

Electrochemical Evaluation of the Catalytic Effect of Natural Phosphate on the Oxidation of Ascorbic Acid: Analytical Application in Human Blood

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This work describes the electroanalytical activity of the natural phosphate modified carbon paste electrode (CPE-NP) for ascorbic acid (AA) oxidation, where its electrochemical response is compared to the carbon paste electrode (CPE). The voltammetric behavior of AA was studied when an anodic peak appeared at 0.35 V (vs. Ag/AgCl/3 M KCl) in the Britton-Robinson buffer solution (pH 6.0). This peak was obtained from the irreversible oxidation of AA at CPE-NP. The electro-catalytic influence was studied by cyclic voltammetry (CV) and differential pulse voltammetry (DPV). To give electroanalytical detection to oxidize AA on the CPE-NP, the differential pulse voltammograms were used in the potential range from -0.5 V to 1.5 V vs. Ag/AgCl/(sat. KCl). Besides, CPE-NP can be employed successfully to ameliorate the detection of AA at very feeble concentration with good sensitivity. The calibration range was from 1.0×10^{-6} - 1.0×10^{-3} M. The calculated limit of detection (LD) was 1.44×10^{-9} M when the relative standard deviation (RSD) at 1.0×10^{-5} M AA concentration was 3.29% for nine repetitions. Afterward, the studied method was applied to detect AA in human blood with satisfactory results.

Keywords: Ascorbic acid, Natural phosphate, Human blood, Electrocatalysis

INTRODUCTION

Graphene has shown excellent affection for scientific groups [1-16]. It is a 2-dimensional sp^2 -hybridized carbon sheet with many good physicochemical behavior such as extremely high surface area, excellent electronic transport properties, high mechanical stiffness, and extraordinary thermal and electrical conductivity [1-6]. It has been also indicated to have outstanding commitment for numerous potential utilizations; for example, sensors, nanoelectronics, batteries, supercapacitors, hydrogen storage and nanocomposites [1,7-10]. These supreme properties make it good candidate for electrochemistry applications specially in sensing [10-12]. A Surfactant Enhanced Graphene Paste Electrode and anionic surfactant modified carbon

nanocomposite material were used in the electroanalysis of the molecules thanks to its high sensitivity, fast response, excellent stability, and good reproducibility [13,14]. Carbon paste electrode modified by electropolymerization as well as immobilization technique was used for the resolution of antibacterial drug Ciprofloxacin (CFX) [15]. Sodium dodecyl sulfate surfactant modified graphene paste electrode, prepared by electrochemical immobilization of the sodium dodecyl sulfate surfactant on a graphene paste electrode, was applied for simultaneous determination of dopamine in the presence of ascorbic acid and uric acid [16]. Electropolymerization of aniline blue on the surface of carbon paste electrode was applied for individual and simultaneous determination of ascorbic acid, dopamine and uric acid [17]. Poly (maleic acid) Modified Carbon Paste Electrode was used for the electrochemical detection with stable and sensitive current responses [18]. Electrode based

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on modified carbon nanotube-graphite mixture paste electrode was determined in the electroanalysis of organic compounds [19]. Poly (Solid Red A) modified carbon nanotube paste electrode was used for simultaneous determination of epinephrine, uric acid and ascorbic acid [20]. Poly-l-leucine modified sensor for enhanced voltammetric determination of Riboflavin has been used [21]. A surfactant enhanced novel pencil graphite and carbon nanotube composite paste material as the effective electrochemical electrodes were used for determination of Riboflavin [22]. It has also been reported that graphene has the capacity to replace the other present materials used for the preparation of biosensors [23-26].

Vitamin C or AA, one of the important vitamins, generously exists in several plants and contributes to certain interesting biological reactions such as protection against cancer and elimination of free radicals; however, it cannot be synthesized by the human body. A recommended daily intake in AA is from 70 to 90 mg. Insufficient intake will lead to scurvy syndromes, gingival bleeding, *etc.* Excess AA will cause urinary stones, stomach convulsions, and diarrhea [27]. For the importance of AA in human life, its analysis in an aqueous medium is very important. Habitual techniques for AA analysis are often based on enzymatic techniques [28,29] and UV-Vis [30]. Recently, there has been significant interest in developing chemical sensors for electroanalysis of AA.

Advantages of electrochemical techniques include sensitive, low cost, simple, and excellent methods for the determination of drugs and related molecules in pharmaceutical products and biological fluids. There are many papers on characterization of the electrochemical properties of curcumin [14,15,23,31-33]. Electrochemical detection is a best substitute for the detection of many compounds in pharmaceutical and biological samples [20]. However, the main drawback for the voltammetric detection of AA in real samples is the interference of some concomitant compounds, leading in overlapped voltammetric responses due to their very similar oxidation peak potentials [34,35]. Recently, chemically modified electrode surface has been proved to be a successful method to solve this problem, and various materials and techniques have been used [36,37] the modified electrodes have many advantages like good biocompatibility, stability and easiness

of the preparation [38-40].

AA can be spontaneously oxidized electrochemically at classical electrodes which were employed to detect AA [41,42]. Nevertheless, the oxidation reaction of AA at the electrode necessitates high potential which results in electrode crass by its oxidation products with low reproducibility, feeble sensitivity, and selectivity. Also, some of the molecules, *e.g.* uric acid and dopamine, undergo oxidation in the same potential range as AA. To resolve this issue, chemically modified electrodes were developed and cited with different materials such as conducting polymers [43-47], ionic liquids [48,49], metal nanoparticles [44], carbon nanotubes [45,49,50] and macrocyclic compounds [51,52]. A lot of analytical methods including sensors and biosensors [53-55] have been suggested for determination of AA in various samples. Other techniques, based on the employed physicochemical methods, have been introduced for detection of AA such as HPLC [56-58] CE [59-62]. The research aimed at developing new analytical methods for AA detection is directed towards increasing their specificity, simplicity, sensitivity, and rapidity [63,64]. Electrochemical determination is a good method for electroanalysis of electroactive species. Similarly, some research groups also reported modified electrodes for selective detection and determination of AA. They are nano ZnO/poly (luminol) hybrid film modified electrode [65], poly (xanthurenic acid) and multi-walled carbon nanotubes [66], Pt disc working electrode [67], carbon paste electrode spiked with ferrocene carboxylic acid [68], anionic surfactant modified carbon nanocomposite material [69], modified multiwalled carbon nanotube paste electrode [70], carbon paste modified by 2,7-bis(ferrocenyl ethyl)fluoren-9-one [71], carbon paste modified by 2,2'-[1,2-ethanediylbis (nitriloethylidene)]-bishydroquinone [72], carbon paste modified by bis(4'-(4-pyridyl)-2,2':6',2''-terpyridine) iron(II) thiocyanate [73].

In this work, we have described the electrochemical studies of AA oxidation and their electroanalysis sensitive at CPE-NP in Britton-Robinson solution buffer. Its oxidation performance is compared to that of CPE. The success of the CPE-NP surface toward the electrochemical analysis of AA is evaluated by CV and DPV techniques. The electrode is also applied for detection of AA concentrations in human blood using CV.

EXPERIMENTAL

Reagents and Chemicals

All chemicals used in the present work were of analytical grade or of the highest purity available. Sulfuric acid and potassium hydroxide, acetic acid, boric acid, and phosphoric acid were obtained from Merck (Darmstadt, Germany), Fluka (St. Gallen, Switzerland), and Riedel de Haen (Seelze, Germany) and used as received. Ascorbic acid, hydroquinone, dopamine, resorcinol, salicylic acid, ibuprofen purchased from Sigma-Aldrich were dissolved in 0.1 M Britton-Robinson Buffer (BR; pH 6) to prepare a stock solution of 1.0×10^{-3} M. By diluting the stock solutions, the working standard solutions were prepared. Paraffin was used as the pasting liquid for the carbon-paste electrode (CPE). Carbon paste was supplied from Carbone Lorraine (Lorraine, France; ref. 9900). The pH was adjusted by sulfuric acid or potassium hydroxide. The natural phosphate utilized in the present work was obtained from the Khouribga region (Morocco). All these experiments were performed using distilled water, at room temperature.

Switchgear

The electroanalysis activity of the CPE-NP toward oxidation of AA has been studied by the CV and DPV connected to a computer for control, data acquisition, and storage. The software employed was VoltaLab Master 4. The oxidation of AA was carried out in a three-electrode cell. Ag/AgCl/KCl (3 M) was utilized as a reference electrode and a platinum wire as a counter electrode. The CPE-NP (0.2 cm^2) is the working electrode utilized in the present work.

Electrodes Preparation

The CPE-NP was elaborated by mixing graphite carbon powder and natural phosphate using paraffin oil as a binder. The working electrode was a cylinder that was tightly filled with a mixture of graphite carbon and natural phosphate. The electrical contact was established using a carbon rod.

Procedure

Different supporting electrolytes were tested such as acetate buffer, phosphate buffer, and Britton-Robinson buffer. The excellent electrochemical response was obtained

by Britton-Robinson buffer (pH 6.0). In working procedure the electrochemical responses of the CPE-NP surface is measured at a concentration of AA. A known concentration of AA solution was prepared in 0.1 M Britton-Robinson buffer solution (pH 6.0) and 20 ml of the prepared solution was transferred to an electrochemical cell. The cyclic and differential voltammograms were obtained between -0.5 and 1.5 V at 100 mV s^{-1} . The optimal conditions were determined by measuring the currents as a function of all parameters.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Electrochemical Behavior of AA

Figures 1A and 1B show respectively the cyclic voltammograms (CVs) and the differential pulse voltammograms (DPVs) recorded in the potential range between -0.5 V and 1.5 V on the surfaces of CPE and CPE-NP in 0.1 M BR buffer (pH 6). It seems that the CVs and DPVs have different forms, showing that the CPE surface has been effectively modified by the natural phosphate.

The electroanalysis activity of the CPE-NP toward AA oxidation was studied by CV and DPV at CPE and CPE-NP in BR buffer (pH 6) containing 1.0×10^{-3} M of AA (Figs. 1C and 1D). The anodic peak for AA on CPE and CPE-NP surface appeared at about 0.35 V. The CPE-NP exhibited efficient electrocatalytic oxidation of AA compared to the CPE. Besides, the CPE-NP can promote AA detection. Scheme 1 shows the reaction of oxidation of L-ascorbate to dehydro-L-ascorbic.

Optimization of Experimental Variables

In addition to electrochemical properties, the CPE-NP shows a big capacity for the electroanalysis of AA. This electroanalytical was carried out by the DPV method. Firstly, all electroanalysis parameters were optimized in BR solution (pH 6.0) containing 1.0×10^{-3} M of AA. The effect of the accumulation time on the voltammetric responses was investigated (Fig. 2A). Figure 2B represents an increase in the current intensity as a function of preconcentration time during the first 4 min. After 4 min, the peak intensity decreases with a net increase in the accumulation time. Hence, 4 min was used in all experiments.

The increase of the modifier loading (from 2 to 30% by

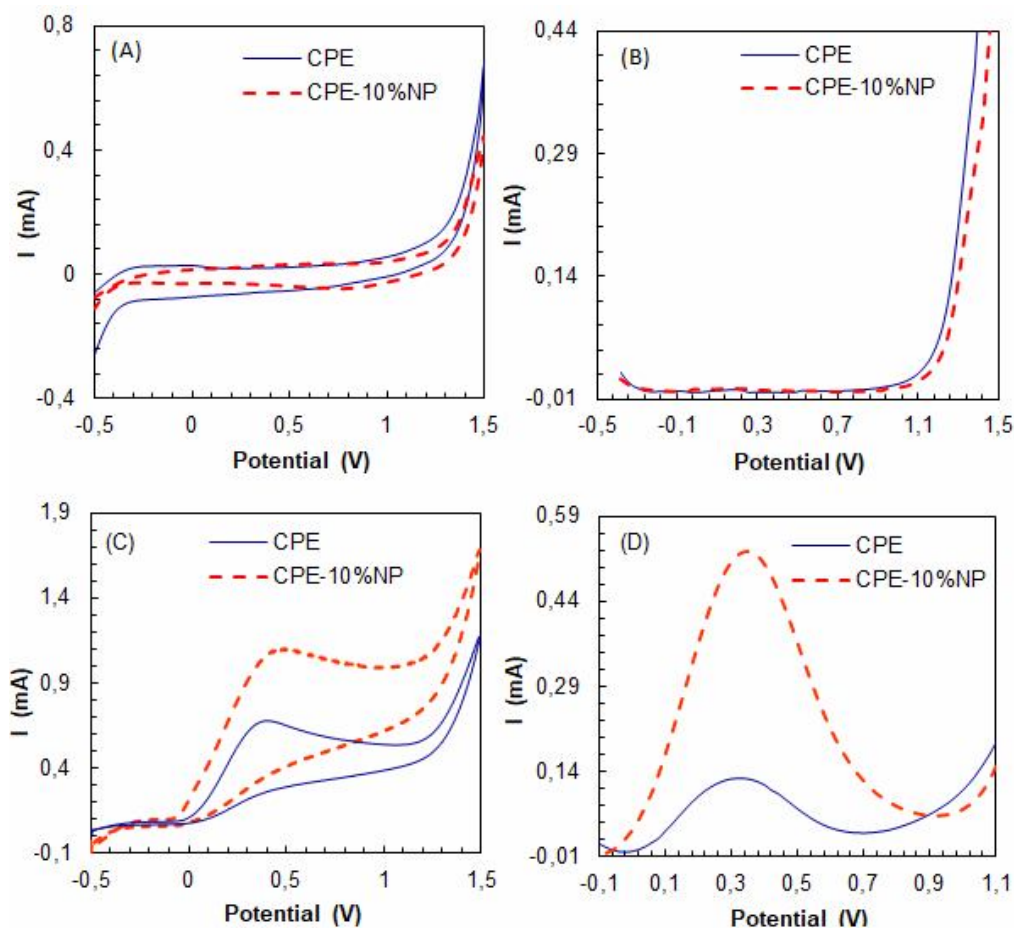
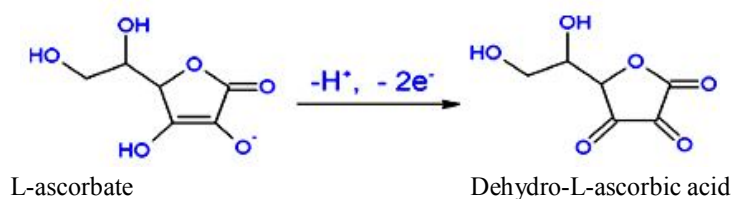


Fig. 1. (A) CVs (100 mV s^{-1}), and (B) DPVs obtained for CPE and CPE-NP in the absence of AA. (C) CVs (100 mV s^{-1}) and (D) DPVs of $1.0 \times 10^{-3} \text{ M}$ AA for CPE and CPE-NP in $1.0 \times 10^{-1} \text{ M}$ BR buffer (pH 6).



Scheme 1. Electrochemical oxidation of AA at CPE-NP [74,75]

weight of carbon paste) affects the AA detection at the CPE-NP surface, represented in Fig. 2C using the DPVs. The oxidation current of AA increases with the increase of the natural phosphate until 10%, beyond this value the oxidation current intensity decreases (Fig. 2D). This is

possibly due to the decrease in the CPE-NP conductivity. Hence, 10% of the ratio by weight was used in this work. In other experimental studies, the optimal electroanalysis parameters to make the AA detection were 14 mV s^{-1} , 120 ms, 100 mV, 400 ms for the step, pulse, width, and

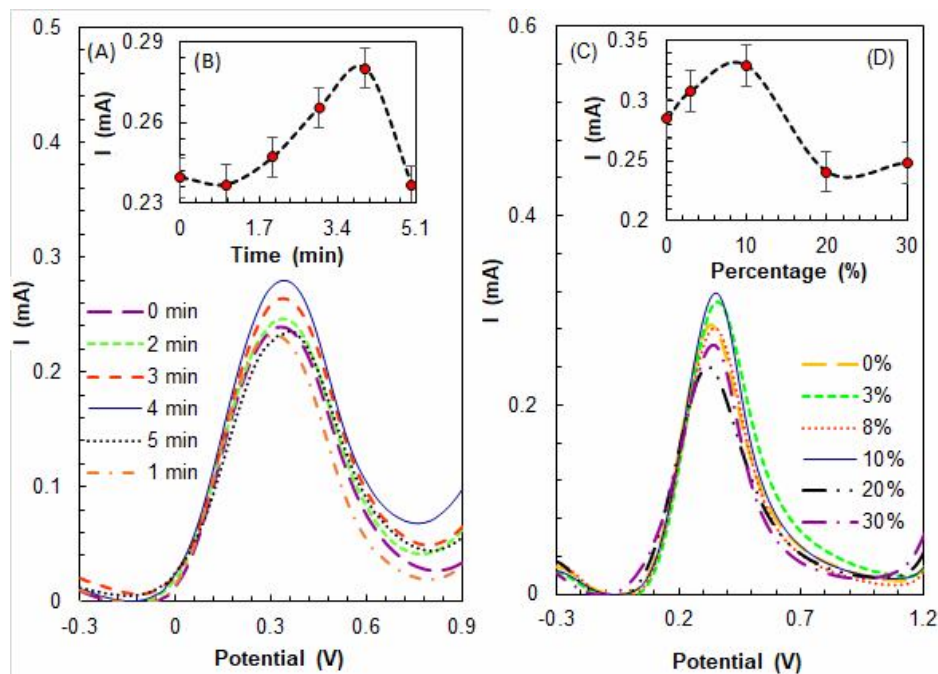


Fig. 2. Influence of the experimental variables ((A) and (B) accumulation time, (C) and (D)% of natural phosphate) involved in the DPV method, 1.0×10^{-3} M AA in BR solution (pH 6.0) at CPE-NP.

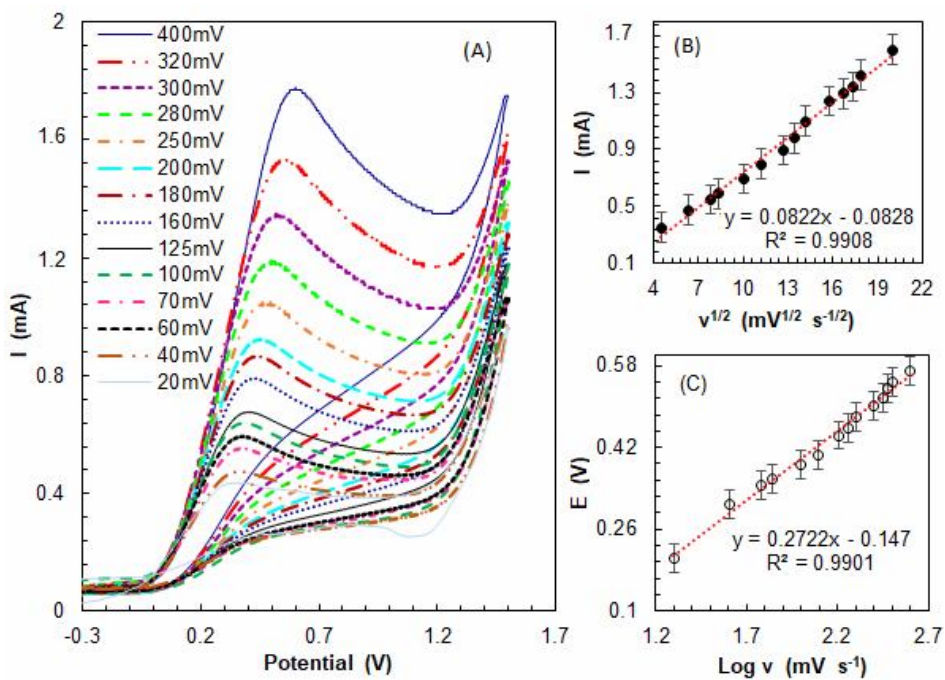


Fig. 3. CVs of 1.0×10^{-3} M AA in 0.1 M BR buffer (pH 6). (A) CVs at different scanning rates, (B) variations of I_p with the $V^{1/2}$, and (C) variations of E_p with $\log V$.

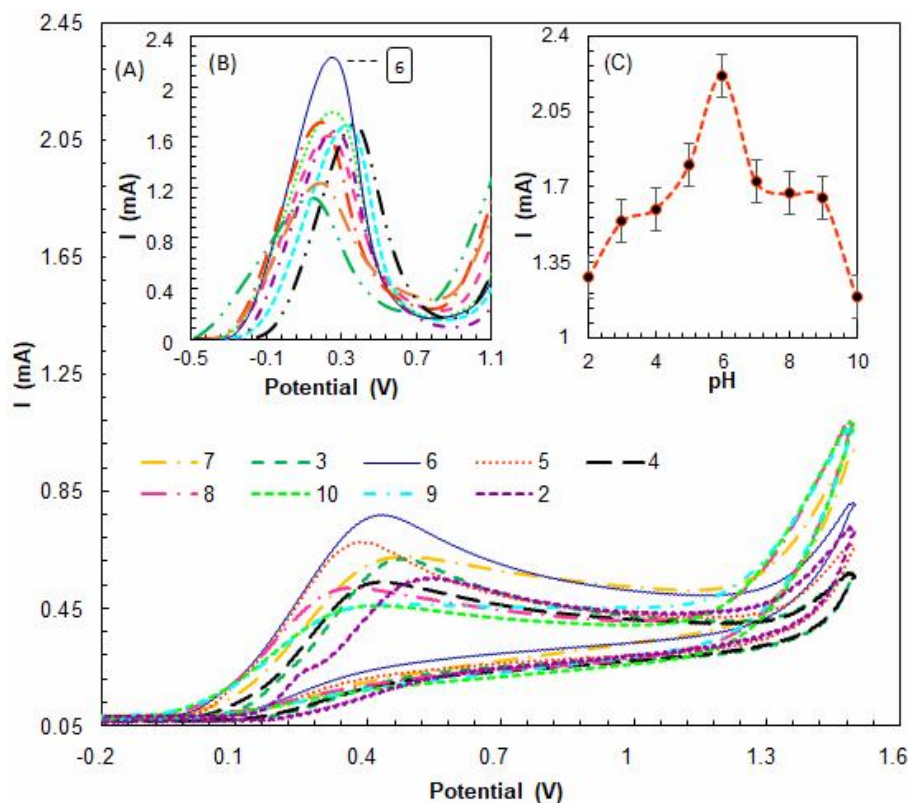


Fig. 4. (A) CVs (at 100 mV s^{-1}) and (B) DPVs of $1 \times 10^{-3} \text{ M}$ AA at different pHs. Inset: plot of I_p vs. pH.

period, respectively.

The Catalytic Effect of CPE-NP

Influence of scanning rate and pH. To further study the AA characteristics at the CPE-NP, the influence of the scanning rates on the voltammetric behavior of AA was studied. Figure 3A illustrates the cyclic voltammograms of AA ($1.0 \times 10^{-3} \text{ M}$) in Britton-Robinson buffer at the CPE-NP surface with increasing scanning rates between 20 and 400 mV s^{-1} . The density of the peak current is proportional to the square root of the scanning rate ($V^{1/2}$) at the CPE-NP surface (Fig. 3B). This phenomenon proposed a diffusion-controlled mechanism at the CPE-NP [76]. The oxidation of AA at the CPE-NP was constantly irreversible, which can be appeared by the potential of AA varied with the logarithm of scan rates. The oxidation peak potentials shifted regularly toward the positive direction with the scan rate varied from 20 to 400 mV s^{-1} (Fig. 3C).

The electrochemical behavior of CPE was carefully

studied in BR buffer by CV and DPV. The influence of on CV and DPV responses of the CPE-NP was studied in the pH range between 1 and 10 and well-defined CVs (Fig. 4A) and DPVs (Fig. 4B) curves were observed. With the increase of buffer pH from 2 to 6, the oxidation peak current increased up to 2.4 mA. When the pH of the electrolytic medium exceeds to 6, the current of the AA oxidation peak decreased. Therefore, pH = 6 is best for the catalytic activity of CPE-NP toward the oxidation of AA (Fig. 4C).

Concentration Effect of AA

The influence of AA concentration has been studied under the optimized conditions by DPV at CPE-NP (Fig. 5A). Figure 5B shows the calibration curve for the oxidation of AA. The current density of the oxidation peak of AA increases with its concentration from 1.0×10^{-6} to $1.0 \times 10^{-3} \text{ M}$ of AA. The limit of detection calculated by the CPE-NP is $1.44 \times 10^{-9} \text{ M}$. The LD calculated by CPE-NP

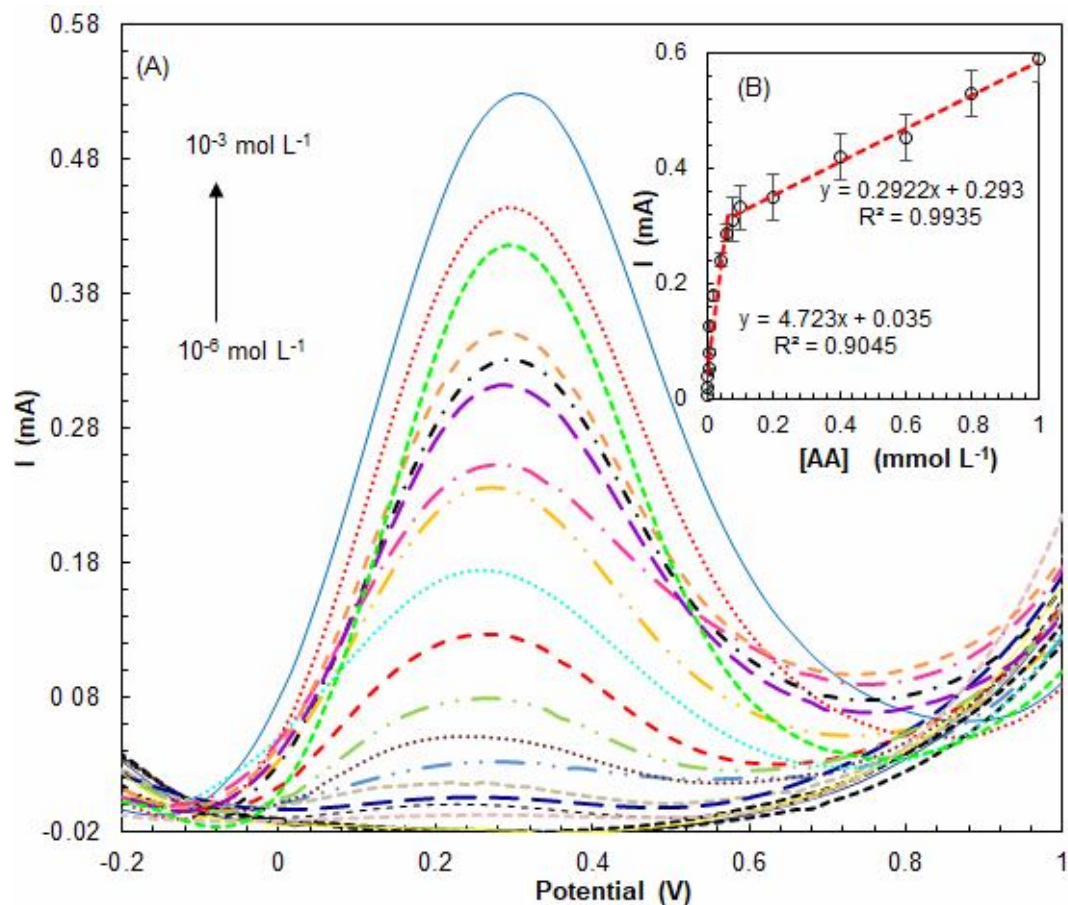


Fig. 5. (A) DPVs of AA in 0.1 M B-R (pH 6) 1.0×10^{-3} , 8.0×10^{-4} , 6.0×10^{-4} , 4.0×10^{-4} , 2.0×10^{-4} , 1.0×10^{-4} , 8.0×10^{-5} , 6.0×10^{-5} , 4.0×10^{-5} , 2.0×10^{-5} , 1.0×10^{-5} , 8.0×10^{-6} , 6.0×10^{-6} , 4.0×10^{-6} , 2.0×10^{-6} and 1.0×10^{-6} M. (B) plots of electrocatalytic peak current versus AA concentration.

was compared with those obtained by other electrodes (Table 1) [65-73]. The repeatability of our analysis method was also investigated as a relative standard deviation (RSD). Therefore, the RSD calculated is 3.29% after nine measurements in solutions of 1.0×10^{-5} M AA.

Electroanalysis of AA in Human Blood

In order to verify the applicability and validity of the analytical method, the rock phosphate modified carbon paste electrode was used for the detection of AA in human blood samples. The human blood solutions were utilized without any pretreatment. The electroanalytical curves were

recorded by the method of differential pulse voltammetry (Fig. 6A). Preliminary analysis indicates that this sample does not contain AA. For this reason, we proceeded by contaminating this sample with ibuprofen at well-defined concentration levels. The AA oxidation peak was well displayed. The calibration curve of the human blood samples using the optimum conditions was linear with a good correlation coefficient ($R^2 = 0.9921$) (Fig. 6B). Consequently, the limit of detection obtained was 8.81×10^{-8} M. The RSD calculated was 4.08% after nine measurements in solutions of 1.0×10^{-5} M AA. This shows the possibility to determine AA in human blood samples.

Table 1. Detection Limit Obtained by Several Electrodes for the Electroanalysis of AA

Modified electrode	Analytical technique	Detection limit (M)	Ep (V)	pH	Ref.
Nano-ZnO/poly(luminol) hybrid film modified electrode	CV	1.0×10^{-6}	0.4	7	[65]
Poly (xanthurenic acid) and multi-walled carbon nanotubes	CV	0.1×10^{-7}	0.3	7	[66]
Pt disc working electrode Carbon paste electrode	CV	9×10^{-5}	0.49	7	[67]
Spiked with ferrocene carboxylic acid	CV	1.08×10^{-5}	0.248	5	[68]
Anionic surfactant modified carbon nanocomposite material	DPV	2.7×10^{-8}	0.3	7	[69]
Modified Multiwalled Carbon Nanotube Paste Electrode	CV	8.9×10^{-8}	0.235	7	[70]
Carbon paste modified by 2,7-bis(ferrocenyl ethyl)fluoren-9-one	CV	9×10^{-6}	0.3	7	[71]
Carbon paste modified by 2,2'-[1,2-ethanediylbis (nitriloethylidyne)]-bishydroquinone	CV	7.5×10^{-8}	0.38	7	[72]
Carbon paste modified by bis(4'-(4-pyridyl)-2,2':6',2''-terpyridine) iron(II) thiocyanate	CV	2×10^{-6}	0.2	5	[73]
CPE-NP	DPV	1.44×10^{-9}	0.35	6	Present work

Influence of Interferences

The effect of interferents was also studied to determine the selectivity of CPE-NP. These interferents were hydroquinone (HQ), dopamine (DA), ascorbic acid (AA), resorcinol (RSC), salicylic acid (As), ibuprofen (IBU) into the solution containing 1.0×10^{-4} M of AA. Electrochemical measurements were studied to determine the influence of interferents on the intensity of the oxidation currents of the compound examined (Fig. 7). The results obtained illustrate that the presence of interfering agents in a solution containing AA does not influence the density of the current of the AA oxidation peak.

CONCLUSIONS

At the surface of CPE-NP, AA can produce an

irreversible anodic peak at 0.35 V in pH 6 BR buffer solutions. The CPE-NP exhibits good electrocatalytic performance toward the oxidation of AA. A large positive shift in the peak potentials of AA was observed. The catalytic evaluation was carried out using the CV and DPV. So, to obtain the detection limit of AA, the DPV method was utilized to determine AA in aqueous media. The results illustrated that the oxidation current for AA at the CPE-NP increased significantly compared with CPE. The relationship between the oxidation current and the concentration of AA was linear from 1.0×10^{-6} to 1.0×10^{-3} M. The detection limit found was 1.44×10^{-9} M. In addition, the results showed the feasibility of determining AA in real samples of human blood.

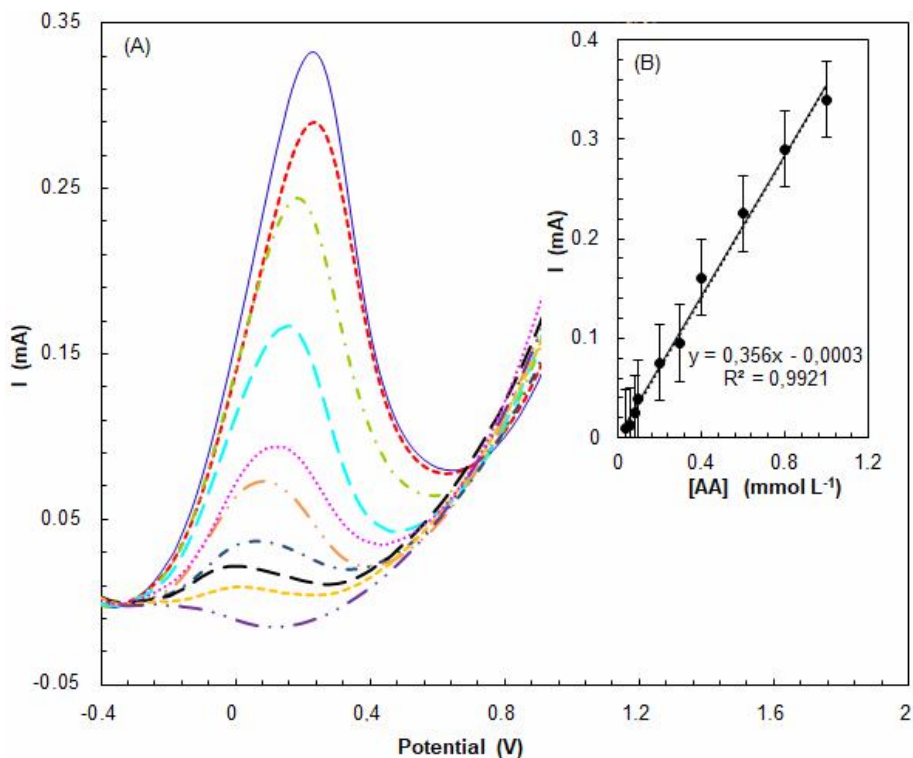


Fig. 6. (A) DPVs of AA from 10^{-5} to 10^{-3} M in 20 ml of human blood samples under optimized conditions, (B) plots of peak current *versus* AA concentration.

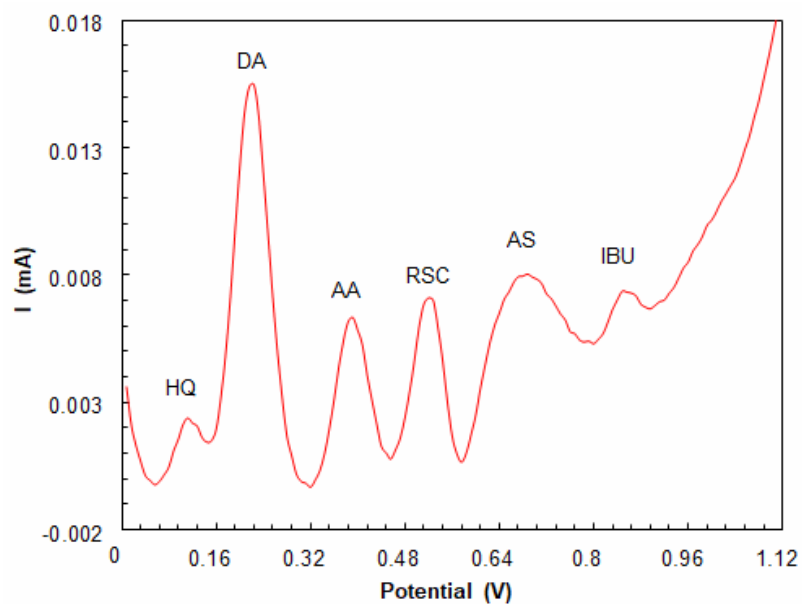


Fig. 7. DPV of a mixture of molecules containing 1.0×10^{-4} M of hydroquinone (HQ), dopamine (DA), ascorbic acid (AA), resorcinol (RSC), salicylic acid (As) and ibuprofen (IBU).

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