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# **A review of the surface features and properties, surfactant adsorption and floatability of four key minerals of diasporic bauxite resources**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Diasporic bauxite represents one of the major aluminum resources. Its upgrading for further processing involves a separation of diasporite (the valuable mineral) from aluminosilicates (the gangue minerals) such as kaolinite, illite, and pyrophyllite. Flotation is one of the most effective ways to realize the upgrading. Since flotation is a physicochemical process based on the difference in the surface hydrophobicity of different components, determining the adsorption characteristics of various flotation surfactants on the mineral surfaces is critical. The surfactant adsorption properties of the minerals, in turn, are controlled by the surface chemistry of the minerals, while the latter is related to the mineral crystal structures. In this paper, we first discuss the crystal structures of the four key minerals of diasporite, kaolinite, illite, and pyrophyllite as well as the broken bonds on their exposed surfaces after grinding. Next, we summarize the surface chemistry properties such as surface wettability and surface electrical properties of the four minerals, and the differences in these properties are explained from the perspective of mineral crystal structures. Then we review the adsorption mechanism and adsorption characteristics of surfactants such as collectors (cationic, anionic, and mixed surfactants), depressants (inorganic and organic), dispersants, and flocculants on these mineral surfaces. The separation of diasporite and aluminosilicates by direct flotation and reverse flotation are reviewed, and the collecting properties of different types of collectors are compared. Furthermore, the abnormal behavior of the cationic flotation of kaolinite is also explained in this section. This review provides a strong theoretical support for the optimization of the upgrading of diasporite bauxite ore by flotation and the early industrialization of the reverse flotation process.

## **KEYWORDS**

Diasporite; kaolinite; illite; pyrophyllite; surface potential; surfactant adsorption; flotation

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