are adjusted to the target composition of the coating layer **120**. If necessary, water may be added to the precursor solution. The precursor solution may be acidic or alkaline.

The precursor solution may be applied to the surface of the positive-electrode active material **110** by any method. For example, the precursor solution can be applied to the surface of the positive-electrode active material **110** using a tumbling granulation coating apparatus. In the tumbling granulation coating apparatus, the precursor solution can be sprayed over and applied to the surface of the positive-electrode active material **110** while tumbling the positive-electrode active material **110**. Thus, a precursor film is formed on the surface of the positive-electrode active material **110**. The positive-electrode active material **110** covered with the precursor film is heat-treated. The heat treatment promotes the gelation of the precursor film and forms the coating layer **120**. Thus, the coated active material **130** is prepared. At this point, the coating layer **120** covers almost the entire surface of the positive-electrode active material **110**. The coating layer **120** has an almost uniform thickness.

The gas phase coating method may be a pulsed laser deposition (PLD) method, a vacuum deposition method, a sputtering method, a chemical vapor deposition (CVD) method, or a plasma chemical vapor deposition method. For example, in the PLD method, an ion-conducting material serving as a target is irradiated with a high-energy pulsed laser (for example, KrF excimer laser, wavelength: 248 nm) to deposit the sublimated ion-conducting material on the surface of the positive-electrode active material **110**. To form the coating layer **120** of LiNbO_3 , LiNbO_3 sintered to a high density is used as a target.

The coated active material **130** is then treated to adjust the ratio (Li/O). For example, the coated active material **130** is heat-treated in an oxygen atmosphere and is then recovered in an atmosphere with a dew point of -30°C . or less. The oxygen atmosphere may be a pure oxygen atmosphere. The heat treatment conditions and the atmospheric conditions for taking out the coated active material **130** from the heat treatment apparatus after the heat treatment can be appropriately selected on the basis of the compositions of the positive-electrode active material **110** and the coating layer **120**. The heat treatment temperature is 150°C . or more and 1000°C . or less, for example. The heat treatment time is 1 hour or more and 72 hours or less, for example. The heat treatment may be followed by a treatment for regrinding the coated active material **130**. For example, the ratio (Li/O) tends to increase with the heat treatment temperature.

The pure oxygen atmosphere may be formed by the following method, for example. The chamber is purged with oxygen gas with a purity of 99% or more to decrease the volume concentration of gases other than the oxygen gas to

less than 1%. The pressure of the pure oxygen atmosphere is equal to atmospheric pressure, for example.

The positive-electrode material **1000** with a desired ratio (Li/O) is produced through these steps.

Second Embodiment

A second embodiment is described below. The description overlapping with the first embodiment is omitted when deemed unnecessary.

FIG. 2 is a schematic cross-sectional view of a battery **2000** according to the second embodiment.

The battery **2000** according to the second embodiment includes a positive electrode **201**, an electrolyte layer **202**, and a negative electrode **203**.

The positive electrode **201** contains the positive-electrode material **1000**.

The electrolyte layer **202** is located between the positive electrode **201** and the negative electrode **203**.

Such a structure can improve the discharge voltage of the battery **2000**.

The volume ratio " $v1:100-v1$ " of the coated active material **130** to the solid electrolyte **100** in the positive electrode **201** may satisfy $30 \leq v1 \leq 95$. Satisfying $30 \leq v1$ provides the battery **2000** with a sufficient energy density. Satisfying $v1 \leq 95$ enables operation at high output power.

The positive electrode **201** may have a thickness of $10\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ or more and $500\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ or less. The positive electrode **201** with a thickness of $10\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ or more provides the battery **2000** with a sufficient energy density. The positive electrode **201** with a thickness of $500\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ or less enables operation at high output power.

The electrolyte layer **202** contains an electrolyte. The electrolyte is a solid electrolyte, for example. Thus, the electrolyte layer **202** may be a solid electrolyte layer. The solid electrolyte may be the material exemplified in the first embodiment. Thus, the electrolyte layer **202** may contain a solid electrolyte with the same composition as that of the solid electrolyte contained in the positive-electrode material **1000**.

Such a structure can further improve the charge-discharge efficiency of the battery **2000**.

Alternatively, the electrolyte layer **202** may contain a halide solid electrolyte with a composition different from that of the solid electrolyte contained in the positive-electrode material **1000**.

Such a structure can improve the output density and charge-discharge efficiency of the battery **2000**.

The electrolyte layer **202** may contain a sulfide solid electrolyte.

Such a structure contains a sulfide solid electrolyte with high reduction stability, enables the use of a low-potential negative-electrode material, such as graphite or metallic lithium, and can improve the energy density of the battery **2000**.

A sulfide solid electrolyte for the electrolyte layer **202** may be the sulfide solid electrolyte exemplified in the first embodiment.

The electrolyte layer **202** may contain at least one selected from the group consisting of solid oxide electrolytes, solid polymer electrolytes, and complex hydride solid electrolytes. Examples of these materials are also described in the first embodiment.

The electrolyte layer **202** may contain only one solid electrolyte selected from the group consisting of the solid electrolytes described above or may contain two or more solid electrolytes selected from the group consisting of the

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solid electrolytes. The plurality of solid electrolytes have different compositions. For example, the electrolyte layer **202** may contain a halide solid electrolyte and a sulfide solid electrolyte.

The electrolyte layer **202** may have a thickness of 1 μm or more and 300 μm or less. The electrolyte layer **202** with a thickness of 1 μm or more tends to prevent a short circuit between the positive electrode **201** and the negative electrode **203**. The electrolyte layer **202** with a thickness of 300 μm or less enables operation at high output power.

The negative electrode **203** contains a material that can adsorb and desorb metal ions (for example, lithium ions). The negative electrode **203** contains a negative-electrode active material, for example.

The negative-electrode active material may be a metallic material, carbon material, oxide, nitride, tin compound, or silicon compound. The metallic material may be a single metal. Alternatively, the metallic material may be an alloy. Examples of the metallic material include lithium metal and lithium alloys. Examples of the carbon material include natural graphite, coke, carbon during graphitization, carbon fiber, spherical carbon, artificial graphite, and amorphous carbon. Silicon (Si), tin (Sn), silicon compounds, and tin compounds can be suitably used in terms of capacity density.

The negative electrode **203** may contain a solid electrolyte. Such a structure increases lithium ion conductivity in the negative electrode **203** and enables operation at high output power. The solid electrolyte may be the material exemplified in the first embodiment.

The negative-electrode active material may have a median size of 0.1 μm or more and 100 μm or less. When the negative-electrode active material has a median size of 0.1 μm or more, the negative-electrode active material and the solid electrolyte in the negative electrode **203** can form a good dispersion state. This improves the charge-discharge characteristics of the battery **2000**. In the negative-electrode active material with a median size of 100 μm or less, lithium can have a sufficient diffusion rate. This enables the battery **2000** to operate at high output power.

The negative-electrode active material may have a larger median size than the solid electrolyte contained in the negative electrode **203**. This enables the negative-electrode active material and the solid electrolyte to form a good dispersion state.

When the volume ratio of the negative-electrode active material to the solid electrolyte in the negative electrode **203** is represented by “v2:100-v2”, the volume ratio v2 of the negative-electrode active material may satisfy $30 \leq v2 \leq 95$. Satisfying $30 \leq v2$ provides the battery **2000** with a sufficient energy density. Satisfying $v2 \leq 95$ enables operation at high output power.

The negative electrode **203** may have a thickness of 10 μm or more and 500 μm or less. The negative electrode **203** with a thickness of 10 μm or more provides the battery **2000** with a sufficient energy density. The negative electrode **203** with a thickness of 500 μm or less enables operation at high output power.

At least one of the positive electrode **201**, the electrolyte layer **202**, or the negative electrode **203** may contain a binder to improve adhesion between particles. The binder is used to improve the binding property of a material constituting the electrode. Examples of the binder include poly(vinylidene difluoride), polytetrafluoroethylene, polyethylene, polypropylene, aramid resin, polyamide, polyimide, polyamideimide, polyacrylonitrile, poly(acrylic acid), poly(methyl acrylate), poly(ethyl acrylate), poly(hexyl acrylate), poly(methacrylic acid), poly(methyl methacrylate), poly

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(ethyl methacrylate), poly(hexyl methacrylate), poly(vinyl acetate), polyvinylpyrrolidone, polyether, poly(ether sulfone), hexafluoropolypropylene, styrene-butadiene rubber, and carboxymethylcellulose. The binder may also be a copolymer of two or more materials selected from the group consisting of tetrafluoroethylene, hexafluoroethylene, hexafluoropropylene, perfluoroalkyl vinyl ether, vinylidene fluoride, chlorotrifluoroethylene, ethylene, propylene, pentafluoropropylene, fluoromethyl vinyl ether, acrylic acid, and hexadiene. A mixture of two or more selected from these may also be used as a binder.

At least one of the positive electrode **201** or the negative electrode **203** may contain a conductive aid to increase electronic conductivity. Examples of the conductive aid include graphite, such as natural graphite and artificial graphite, carbon black, such as acetylene black and Ketjen black, electrically conductive fiber, such as carbon fiber and metal fiber, metal powders, such as fluorocarbon and aluminum, electrically conductive whiskers, such as zinc oxide and potassium titanate, electrically conductive metal oxides, such as titanium oxide, and electrically conductive polymers, such as polyaniline, polypyrrole, and polythiophene. The use of a carbon conductive aid can reduce costs.

The battery **2000** according to the second embodiment may be of a coin type, a cylindrical type, a square or rectangular type, a sheet type, a button type, a flat type, a layered type, or the like.

EXAMPLES

The present disclosure is described in detail in the following examples and comparative examples.

Example 1

[Preparation of Halide Solid Electrolyte]

In an argon glove box with a dew point of -60°C . or less, a LiCl powder, a LiBr powder, and a YCl_3 powder were weighed in a mole ratio of $\text{LiCl}:\text{LiBr}:\text{YCl}_3=1:2:1$. These were ground and mixed in a mortar to prepare a mixture. The mixture was then milled in a planetary ball mill at 600 rpm for 12 hours.

Thus, a halide solid electrolyte powder of Example 1 represented by the composition formula $\text{Li}_3\text{YBr}_2\text{Cl}_4$ was prepared.

[Preparation of Coated Active Material]

A powder of $\text{Li}(\text{NiCoMn})\text{O}_2$ (hereinafter referred to as NCM) was dried under vacuum at 100°C . for 2 weeks. The NCM powder was then taken out from the drying apparatus in a dry atmosphere with a dew point of -30°C . or less.

In an argon glove box with a dew point of -60°C . or less, ethoxy lithium (manufactured by Kojundo Chemical Laboratory Co., Ltd.) and niobium pentaethoxide (manufactured by Kojundo Chemical Laboratory Co., Ltd.) were weighed in a mole ratio of 1:1 and were dissolved in super-dehydrated ethanol (manufactured by Wako Pure Chemical Co., Ltd.) to prepare a coating solution.

A tumbling granulation coating apparatus (FD-MP-01E manufactured by Powrex Corporation) was used to form a coating layer on the surface of the dried NCM particles.

The input of NCM, the stirring speed, and the liquid feed rate of the coating solution were 1 kg, 400 rpm, and 6.59 g/min, respectively. The input of the coating solution was adjusted to form a LiNbO_3 film with a thickness of 6 nm. The input of the coating solution was calculated from the specific surface area of the active material and the density of LiNbO_3 . A series of steps using a tumbling granulation

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coating apparatus was performed in a dry atmosphere with a dew point of -30°C . or less.

After completion of the treatment for forming the coating layer, the prepared powder was put into an alumina crucible and was heat-treated in a pure oxygen atmosphere at 350°C . for 1 hour.

The powder after the heat treatment was taken out in a dry atmosphere with a dew point of -30°C . or less and was reground in an agate mortar. Thus, a coated active material of Example 1 (NCM coated with the coating layer) was prepared.

The coating material in the coating layer was LiNbO_3 .
[Preparation of Positive-Electrode Material]

In an argon glove box with a dew point of -60°C . or less, a carbon conductive aid, the halide solid electrolyte of Example 1, and the coated active material of Example 1 were weighed in a weight ratio of 2:18:82. These were mixed in an agate mortar to prepare a positive-electrode material of Example 1.

Example 2

[Preparation of Halide Solid Electrolyte]

A halide solid electrolyte (NCM) powder of Example 2 was prepared in the same manner as in Example 1.

[Preparation of Coated Active Material]

The NCM powder was dried under vacuum at 100°C . for 2 weeks. The NCM powder was then heat-treated in a nitrogen atmosphere at 400°C . for 1 hour to dry the surface of the NCM particles. The NCM powder was taken out from the drying apparatus in a dry atmosphere with a dew point of -30°C . or less.

A coating layer was formed on the surface of the NCM particles in the same manner as in Example 1 except that the input of the coating solution was adjusted to form a LiNbO_3 film with a thickness of 2 nm. Thus, a coated active material of Example 2 was prepared.

[Preparation of Positive-Electrode Material]

A positive-electrode material of Example 2 was prepared in the same manner as in Example 1 except that the coated active material of Example 2 was used.

Example 3

A positive-electrode material of Example 3 was prepared in the same manner as in Example 2 except that the input of the coating solution was adjusted to form a LiNbO_3 film with a thickness of 6 nm.

Example 4

A positive-electrode material of Example 4 was prepared in the same manner as in Example 2 except that the input of the coating solution was adjusted to form a LiNbO_3 film with a thickness of 12 nm.

Comparative Example 1

[Preparation of Halide Solid Electrolyte]

A halide solid electrolyte (NCM) powder of Comparative Example 1 was prepared in the same manner as in Example 1.

[Preparation of Coated Active Material]

The NCM powder was dried under vacuum at 100°C . for 2 weeks. The NCM powder was then taken out from the drying apparatus in a dry atmosphere with a dew point of -30°C . or less.

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In an argon glove box with a dew point of -60°C . or less, ethoxy lithium (manufactured by Kojundo Chemical Laboratory Co., Ltd.) and niobium pentaethoxide (manufactured by Kojundo Chemical Laboratory Co., Ltd.) were weighed in a mole ratio of 1:1 and were dissolved in super-dehydrated ethanol (manufactured by Wako Pure Chemical Co., Ltd.) to prepare a coating solution.

A tumbling granulation coating apparatus (FD-MP-01E manufactured by Powrex Corporation) was used to form a coating layer on the surface of the dried NCM particles.

The input of NCM, the stirring speed, and the liquid feed rate of the coating solution were 1 kg, 400 rpm, and 6.59 g/min, respectively. The input of the coating solution was adjusted to form a LiNbO_3 film with a thickness of 2 nm. The input of the coating solution was calculated from the specific surface area of the active material and the density of LiNbO_3 . A series of steps using a tumbling granulation coating apparatus was performed in a dry atmosphere with a dew point of -30°C . or less.

After completion of the treatment for forming the coating layer, the prepared powder was put into an alumina crucible and was heat-treated in the air at 350°C . for 1 hour.

The powder after the heat treatment was taken out in the air and was reground in an agate mortar. Thus, a coated active material of Comparative Example 1 was prepared.

The coating material in the coating layer was LiNbO_3 .
[Preparation of Positive-Electrode Material]

In an argon glove box with a dew point of -60°C . or less, a carbon conductive aid, the halide solid electrolyte of Comparative Example 1, and the coated active material of Comparative Example 1 were weighed in a weight ratio of 2:18:82. These were mixed in an agate mortar to prepare a positive-electrode material of Comparative Example 1.

Comparative Example 2

A positive-electrode material of Comparative Example 2 was prepared in the same manner as in Comparative Example 1 except that the input of the coating solution was adjusted to form a LiNbO_3 film with a thickness of 6 nm.

Comparative Example 3

A positive-electrode material of Comparative Example 3 was prepared in the same manner as in Comparative Example 1 except that the input of the coating solution was adjusted to form a LiNbO_3 film with a thickness of 12 nm.
[Preparation of Sulfide Solid Electrolyte]

In an argon glove box with a dew point of -60°C . or less in an Ar atmosphere, a Li_2S powder and a P_2S_5 powder were weighed in a mole ratio of $\text{Li}_2\text{S}:\text{P}_2\text{S}_5=75:25$. These were ground and mixed in a mortar to prepare a mixture. The mixture was then milled in a planetary ball mill (P-7 manufactured by Fritsch GmbH) at 510 rpm for 10 hours. Thus, a glassy solid electrolyte was prepared. The glassy solid electrolyte was heat-treated at 270°C . for 2 hours in an inert atmosphere. Thus, a glass-ceramic sulfide solid electrolyte was prepared.

[Production of Secondary Battery]

Secondary batteries were produced using the halide solid electrolyte of Example 1, the positive-electrode materials of Examples 1 to 4 and Comparative Examples 1 to 3, and the sulfide solid electrolyte.

First, 80 mg of a sulfide solid electrolyte, 20 mg of a halide solid electrolyte, and 18 mg of a positive-electrode material were layered in this order in an insulating outer

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tube. The layered body was pressed at a pressure of 720 MPa to form a positive electrode and an electrolyte layer.

Metal In (thickness: 200 μm), metal Li (thickness: 300 μm), and metal In (thickness: 200 μm) were then layered in this order on the electrolyte layer on the side opposite to the side in contact with the positive electrode. The layered body was pressed at a pressure of 80 MPa to form a layered body composed of the positive electrode, the electrolyte layer, and a negative electrode

A stainless steel current collector was then placed on the top and bottom of the layered body. A current collector lead was attached to each current collector.

Finally, the insulating outer tube was sealed with an insulating ferrule to insulate the inside of the outer tube from the outside air atmosphere. Thus, batteries of Examples 1 to 4 and Comparative Examples 1 to 3 were produced.

[Charge-Discharge Test]

The batteries of Examples 1 to 4 and Comparative Examples 1 to 3 were subjected to a charge-discharge test under the following conditions.

The batteries were placed in a thermostat at 25° C.

The batteries were charged with a constant current at a current value of 140 μA corresponding to 0.05 C rate (20 hour rate) with respect to its theoretical capacity, and the charging was completed at a voltage of 3.7 V.

The batteries were then discharged at the same current value of 140 μA corresponding to 0.05 C rate, and the discharging was completed at a voltage of 1.9 V.

The average discharge voltages of the batteries of Examples 1 to 4 and Comparative Examples 1 to 3 were thus measured. Table 1 shows the results.

[Surface Composition Analysis]

The coated active materials of Examples 1 to 4 and Comparative Examples 1 to 3 were used in the following measurements.

Quantera SXM (manufactured by ULVAC-PHI, Inc.) was used for XPS surface composition analysis. The measurement conditions are as follows:

X-ray source: Al monochrome (25 W, 15 kV)

Analysis area: 300 μm ×800 μm (Area)

Electron/ion flood gun: ON

Photoelectron take-off angle: 45 degrees

The scan range of binding energy was from 0 to 1250 eV. The atomic concentrations of elements were calculated using software "MultiPak" available from ULVAC-PHI, Inc.

Elements selected for measurement were Li (scan range: 45 to 65 eV), C (scan range: 275 to 295 eV), O (scan range: 522 to 542 eV), Mn (scan range: 632 to 662 eV), Co (scan range: 770 to 810 eV), Ni (scan range: 848 to 888 eV), and Nb (scan range: 195 to 215 eV). For the atomic concentration of each element, the surface concentration of the element was calculated from the integrated peak area ratio based on peaks observed in the scan range of the element. The ratio (Li/O) was then calculated as an atomic ratio from the calculated surface Li concentration and the calculated surface O concentration.

Thus, the atomic ratio (Li/O) of the lithium (Li) content to the oxygen (O) content was determined in the region from the outermost surface of the coated active material to a depth of 10 nm. Table 1 shows the results.

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TABLE 1

	Heat treatment atmosphere	Li/O (atomic concentration/atomic concentration)	Average discharge voltage (V)
Comparative example 1	Air atmosphere	0.44	3.575
Comparative example 2	Air atmosphere	0.34	3.586
Comparative example 3	Air atmosphere	0.33	3.570
Example 1	Pure oxygen atmosphere	0.18	3.624
Example 2	Pure oxygen atmosphere	0.26	3.640
Example 3	Pure oxygen atmosphere	0.13	3.635
Example 4	Pure oxygen atmosphere	0.26	3.625

DISCUSSIONS

As shown in Table 1, the coated active materials of Examples 1 to 4 had an atomic ratio (Li/O) of 0.18, 0.26, 0.13, and 0.26, respectively. All the coated active materials of Examples 1 to 4 had an atomic ratio (Li/O) of 0.26 or less. The batteries of Examples 1 to 4 had an average discharge voltage of 3.624 V or more. It was confirmed that the discharge voltage of the batteries could be improved by using a positive-electrode material with an atomic ratio (Li/O) of the lithium content to the oxygen content in a surface layer portion of the coated active material being 0.26 or less.

In contrast, the atomic ratios (Li/O) of the coated active materials of Comparative Examples 1 to 3 were 0.44, 0.34, and 0.33, which were significantly higher than the values of Examples 1 to 4. The batteries of Comparative Examples 1 to 3 had an average discharge voltage of 3.586 V or less.

A battery according to the present disclosure can be used as an all-solid-state battery, for example.

What is claimed is:

1. A positive-electrode material comprising:
 - a positive-electrode active material;
 - a coating layer covering the positive-electrode active material; and
 - a solid electrolyte,
 wherein the coating layer contains oxygen and lithium, the positive-electrode active material and the coating layer constitute a coated active material, a ratio Li/O of a lithium content to an oxygen content in a surface layer portion of the coated active material is 0.26 or less based on an atomic ratio, the solid electrolyte is represented by the following composition formula (1),



where α , β , and γ are independently more than 0,

M includes at least one element selected from the group consisting of metal elements other than Li and metalloid elements, and

X includes at least two selected from the group consisting of F, Cl, Br, and I.

2. The positive-electrode material according to claim 1, wherein the coating layer contains an alkali salt.

3. The positive-electrode material according to claim 1, wherein the M includes yttrium.

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4. The positive-electrode material according to claim 1, satisfying $2.5 \leq \alpha \leq 3$, $1 \leq \beta \leq 1.1$, and $\gamma = 6$.

5. The positive-electrode material according to claim 1, wherein the X includes at least one selected from the group consisting of Cl and Br.

6. The positive-electrode material according to claim 1, wherein the coating layer contains a lithium niobate compound.

7. The positive-electrode material according to claim 1, wherein the positive-electrode active material contains Li and at least one element selected from the group consisting of Mn, Co, Ni, and Al.

8. A battery comprising:

a positive electrode containing the positive-electrode material according to claim 1;

a negative electrode; and

an electrolyte layer between the positive electrode and the negative electrode.

9. The battery according to claim 8, wherein the positive-electrode material further contains a solid electrolyte, and

the electrolyte layer contains a solid electrolyte with the same composition as that of the solid electrolyte contained in the positive-electrode material.

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10. The battery according to claim 8, wherein

the positive-electrode material further contains a solid electrolyte, and

the electrolyte layer contains a halide solid electrolyte with a composition different from that of the solid electrolyte contained in the positive-electrode material.

11. The battery according to claim 8, wherein the electrolyte layer contains a sulfide solid electrolyte.

12. The positive-electrode material according to claim 1, wherein the solid electrolyte is represented by the formula $\text{Li}_3\text{YBr}_2\text{Cl}_4$.

13. The positive-electrode material according to claim 1, wherein the coating layer includes at least one selected from the group consisting of, a Li—Nb—O compound, a Li—B—O compound, a Li—Al—O compound, a Li—Si—O compound, a Li—S—O compound, a Li—Ti—O compound, a Li—Zr—O compound, a Li—Mo—O compound, a Li—V—O compound, a Li—W—O compound, lithium carbonate, lithium hydrogen carbonate, lithium oxide, and lithium hydroxide.

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