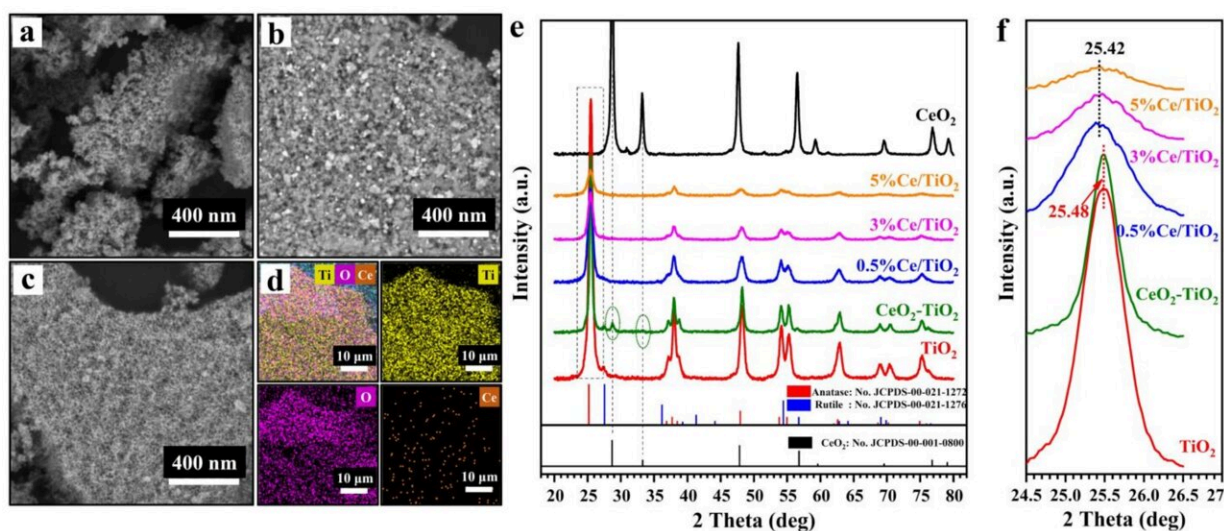


Visible light absorption of titanium dioxide achieved through cerium synchronous doping in anatase

April 24 2023, by Liu Jia



SEM images of (a) pure TiO₂, (b) CeO₂-TiO₂, and (c) Ce/TiO₂; (d) element mapping images of Ti, O, and Ce in the Ce/TiO₂ sample; (e) XRD patterns of the CeO₂, pure TiO₂, CeO₂-TiO₂ mixture, and Ce/TiO₂ samples with different Ce doping contents; (f) 23.5–25.0° refined XRD spectrums of (e). Credit: *Molecules* (2023). DOI: 10.3390/molecules28062433

The introduction of rare earth elements into TiO₂ can effectively improve the electron-hole separation of TiO₂ and prolong the visible light response of TiO₂.

Cerium (Ce) shows variable valence states $\text{Ce}^{3+}/\text{Ce}^{4+}$ with different electronic structures ($4f^15d^0$ and $4f^05d^0$, respectively) among [rare earth elements](#), which easily form oxygen vacancies. Ce element with unique electronic structure can be used to modify semiconductor photocatalysts to improve their photocatalytic performance.

In a study published in *Molecules*, the research group led by Prof. Lu Canzhong from Fujian Institute of Research on the Structure of Matter of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, reported the visible light absorption of Ce/TiO_2 .

The researchers achieved simultaneous [doping](#) of Ce in the TiO_2 lattice using a simple sol-gel method which achieved Ce synchronous doping in the lattice of TiO_2 . They observed morphology and structure of the pure TiO_2 , Ce-doped TiO_2 (Ce/TiO_2), and CeO_2 -mixed TiO_2 ($\text{CeO}_2\text{-TiO}_2$) samples by X-ray diffraction (XRD), scanning [electron microscopy](#) (SEM), and [transmission electron microscopy](#) (TEM). They found that Ce doping in the lattice of anatase TiO_2 resulted in a smaller grain size of the sample.

Additionally, the researchers revealed the high photocurrent density ($10.9 \mu\text{A}\times\text{cm}^{-2}$) of Ce/TiO_2 by linear sweep voltammetry (LSV) test, which is 2.5 times that of common TiO_2 material ($4.3 \mu\text{A}\times\text{cm}^{-2}$). They evaluated the light absorption range of Ce/TiO_2 using incident photo-to-current efficiency (IPCE) test. Ce/TiO_2 shows visible light absorption up to 500 nm, while pure TiO_2 shows no obvious response in the visible region.

Moreover, the researchers unveiled that the electron-trapping centers formed by Ce doping into the TiO_2 lattice improved the separation efficiency of photogenerated electrons and holes. The narrow bandgap of Ce-doped TiO_2 showed excellent visible light absorption and photocurrent response. Due to the Ce doping, the Ce/TiO_2 samples

achieved high photocurrent density and incident photon current efficiency (IPCE).

This study provides a practical strategy and an important reference for the preparation and understanding of highly efficient visible light-activated rare earth-doped photocatalysts.

More information: Mei-Hong Tong et al, Cerium Synchronous Doping in Anatase for Enhanced Photocatalytic Hydrogen Production from Ethanol-Water Mixtures, *Molecules* (2023). [DOI: 10.3390/molecules28062433](https://doi.org/10.3390/molecules28062433)

Provided by Chinese Academy of Sciences

Citation: Visible light absorption of titanium dioxide achieved through cerium synchronous doping in anatase (2023, April 24) retrieved 23 June 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2023-04-visible-absorption-titanium-dioxide-cerium.html>

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