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High sensitive electrochemical detection of silver nanoparticles based on a MoS₂/graphene composite

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Abstract In this work, $MoS₂$ -reduced graphene oxide (rGO) composites were prepared by a simple hydrothermal reaction and characterized by SEM, Raman, XRD, and electrochemical impedance spectroscopy (EIS). The obtained $MoS₂-rGO/GCE$ was used for electrochemical investigation of silver nanoparticles (AgNPs) by cyclic voltammetry (CV), differential pulse voltammetry (DPV), and chronocoulometry (CC). It was found that the $MoS₂-rGO/GCE$

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Department of Physi-Chemical Inspection, Jinan Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Jinan 250022, China exhibited good stability and could enhance current response of AgNP electrooxidation efectively. On the basis, a new electrochemical method was developed to detect AgNPs in aqueous solution. The proposed method exhibited satisfactory analytical performance for AgNP detection with the limit of detection (LOD) as 2.63 ng/L and the linear range from 5 to 120 ng/L. The determination assays in water samples by $MoS₂-rGO/GCE$ were also discussed. The assay recoveries in water samples were obtained as 94.9– 99.4%. That suggested a promising application prospect in environmental analysis.

Keywords Electroanalysis · Diferential pulse voltammetry · Molybdenum disulfde · Silver nanoparticles, Environmental effects

Introduction

Silver nanoparticles (AgNPs) were widely used in various applications because they can improve the performance of many consumer and industrial products, for example, in antibacterial medicine and devices, personal care products, water treatment, photocatalysis, and disinfection (Dankovich and Gray [2011;](#page-9-0) Rizzello and Pompa [2014](#page-9-1); Yu et al. [2013](#page-10-0)). However, the growing use of AgNPs and releasing into environment has raised concerns about their potential implications to the environment and human health (Marambio-Jones and Hoek [2010](#page-9-2); Loeschner et al. [2013](#page-9-3)). To address this issue, an urgent requirement has been the development of analytical techniques to detect the presence and the concentration of AgNPs in environment and biological tissues. Series of analytical techniques, such as ICP-MS (Artiaga et al. [2015](#page-9-4); Paramelle et al. [2014\)](#page-9-5), UV spectra (Chao et al. [2011\)](#page-9-6), cloud point extraction (Alvaredo et al. [2013\)](#page-9-7), chromatography (Cheng and Compton [2014](#page-9-8)), and electrochemical techniques (Zhou et al. [2011](#page-10-1); Zhang et al. [2000](#page-10-2)) have been developed for detection and characterization of AgNPs. Among the above techniques, the electrochemical technique has been accepted as a powerful tool to detect AgNPs due to its portability, low cost, and real-time analysis. In particular, the analytical performance of electrochemical techniques always largely depends on electrode materials (Uslu and Ozkan [2007](#page-9-9); Asadi et al. [2014\)](#page-9-10). For that, novel electrode materials, especially with good adsorption performance for AgNPs and excellent electrochemical properties, are still expected in AgNP detection.

Molybdenum disulfide $(MoS₂)$ and related materials, which are considered promising electrode materials, have attracted a signifcant interest due to their unique 2D layered structure, good electrochemical properties, and outstanding semiconductor features (Matte et al. [2010](#page-9-11)). Due to the weak van der Waals forces, $MoS₂$ materials exhibited typical 2D layered structure with high specifc surface area (Li et al. [2014\)](#page-9-12). The high surface area and sulfur element endue $MoS₂$ materials promising adsorption ability for Ag by metal-sulfur covalent coordination (Pan et al. [2014](#page-9-13)). Zhu reported the adsorption and in situ reduction of Ag^+ at MoS_2 surface to form $AgNPs-MoS₂$ composite by coordination effect (Zhao et al. 2015). Li also reported MoS₂ nanosheets were used as a reaction substrate of AgNPs; the resultant $AgNPs-MoS₂$ exhibited higher quality SERS activity (Xie et al. [2013](#page-10-4)). However, the aggregation of layered structure and the poor intrinsic conductivity of $MoS₂$ still limit its further electrochemical application and required improvement (Huang et al. [2012](#page-9-14)). Composition with graphene is considered an efective approach to enhance the electrochemical properties and stability of semiconductor materials, due to the large specifc surface area, good electric conductivity, and stable physicochemical properties (Zhao et al. [2015\)](#page-10-5). Wang reported the layered $MoS₂$ nanosheets supported on 3D graphene aerogel and the resultant $MoS₂-GA$ exhibited significant enhancement in electrochemical catalytic activity (David et al. [2014](#page-9-15)). Singh also reported the composition of exfoliated $MoS₂$ and rGO flakes. The obtained $MoS₂$ -rGO was used for sodium-ion battery and exhibited enhanced electrochemical capacity and better $Na⁺$ ion cycling ability (Mohan et al. [2017\)](#page-9-16).

Here, we achieved a simple route to synthesize $MoS₂-rGO$ composite by hydrothermal reaction. The as-prepared $MoS₂-rGO$ was used to modify glassy carbon electrode (GCE). Compared with single $MoS₂/GCE$, $MoS₂-rGO/GCE$ exhibited enhanced cycling stability. Moreover, in the electroanalytical application of AgNPs, $MoS₂-rGO/GCE$ performed better electrochemical response currents than GCE, MoS₂/GCE, or rGO/GCE. After the optimization of pH and enrichment time, the proposed electrode performed good linear relationship and satisfactory sensitivity for AgNPs. This study maybe provides a new opportunity for AgNPs detection.

Experimental

Reagents, instruments, and measurements

Ammonium heptamolybdate, potassium ferricyanide, potassium ferrocyanide, trisodium citrate, thiourea, ammonia, nitric acid, ethanol, sodium hydroxide, sodium dihydrogen, sodium dihydrogen phosphate, and disodium hydrogen phosphate were purchased from Chongqing chemical reagent factory. Silver nitrate and sodium chloride were purchased from Kelong chemical reagent factory. Gum acacia were purchased from Aladdin Chemicals Corporation. All the solutions were prepared and diluted by ultrapure water. AgNP standard solution was prepared by previous literature (Ferrari and Basko [2013](#page-9-17)) and was diluted to required concentration. Dynamic light scattering (DLS) (Fig. S1) and SEM (Fig. S2) results exhibited the particle size of AgNPs was uniform. The average size (Z_d) and standard deviation (Σ) of AgNPs were measured by DLS as 5.26 nm and 0.87 nm, respectively. The polydisperse index (PDI) was calculated as 0.16, by the formula $PDI = \Sigma^2/Z_d^2$. The obtained AgNP solutions were stored in dark place at 4 °C for future use.

Dynamic light scattering (DLS) and zeta potential of AgNPs were carried by a Zetasizer Nano-ZS90

Scheme 1 The brief schematic graph for the process of material preparation and electrode modifcation

instrument (Malvern, UK). Scanning electron microscopy (SEM) images were taken on a Hitachi model S-4800 feld emission scanning microscope (Hitachi, Japan). XRD measurements were carried on XD-3 X-ray difractometer (Puxi, Beijing, China). Raman spectra were obtained by a Renishaw inVia Raman microscope (Renishaw, UK).

Cyclic voltammetry (CV), chronocoulometry (CC), and diferential pulse voltammetry (DPV) were performed on a CHI660e electrochemical workstation (Chenhua, China). Electrochemical impedance spectroscopy (EIS) measurements were performed on the IM6ex electrochemical workstation (ZAHNER, Germany). All the abovementioned electrochemical experiments were carried out with a conventional three-electrode cell at room temperature. The threeelectrode cell was employed including a modifed glassy carbon electrode (GCE) as the working electrode, a platinum wire electrode as the counter electrode, and an Ag/AgCl electrode as the reference electrode. Before LSV, DPV, or CV measurement, working electrode was immersed in electrolyte for a certain adsorption time.

Preparation of rGO , $MoS₂$ and $MoS₂-rGO$ composite

The process of material preparation and electrode modifcation is briefy shown in Scheme [1.](#page-2-0) rGO and $MoS₂-rGO$ were prepared by hydrothermal reduction method based on previous reports with minor modifcation (David et al. [2014](#page-9-15)). Eighty-milligram graphene oxide (GO) powders were dispersed in 40 mL deionized water. The obtained GO dispersion was transferred into a Tefon reaction kettle and heated at 150 °C for 12 h. After cooling down and freeze drying, the rGO was obtained.

 $MoS₂-rGO$ was synthesized by the hydrothermal reaction of $(NH_4)_6M_2O_{24}$ and CH_4N_2S on rGO surface. Similar to the above procedure, 80 mg GO dispersion was transferred into a Tefon reaction kettle and heated at 150 °C for 12 h. Then, 200 mg (NH₄)₆Mo₇O₂₄ and 2g $CH₄N₂S$ were added in dispersion. Then, the mixed dispersion was transferred into another Teflon reaction bottle and heated at 180 °C for 24 h. After the bottle cooled to room temperature, the product was washed by water and ethanol to remove impurities. After the fnal drying, $MoS₂-rGO composite was obtained.$

For comparison, pure $MoS₂$ without rGO modification was also prepared by similar procedures. Two-hundred-milligram $(NH_4)_6M_0$, O_{24} and 2g CH_4N_2S were dispersed in 40 mL deionized water. The dispersion was transferred into Tefon reaction bottle and heated at 180 °C for 24 h. After the cooling to room temperature, purification, and drying, pure $MoS₂$ was obtained.

Preparation of $MoS₂-rGO$ modified glassy carbon electrodes

Prior to modification, the GCE ($\Phi = 3$ mm) was polished carefully on a polishing cloth with 0.05 mm alumina powder and rinsed with ultrapure water. Before use, the GCE was treated by sonication in 50 wt% ethanol aqueous solution. Ten-milligram $MoS₂-rGO$ composite was dispersed in 10 mL ultrapure water to form $MoS₂-rGO$ dispersion (1 mg/ mL). Five microliters of $MoS₂-rGO$ dispersion was drop-casted onto GCE surface. After the GCE dried in air, $MoS₂-rGO/GCE$ was obtained. For comparison, $MoS₂/GCE$ and rGO/GCE were prepared with similar steps by drop-casting same amount of $MoS₂$ dispersion or rGO dispersion as the modifer of GCE, respectively.

Results and discussion

Characterization of materials

The obtained material was characterized by SEM. Figure [1A and B](#page-3-0) show the SEM images of rGO and $MoS₂-rGO, respectively.$ In Fig. [1A](#page-3-0), rGO exhibited a typical crumpled and wrinkled fake-like structure. After the growth of $MoS₂$, MoS₂-rGO remained original flake structure and assembled with $MoS₂$ nanosheets on rGO surface. The morphology suggested the successful composition of $MoS₂-rGO$. At higher magnification rate, $MoS₂-rGO$ displayed scattered flowerlike architectures (Fig. [1C and D](#page-3-0)). The scattered fowerlike architectures indicated

rGO surface enhanced the dispersibility of $MoS₂$ nanosheets efectively.

Figure [2A](#page-4-0) displays the Raman spectrum of rGO and $MoS₂-rGO$ composite. For rGO, two characteristic peaks, which were corresponding to the D band and G band of carbon materials, appeared at 1328 cm⁻¹ and 1598 cm⁻¹ respectively. For MoS₂-rGO, the two peaks still existed without any peak shift after the composition of $MoS₂$. That indicated $MoS₂-rGO$ maintained the carbon structure of rGO. In general, the intensity ratio value of D band to G band (I_D/I_G) is an indicator of surface defect in carbon materials (Zheng et al. [2014](#page-10-6)). The intensity ratio value of D band to G band (I_D/I_G) for MoS₂-rGO (1.13) was higher than that for pure rGO (0.97), demonstrating that the introduction of $MoS₂$ nanosheets increased the carbon defects of rGO surface. Moreover, the emergence of two new characteristic peaks at 371 cm^{-1} and 406 cm^{-1} were associated with the in-plane E_{2g}^{1} and out-of-plane A_{1g} vibrational modes of hexagonal MoS_2 , respectively (Lee et al. [2010](#page-9-18)). The result showed $MoS₂$ maintained original structure after the modifcation with rGO. The XRD patterns of rGO, $MoS₂$, and $MoS₂$ -rGO are shown in Fig. [2B](#page-4-0). The diffraction peak at around 23.5° could be assigned to graphene (002) difraction peak for rGO (Liu et al. [2012\)](#page-9-19). After the composition, $MoS₂-rGO$ maintained the (002) peak of rGO. Compared with the simulation XRD pattern (JCPDS 37-1492), the prominent peaks

Fig. 1 SEM images of rGO (**A**) and MoS2-rGO (**B**, **C**, and **D**)

Fig. 2 Raman spectra (**A**) and XRD patterns (**B**) of rGO and MoS2-rGO

of MoS₂-rGO, including (002) at 14° , (100) at 33°, (103) at 39°, and (106) at 59°, matched well with the hexagonal structure of $MoS₂$. That indicated the crystal structure of $MoS₂$ was not changed in composition process.

Electrochemical characterization of electrodes

The electrochemical characterization of electrodes $(GCE, rGO/GCE, MoS₂/GCE, and MoS₂-rGO/$ GCE) in electrolyte containing 1.0×10^{-3} M $[Fe(CN)_6]^{3-}/[Fe(CN)_6]^{4-}$ was investigated by EIS, CV, and CC. EIS experiment was a powerful tool to study the electrode interface properties. The EIS results (Nyquist plots, −Z″ vs. Z′) for four electrodes are shown in Fig. [3A](#page-5-0). For electrode/electrolyte system, EIS always showed a typical curve containing an obvious semicircle in the high frequency region and an approximate straight line in the low frequency region (Lisdat and Schäfer [2008;](#page-9-20) Chang and Park [2010](#page-9-21)). The diameters of the semicircle corresponded to the interfacial charge-transfer resistance (R_{ct}) which usually represented the resistance of electrochemical reactions on the electrode and was often called the Faraday resistance. The interfacial charge-transfer resistance (R_{ct}) values of GCE, rGO/GCE, MoS₂/GCE, and $MoS₂-rGO/GCE$ could be achieved as 79.48 Ω, 166.5 Ω, 677 Ω, and 233.7 Ω by simulation, respectively. The highest R_{ct} values of MoS₂/GCE indicated the poor electric conductivity of single $MoS₂$. Compared with $MoS₂/GCE$, $MoS₂-rGO/GCE$ exhibited lower

 R_{ct} value. That phenomenon meant rGO had excellent electric conductivity and could promote the charge transfer ability of $MoS₂$. This conclusion was consistent with the CV results (Fig. [3B\)](#page-5-0). A pair of electrochemical peaks, which were corresponding to the redox of $[Fe(CN)_6]^{3-}/[Fe(CN)_6]^{4-}$, were presented at all four electrodes' CV results (Fig. [3B\)](#page-5-0). The area under the CV curve at $MoS₂-rGO/GCE$ was found to be larger than that at other three electrode. This observation indicated that the hybrid material showed good capacitive behavior due to a synergistic contribution of both $MoS₂$ and rGO (Kamila et al. [2017;](#page-9-22) Joseph et al. [2018](#page-9-23)). Although capacitive current seems dominant for the four electrodes, the oxidation and reduction peaks at MoS_2 -rGO/GCE (I_{pa} =102 mA, I_{pc} =107 mA) exhibited higher currents than those at GCE $(I_{pa} = 67 \text{ mA}, I_{pc} = 63 \text{ mA})$ and MoS₂/GCE $(I_{pa} = 82 \text{ mA})$, I_{pc} =85 mA). This indicated that the combination of rGO could promote the charge transfer ability and then enhance the electrochemical response currents efectively. The electrode stability was further discussed in Fig. [3C.](#page-5-0) With the three continuous CV tests, the electrochemical behavior of $MoS₂/GCE$ changed greatly, including the decrease of response currents and the visible shift of peak potentials. On the contrary, there were no obvious potential or current changes occurred in three continuous CV tests for $MoS₂-rGO/GCE$. That indicated $MoS₂-rGO/GCE$ exhibited better electrochemical stability than $MoS₂/GCE$ and the stability which might attribute to the composition of rGO. The CC results of GCE, rGO/GCE, MoS₂/GCE, and

Fig. 3 EIS spectra (**A**), cyclic voltammetries (**B**), and chronocoulometries (**D**) for GCE, rGO/GCE, MoS2/GCE, and MoS2-rGO/ GCE in [Fe(CN)6]3−/[Fe(CN)6]/4−solution; CV stability tests (**C**) for MoS2/GCE and MoS2-rGO/GCE

 $MoS₂-rGO/GCE$ are displayed in Fig. [3D.](#page-5-0) The highest slope value of $MoS₂-rGO/GCE$ indicated the satisfied electrode performance in the electrochemical redox of $[Fe(CN)_6]^3$ ⁻/ $[Fe(CN)_6]$ /⁴⁻. Both the CV and CC results showed that the $MoS₂-rGO$ exhibited the biggest capacitive current than rGO or $MoS₂$. That was attributed to synergistic contribution of the pseudocapacitance from $MoS₂$ and the double layer capacitance from rGO (Kamila et al. [2017](#page-9-22); Joseph et al. [2018\)](#page-9-23). Furthermore, the electrochemical active surface area (*A*) of the electrodes could be calculated by the CC results of $K_3Fe(CN)_6$ (Fig. [3D\)](#page-5-0) with Anson equation (Cheng et al. [2013\)](#page-9-24): $Q=2nFAC_0D^{1/2}\pi^{-1/2}t^{1/2}+Q_{dl}+Q_{ads}$, where *F* is the Faraday constant $(F=96500 \text{ C·mol}^{-1})$, *n* is the number of electron transferred $(n=1)$, *D* is the diffusion coefficient of K₃Fe(CN)₆ (*D*=6.3×10⁻⁶ cm²/s), *t* is the reaction time, Q_{dl} is the charge of electric

double-layer capacitor, and Q_{ads} is the adsorption charge. In the equation, Q and $t^{1/2}$ exhibited linear relationship with the linear slope of $2nFAC_0D^{1/2}\pi^{-1/2}$. Based on the linear slope value of $Q \sim t^{1/2}$ curves, the electrochemical surface area (*A*) of GCE, rGO/GCE, $MoS₂/GCE$, and $MoS₂-rGO/GCE$ could be calculated as 0.0103 cm², 0.0118 cm², 0.0166 cm², and 0.03778 cm², respectively. The highest electrochemical surface area of MoS₂-rGO/GCE would benefit the enrichment and adsorption of analytes.

Electrochemical behaviors of AgNPs at $MoS₂-rGO/$ **GCE**

Figure [3A](#page-5-0) displays the CV results of AgNPs at GCE, rGO/GCE , $MoS₂/GCE$, and $MoS₂-rGO/GCE$. At GCE, there is no obvious response current of AgNPs.

Fig. 4 CV (**A**) and CC (**B**) results for GCE, rGO/GCE, MoS2/GCE, and MoS2-rGO/GCE in AgNP solution

At rGO/GCE, MoS_2/GCE , and MoS_2 -rGO/GCE, the oxidation peak of AgNPs appeared signifcantly. Compared with rGO/GCE or $MoS₂/GCE$, AgNPs at $MoS₂-rGO/GCE$ showed higher oxidation current. The results indicated that $MoS₂-rGO/GCE$ exhibited enhanced electrochemical responsibility of oxidation of AgNPs and could be employed as a potential sensing platform of AgNPs. The CC result of blank solution and CC results of AgNPs at four electrodes are obtained in Fig. [4B](#page-6-0). The absorption amount of AgNPs in electrochemical reaction could be calculated by CC results and Anson equation (Duan and Huang [2016](#page-9-25)). The absorption amounts of AgNPs of GCE, $MoS₂/GCE$, rGO/GCE , and $MoS₂-rGO/GCE$ were obtained as 6.73×10^{-12} mol, 2.96×10^{-11} mol, 3.54×10^{-11} mol, and 6.35×10^{-11} mol, respectively. The highest absorption mount indicated $MoS₂-rGO/$ GCE exhibited excellent adsorption ability to AgNPs

Fig. 5 Optimization of pH value (**A**) and adsorption time (**B**) for AgNPs determination with working potential at 0.27 V

Fig. 6 DPV curves for diferent concentrations of AgNPs in MoS2-rGO/GCE (**A**); the linear relationship between AgNP concentrations and peak current values (**B**)

than GCE, $r\text{GO/GCE}$, or MoS_2/GCE . That might attribute to the Ag-S coordination efect and the high electrochemical surface area.

The effect of pH of electrolyte was also discussed in obtained experiment. Figure [5A](#page-6-1) displays the oxidation peak current values of AgNPs at diferent pH in the range from 2.77 to 7.71. While pH increased from 2.77 to 4.76, the peak current of AgNPs increased that might be attributed to the electrostatic adsorption between $MoS₂-rGO$ and AgNPs; while pH increased from 4.76 to 7.71, the peak current of AgNPs decreased. At electrolyte pH of 4.76, the oxidation peak current achieved the highest value. In order to further explore the infuence of pH on electrochemical detection, the zeta potentials of AgNPs and $MoS₂-rGO$ with different electrolyte pH were measured (Fig. S3). At electrolyte pH of 4.76, the zeta potential of AgNPs and $MoS₂-rGO$ exhibited highest diference value. The large zeta potential diference at pH 4.76 indicated the electrostatic repulsion between $MoS₂-rGO$ and AgNPs was minimal, which was benefcial for electrostatic adsorption and electrochemical detection towards AgNPs (Cepriá et al. [2016](#page-9-26)). Therefore, pH 4.76 was selected as the optimum pH in this work. As an important factor for electrochemical signal amplifcation, adsorption time was also discussed

Table 1 Analytical performances comparison for electrochemical methods for AgNP detection

Working electrode	Working potential (vs. Ag/AgCl, V)	LOD (normalized, g/L)	Reference
L-Cysteine/SPE	0.31	3.56×10^{-10}	Duan and Huang 2016)
PEI-CNTs/GCE	0.33	4.77×10^{-9}	Cepriá et al. 2016)
GC microelectrode	0.27	1×10^{-4}	Stuart et al. 2014)
Commercial gold compact discs	0.46	2.37×10^{-10}	Cepriá et al. 2014)
SPE	0.31	5×10^{-7}	Goda et al. 2014)
GCE	0.24	3.31×10^{-7}	Sadik et al. 2014)
Poly(amic) acid filter membrane electrode	0.23	1.4×10^{-4}	Li et al. 2019)
Carbon microdisc electrode	0.8	1.73×10^{-9}	Vidal et al. 2020)
Electropolymerization L-Cysteine/GCE	0.312	4×10^{-5}	Vidal et al. 2020)
$MoS2-rGO/GCE$	0.27	2.63×10^{-9}	This work

in obtained detection. Before each LSV measurement, $MoS₂-rGO/GCE$ as working electrode was immersed in electrolyte for a certain adsorption time from 0.5 to 8 h, in order to enrich AgNPs onto the electrode surface. After the adsorption procedure, the LSV measurement was carried from -0.4 to 0.6 V, with the scan rate at 50 mV/s. Figure [5B](#page-6-1) displays the reaction charge values of AgNPs with diferent adsorption time from 0.5 to 8 h (reaction charge value could be obtained by LSV result). Similar to previous works, the reaction charge increased linearly with the adsorption time approximately (Duan and Huang [2016;](#page-9-25) Stuart et al. [2014](#page-9-27)). Considering the detection time and sensitivity in the actual detection, 3 h was selected as the optimized adsorption time for AgNP detection in this work (Cepriá et al. [2016](#page-9-26)).

Analytical performance and electrochemical detection

Under the optimal experimental conditions (electrolyte pH=4.76, adsorption time is 3h), the analytical performances for AgNPs of the proposed electrode were evaluated by DPV. Figure [6A](#page-7-0) displays the DPV results of AgNPs with different concentrations in the range from 5 ng/L to 120 ng/L. As observed in Fig. [6B,](#page-7-0) the oxidation peak currents (I_{pa}) exhibited good linear relationship with the AgNP concentrations (*c*). The linear regression equation between *I_{pa}* and *c* was defined as I_{pa} (μA)=1.501+0.0709*c* (ng/L) $(R^2=0.9952, n=12)$. Based on the above equation, the AgNP detection method was established with the limit of detection (LOD) as 2.63 ng/L and linear range as 5–120 ng/L. Compared with other electrochemical detection techniques in AgNP detection, our electrode exhibited satisfactory analytical performances, including lower working potential and LOD (Table [1\)](#page-7-1).

To examine the applicability of the proposed method, the detection assays for AgNPs in lake water samples were performed. Prior to testing, the lake

Table 2 Standard addition measurement for AgNPs detection in lake sample

Content (ng/L) Spiked (ng/L) Found (ng/L) Recovery $(\%)$			
	Ω		
	10	$9.83 + 0.2$	98.3
	30	$28.2 + 0.3$	94.0
	50	$49.7 + 0.3$	99.4

water samples were not subjected to any further treatment, except for a simple fltration with flter paper. Lake water samples were added to the electrolyte using the standard addition method. The measurement results are presented briefly in Table [2](#page-8-0) and Fig. S4. The detection method for AgNPs exhibited a satisfactory result with the recoveries range from 94.9 to 99.4%. The recoveries demonstrate that the proposed method was potentially applicable for determination of AgNPs in environmental samples. Furthermore, the stability and reproducibility were also considered. The relative standard deviation (RSD) of determination results for the seven $MoS₂-rGO/GCE$ electrodes, which were fabricated under same condition, was calculated as 2.6%. Meanwhile, the RSD of determination results for $MoS₂-rGO/GCE$ in six repetitive tests was 4.3%. That indicated $MoS₂-rGO/GCE$ exhibited satisfactory stability and reproducibility.

The interference of common ions in AgNPs detection was also evaluated. It was found that 1 M of Na^+ , K⁺, and PO₄³⁻; 1 mM of Ca²⁺, Mg²⁺, and NH₄⁺; 0.1 mM of SO_4^2 ⁻ and NO₃⁻; and 100 μg/L of Cu²⁺, Pb²⁺, Zn^{2+} , and Cd^{2+} did not interfere with the electrochemical responses of 100 ng/L of AgNPs (RSD below \pm 5%). That indicated that $MoS₂-rGO/GCE$ exhibited high antiinterference capacity in AgNP determination.

Conclusion

The main feature of this work was to propose an electrochemical method to detect AgNPs in aqueous solution by $MoS₂-rGO$ composite. $MoS₂-rGO/GCE$ exhibited satisfactory performance not only on the good electric conductivity, but also on the electrochemical detection of AgNPs. Due to the Ag-S coordination efect, $MoS₂-rGO$ composite could promote the adsorption and electrochemical response of AgNPs at electrode surface. The obtained method exhibited outstanding electroanalytical performance for AgNPs, including with a mild applied potential and a superior LOD, which is expected to be applied in further environmental analysis.

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Declarations

Confict of interest The authors declare no competing interests.

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