

# Synthesis, Spectral Characterization and Anti-Microbial Activity of Silver Nanoparticles in 1-Alkyl-3-Methylimidazolium Methanesulfonate Ionic Liquids

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**Abstract:-** Nanoparticles of silver have been synthesized via the reaction of silver nitrate salt in 1-alkyl-3-methylimidazolium methane sulfonate ionic liquids. The reaction was performed under reducing conditions in the presence of  $\text{NaBH}_4$  and at elevated temperatures to obtain homogeneous reaction mixtures. The FTIR of samples in both EMIMMS and BMIMMS shows pronounced absorption at  $3426\text{cm}^{-1}$ , assignable to the symmetric stretching vibration of  $\nu(\text{N-H})$  group of the imidazolium cation. The bands between ca.  $3100\text{cm}^{-1}$  along with the bands between  $1,600$  and  $1,500\text{cm}^{-1}$  can be assigned to C-H stretching and in-plane vibrations of the imidazolium ring. The bands between  $1,300$  and  $1,050\text{cm}^{-1}$  can be assigned to aliphatic in-plane vibrations, and the bands between  $900$  and  $750\text{cm}^{-1}$  are due to the respective out-of-plane vibrations of the organic cations, respectively. The UV-Vis absorption spectra of samples shows surface plasmon resonance (SPR) band ( $\lambda_{\text{max}}$ ) around  $420\text{nm}$  for EMIMMS, which becomes broadened and slightly shifted to the longer wavelength region of  $620\text{nm}$  for BMIMMS ionic liquids indicating the presence and formation of silver nanoparticles. The SEM images confirm that the precipitates are indeed nanoparticles. The SNPs grown in both EMIMMS and BMIMMS consists of clusters of nanoplates and nanorods. The results of the antimicrobial activity carried out on some selected microbes showed that the silver nanoparticles synthesized in 1-butyl-3-methylimidazolium methane sulfonate and the ionic liquid itself showed a greater zone of inhibitory clearance compared to the silver nanoparticles synthesized in 1-Ethyl-3-methylimidazoliummethane sulfonate.

**Key words:** Nanoparticles, Ionic liquids, silver, chemical reduction, ionothermal, antimicrobial activity.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Nanoparticles which could be particulate dispersions or solid particles are basically assemblies of hundreds to thousands of atoms with a size in the range of  $1\text{-}100\text{nm}$ . These nanomaterials are quite interesting for a large variety of applications, including catalysis, sensing, and electrochemistry [1-4]. Silver nanoparticles in particular are attractive because of their unique optical and disinfectant properties. They are used for many different applications and in a wide range of different products [5,6]. In the medical field, they are non-toxic to the human body at low concentrations and have broad spectrum of antibacterial actions [7,8]. Consequently, they are applied in wound dressing, as well as for coating of working surfaces or surgical instruments and prostheses [9, 10]. Silver nanoparticles can also be used in food container systems or as coating material for certain household devices such as washing machines [11]. They are incorporated into textiles [12-13], and even added to cosmetics [14]. The performance of nanomaterials in many of these applications requires the control over the size, the morphology and the surface structure, which is based on the appropriate control of the parameters that influence nucleation and growth [15-17]. There is thus a need to control these parameters for efficient operation of a device or device component. While there are many protocols available for the synthesis of metallic nanoparticles, ionic liquids have been investigated as candidates for the synthesis of many metal nanoparticles [15], including titanium and/or titanium oxide and gold nanoparticles [18-19], because ILs have in the recent past been established as useful media for the synthesis of a wide variety of inorganic materials [20-25]. Among others, metal nanoparticle formation in ILs and their application have attracted interest because many ILs efficiently stabilize nanoparticles under a variety of experimental conditions. The particular interest in ILs is that they can also stabilize inorganics (not only nanoparticles) that cannot be stabilized otherwise. The current study reports on an ionic liquid assisted synthesis of silver nanoparticles via chemical reduction of  $\text{AgNO}_3$  by  $\text{NaBH}_4$  under quasi-ionothermal conditions.

## II. EXPERIMENTAL MATERIALS

ILs based on 1-ethyl-3-methylimidazolium (Emim) or 1-butyl-3-methylimidazolium (Bmim) cations and methanesulfonate (MS), AgNO<sub>3</sub>, NaBH<sub>4</sub>, ethylene glycol were obtained commercially (BHD chemical Ltd. England) and used as received.

### Nanoparticle synthesis

In a typical synthesis, 0.043 g (0.25 mmol) of silver trioxonitrate(V) salt was added to 1 g of IL. The mixture was sonicated for 10 min. Then 0.0038 g (1 mmol) of NaBH<sub>4</sub> was added at ambient conditions. The resulting dark mixture was stirred and heated to about 120 °C for 8 hr. Before isolating the precipitate by centrifugation, a small fraction of the dark colloidal dispersion was removed for UV/Vis, and IR measurements. The centrifuged product was washed with ethanol and dried under vacuum for 12 h.

### Spectroscopy

FTIR spectra of the solid samples prepared using KBr pellets were recorded between 4000-400 cm<sup>-1</sup> on Perkin Elmer FTIR spectrophotometer at 2 cm<sup>-1</sup> resolution. The UV/Vis spectrophotometric measurements were performed on Thermo scientific evolution 201 spectrometer using 10 mm quartz cuvettes containing the nanoparticles. The samples were dissolved in ethyleneglycol then transferred into a cuvette before being placed in the spectrophotometer for the detection of the absorbance. The UV/Vis absorption spectral data of the fraction of the nanoparticles in ionic liquid (as well as the solid gathered by centrifugation) dispersed in ethanol were collected at room temperature.

### Scanning Electron Microscopy (SEM)

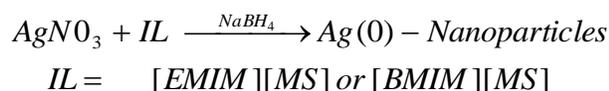
The images of the compound were obtained with the aid of Scanning Electron Microscope- mini MEL-300M SCOTECH operated at 15 kV.

### Antimicrobial Activity Test

Muller Harting agar dilution technique sensitizing test was carried out on the ionic liquids and the filtrate of the synthesized silver nanoparticles, this was done on the spectrum of microbial organisms. Using the porous cup, the agar well was created on the solidified broth which was prepared by dilution of an overnight broth culture in a petri dish, with the help of 2.0 ml syringe, the filtrate was introduced into the well and was left to stand overnight after which a ruler was used to measure the minimum inhibitory zone of clearance (MIC) expressed in (cm), the values after one day of exposure were recorded.

### Results and Discussion

Silver nanoparticles have been synthesized by chemical reduction of silver trioxonitrate (V) in ionic liquids based on 1-ethyl-3-methylimidazolium (EMIM) or 1-butyl-3-methylimidazolium (BMIM) cations and methanesulfonate (MS) anion. The reactions were performed under quasi-isonothermal conditions in the presence of NaBH<sub>4</sub> at 120 °C to obtain homogeneous reaction mixtures



The dispersion of the metal salt in ionic liquid gives a brownish colouration, which changes to black on addition of sodium borohydride. A small fraction of the brownish and black colloidal dispersion representing Ag+

IL and Ag<sup>0</sup>-IL interactions, respectively, was taken for IR and UV-Vis measurements before heating under reflux at 120°C. The UV-Vis spectrum of Ag<sup>+</sup>-EMIMMS mixture at room temperature (30°C) shows that there is an interaction between the ionic liquid and the silver ion resulting in the formation of brownish solution. The gradation in colour from colorless to brown is an indication of self-reduction of the Ag ion by the EMIMMS ionic liquid. On addition of the reducing agent, reduction of the Ag ion to Ag<sup>0</sup> takes place as evidenced by the change in colour from brown to black, as well as by intense absorption in the range of 200-240nm centered at 210nm in the UV region ascribed to ligand-to-metal charge transfer (LMCT). This represents a discrete nucleation event with molecules of the ionic liquid being adsorbed on the surface of the Ag<sup>0</sup> nanoparticles. The nucleation is followed by slower controlled growth, which on heating, the particles acquire enough surface energy that promotes dissolution and second growth phase (Ostwald ripening) with the formation of uniform mono-dispersed larger particles [26-30]

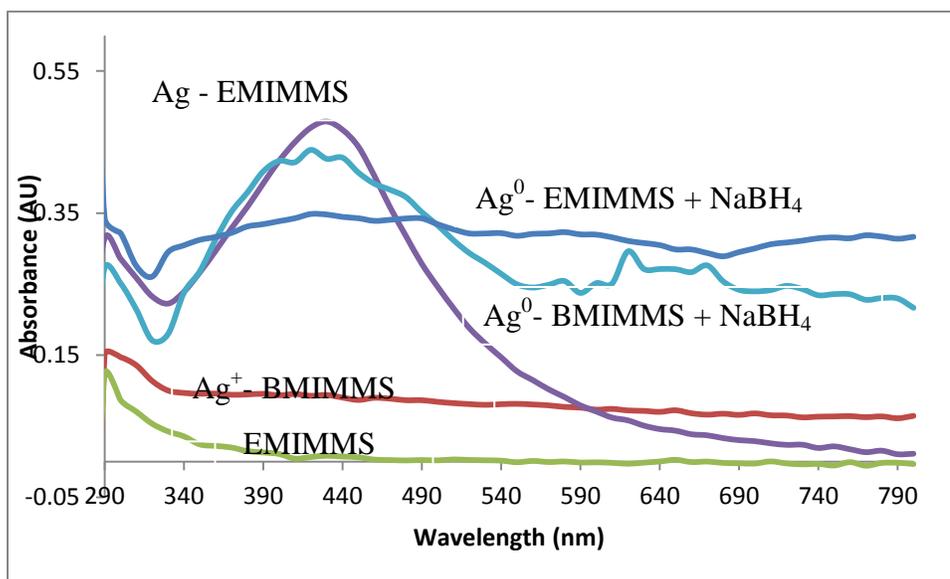


Fig1. UV-Vis absorption spectra of silver nanoparticles in EMIMMS and BMIMMS ILs

Figure 1 gives the UV-Vis spectra of the silver nanoparticles grown in imidazolium-based ionic liquids after 8h of heating at 120°C. The UV-Vis absorption spectra of ionic liquid-stabilized silver nanoparticles shows that after the borohydride reduction of the Ag<sup>+</sup> to Ag nanoparticles, the wavelength at absorption maximum ( $\lambda_{max}$ ) for the nanoparticles shift towards longer wavelength and exhibits band broadening in the range 330-580nm. The wavelength at absorption maxima ( $\lambda_{max} = 420\text{nm}$ ) can be attributed to the presence of particles in the size range 2-50nm. The shift towards longer wavelength of 580nm and 630nm, respectively for EMIMMS and BMIMMS clearly indicates the presence of larger particles. The position and shape of plasmon absorption of silver nano-clusters are strongly dependent on the particle size, dielectric medium, and surface-adsorbed species. The surface plasmon absorption of silver nanoparticles have short wavelength band in the visible region around 420 nm due to the transverse electronic oscillation [31].

The infrared spectra of samples grown in EMIMMS and BMIMMS shows common absorption bands in the samples isolated even after centrifugation and washing. A pronounced absorption at 3426cm<sup>-1</sup>, is assignable to the symmetric stretching vibration of  $\nu(\text{N-H})$  group of the imidazolium cation. The bands between ca. 3100 cm<sup>-1</sup> along with the bands between 1,600 and 1,500 cm<sup>-1</sup> can be assigned to C-H stretching and in-plane vibrations of the imidazolium ring. The bands between 1,300 and 1,050 cm<sup>-1</sup> can be assigned to aliphatic in-plane vibrations, and the bands between 900 and 750 cm<sup>-1</sup> are due to the respective out-of- plane vibrations of the organic cations, respectively. The band at 1310-1373cm<sup>-1</sup> region is attributed to the  $\nu(\text{C-N})$  stretching vibration of the tertiary amine. Also the vibration at 726 cm<sup>-1</sup> indicates the presence of  $\nu(\text{C-S})$  stretching vibration of the

methanesulfonates, while the absorption band at 1373 – 1456.48cm<sup>-1</sup> region is a clear indication of the presence of sulfonates vibration. The various assignments are in agreement with similar compounds reported in literature [32-34].

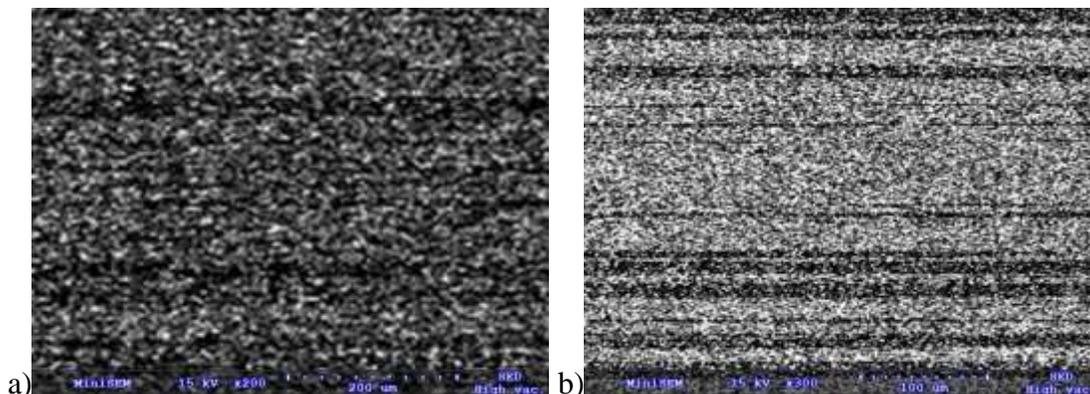


Fig.2 SEM images of silver nanoparticles grown in ionic liquids a) EMIMMS b) BMIMMS

The SEM images of MNPs grown in both EMIMMS and BMIMMS ionic liquids are presented in Figure 2. The images confirm that the precipitates are indeed nanoparticles. The SNPs grown in both EMIMMS and BMIMMS consists of clusters of nanoplates and nanorods. There is a slight increase in both the nanoparticles diameter and size distribution as we move from C2 to C4 of the alkyl-side chains of the imidazolium cation.

Nanoparticles must be stabilized in order to prevent their agglomeration or aggregation which eventually leads to the formation of small bulk metal particles. Metal nanoparticles (M-NPs, “core”) are considered stabilized in ILs by the formation of “protective” anionic and cationic layers (“shells”) around them in a “core-shell system”. The first inner shell is believed to be anionic, [35] because then the IL anion would have the strongest influence on the size and electrostatic stabilization and the anion molecular volume controls the range of the nanoparticle size. In addition, the supramolecular imidazolium-anion clusters of ILs should be taken into account [36].

Table 1 gives the anti-bacterial activity of the silver nanoparticles prepared in EMIMMS and BMIMMS ionic liquids. The results shows that the silver nanoparticles synthesized in 1-butyl-3-methylimidazolium methanesulfonate and the ionic liquid itself showed a greater zone of inhibitory clearance compared to the silver nanoparticles synthesized in 1-ethyl-3-methylimidazoliummethane sulfonate. This result is in line with the literature report that the microbial activity of the nanoparticles depends on the length of the alkyl side chains, and the positions they are being attached to the imidazolium ring [30, 37].

TABLE 1 Anti-microbial Activity Test

Samples	MIC on tested microbes					
	STA	PRT	ES	CA	PA	ST
BMIM[MS]	1.4	2.2	3.4	2.0	2.1	R
EMIM[MS]	1.4	2.5	2.8	1.1	1.6	R
AgEMIM[MS]	1.0	1.3	R	R	1.2	R

AgBMIM[MS]	2.0	1.1	1.8	R	1.6	R
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STA: *Staphylococcus Aureus*, PRT: *Proteus*, ES: *Escherichia Coli*,  
CA: *Candida albicans*, PA: *Pseudomonas aerogerosa*, ST: *Salmonella typhi*,

### III. CONCLUSION

Silver nanoparticles have been successfully synthesized in 1-ethyl-3-methylimidazolium methane sulfonate and 1-butyl-3-methylimidazolium methane sulfonate ionic liquids by chemical reduction of AgNO<sub>3</sub> in the presence of NaBH<sub>4</sub>. The dispersion of the metal salt in ionic liquid gives a brownish colouration, which changes to black on addition of sodium borohydride. IR and UV-Vis measurements reveal that the ionic liquids are adsorbed on the surface of the silver nanoparticles thereby providing electrostatic stabilization of the particles. There is clear evidence from the UV-Vis measurement that the ionic liquid 1-ethyl-3-methylimidazolium methane sulfonate (EMIMMS) can as well act as a reducing agent. The SEM micrographs shows the presence of uniformed monodispersed nanorods in both EMIMMS and BMIMMS ionic liquids. The anti-microbial test reveals that the silver nanoparticles prepared in BMIMMS has greater zone of inhibitory clearance. Efforts are under way to prepare the metal nanoparticles in a wide spectrum of imidazolium-based ionic liquids.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This work was supported by The World Academy of Sciences for the advancement of science in developing countries (TWAS) under Research Grant No 12-169 RG/CHE/AF/AC-G -UNESCO FR: 3240271320 for which grateful acknowledgment is made. A.A.A is also grateful to the Royal Society of Chemistry for personal Research Grant.

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