



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

**DISSOLUTION OF OIL PALM BIOMASS BY ALKYL-IMIDAZOLIUM
IONIC LIQUIDS FOR EFFICIENT ENZYMATIC HYDROLYSIS**

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By

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**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, in
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October 2011

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Faculty: Science

The dissolution of oil palm biomass by ionic liquids (ILs) was comparatively studied. The ionic liquids, 1-ethyl-3-methylimidazolium chloride ([emim]Cl), 1-butyl-3-methylimidazolium chloride ([bmim]Cl) and 1-ethyl-3-methylimidazolium acetate ([emim]OAc) were used to dissolve oil palm biomass and cellulose fibers which are empty fruit bunches (EFB), oil palm frond (OPF) and oil palm trunk (OPT). Dissolution of 5 wt. % (0.1 g) of fibers/ ILs solutions were conducted at 100 °C under inert atmosphere. The heating time for complete dissolution was optimized. It has been shown that [emim]OAc is the best solvent for dissolution of oil palm biomass compared to [emim]Cl and [bmim]Cl. EFB, OPF and OPT fibers dissolved in [emim]OAc shows more than 95 % w/w of dissolution after 16 h of heating, while EFB and OPF fibers dissolved more than 85 % w/w after being heated more than 48 h in [emim]Cl and [bmim]Cl. Cellulose fibers were successfully dissolved after 2 - 3 h of heating in all ILs tested. Fourier-transform infrared spectroscopy (FT-IR)

confirmed the absorbance band at 1729 cm^{-1} and 1512 cm^{-1} which correspond to hemicellulose and lignin, respectively disappeared after regeneration process indicating that they were diminished after the washing step. Regenerated cellulose-rich solids were obtained in amorphous form (cellulose II), thus decreasing the crystallinity index (CrI) values. The CrI value for regenerated EFB, OPF and OPT fibers decreased after 12 h of dissolution in [emim]OAc which were 79.3, 80.3 and 79.3 % to 39.8, 38.3 and 40.2 %, respectively. The accumulated glucose released was reached to a level approximately 13.8 mg/ml which was at least ten-fold higher than that of untreated fibers samples which only 3.19 mg/ml. From NMR study, the six signals of the unmodified anyhydroglucose unit appear clearly at 102.5 (C-1), 79.67 (C-4), 76.44 (C-5), 75.24 (C-3), 74.19 (C-2) and 60.15 ppm (C-6). Through swelling and dissolution mechanism of fibers, disintegration into rod-like fragments, ballooning followed by dissolution and homogeneous swelling were clearly observed for both oil palm biomass and cellulose fibers. Observation under scanning electron micrograph (SEM) showed that, the loose structures of oil palm biomass fibers and a greater part of the smaller fibrils seemed to be absent in the cellulose-rich solids were observed after regeneration.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia bagi memenuhi syarat bagi mendapatkan Ijazah Master Sains

PEMELARUTAN HASIL BUANGAN KELAPA SAWIT DALAM CECAIR BERION ALKIL-IMIDAZOLIUM UNTUK HIDROLISIS ENZIM YANG CEKAP

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Pemelarutan gentian biojisim kelapa sawit oleh cecair berion (ILs) telah dikaji secara perbandingan. Cecair berion iaitu 1-etil-3-metilimidazolium klorida ([emim]Cl), 1-butyl-3-metilimidazolium klorida ([bmim]Cl) dan 1-etil-3-metilimidazolium asetik ([emim]OAc) telah digunakan untuk pemelarutan biojisim kelapa sawit dan gentian selulosa termasuklah daripada tandan kelapa sawit kosong (EFB), pelepah kelapa sawit (OPF) dan batang kelapa sawit (OPT). Proses pemelarutan 5 % berat (0.1 g) gentian/ILs dijalankan pada suhu pemanasan 100 °C dan di bawah pengaruh gas nadir. Masa pemanasan untuk pemelarutan lengkap 5 % berat gentian/ ILs yang dipanaskan telah dioptimum dan dicatatkan. [emim]OAc telah membuktikan bahawa ia adalah pelarut yang paling baik untuk tujuan pemelarutan gentian biojisim kelapa sawit berbanding dengan [emim]Cl dan [bmim]Cl. Gentian yang dilarutkan di dalam [emim]OAc menunjukkan lebih daripada 95 % b/b pemelarutan selepas dipanaskan selama 16 jam, sementara gentian EFB dan OPF larut sekitar 85% selepas lebih 48

jam dipanaskan di dalam [emim]Cl dan [bmim]Cl. Sementara itu, gentian selulosa telah berjaya dilarutkan selepas 2-3 jam pemanasan. Spektroskopi infra-merah (FT-IR) jelas menunjukkan jalur penyerapan pada 1729 cm^{-1} and 1512 cm^{-1} yang merujuk kepada ketiadaan hemisellulosa dan lignin selepas proses penghasilan semula iaitu semasa proses pembasuhan. Proses penghasilan semula telah menghasilkan bahan kaya selulosa yang bersifat amorfos (selulosa II), sekaligus merendahkan nilai indeks kristal (C_rI). Nilai C_rI untuk bahan kaya selulosa yang telah terhasil semula daripada gentian EFB, OPF dan OPT menurun daripada 79.3, 80.3 dan 79.3 % kepada 39.8, 38.3 dan 40.2 % selepas 12 jam pemelarutan di dalam [emim]OAc. Glukosa terhasil adalah sebanyak 13.8 mg/ml, iaitu kira-kira sepuluh kali ganda lebih tinggi berbanding sampel yang tidak dirawat yang hanya 3.19 mg/ml. Daripada analisis NMR, enam isyarat unit anhidroglukosa tidak diubahsuai muncul dengan jelas pada 102.5 (C-1), 79.67 (C-4), 76.44 (C-5), 75.24 (C-3), 74.19 (C-2) dan 60.15 ppm (C-6). Melalui mekanisma pembengkakan dan pemelarutan gentian, penceraian secara memanjang kepada ceraihan berbentuk rod yang besar, bengkakan membelon diikuti dengan pemelarutan dan pembengkakan setara jelas diperhatikan untuk kedua-dua gentian kelapa sawit dan sellulosa. Pemerhatian menerusi mikroskopi pengimbas elektron (SEM) menunjukkan struktur gentian biojisim kelapa sawit adalah sedikit longgar dan sebahagian besar gentian yang lebih kecil didapati tidak wujud di dalam bahan kaya selulosa selepas melalui proses penghasilan semula.

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DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis is based on my original work except for quotations and citations which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously and is not currently, submitted for any other degree at Universiti Putra Malaysia or other institutions.



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Date: 10 OCTOBER 2011



TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	i
ABSTRAK	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
APPROVAL	viii, ix
DECLARATION	x
LIST OF TABLES	xiv
LIST OF FIGURES	xv
LIST OF SCHEMES	xviii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xix

CHAPTER		Page
1	INTRODUCTION	
	1.1 Background of the Study	1
	1.2 Objectives	4
2	LITERATURE REVIEW	
	2.1 Ionic Liquids (ILs)	5
	2.2 Physico-Chemical Properties of ILs	6
	2.2.1 Melting point	7
	2.2.2 Water Miscibility	7
	2.2.3 Polarity	8
	2.3 Oil Palm Biomass	9
	2.3.1 Biomass Production and Uses in the Oil Palm Industry	11
	2.4 Lignocellulosic Biomass Materials	12
	2.4.1 Cell Wall Organization	12
	2.4.1.a Cellulose	13
	2.4.1.b Hemicellulose	15
	2.4.1.c Lignin	16
	2.5 Conventional Method of Lignocellulosic Biomass Dissolution	17
	2.6 New Approach of Lignocellulosic Biomass Dissolution	20
	2.7 Hydrolysis	25

3	MATERIAL AND METHODS	
3.1	Materials	28
3.1.1	Solvents	29
3.1.2	Chemicals	29
3.1.3	Enzymes	30
3.1.4	Equipments/ Instruments	30
3.2	Methods	31
3.2.1	Preparation of Biomass Samples	31
3.2.2	Determination of Moisture Content	32
3.2.3	Determination of Extractive Content	32
3.2.4	Determination of Holocellulose Content	34
3.2.5	Determination of α -Cellulose Content	35
3.2.6	Determination of Lignin Content	36
3.2.7	Determination of Ash Content	37
3.3	Selection of Ionic Liquids	37
3.3.1	Preparation of Sample for Solubilization in ILs	38
3.3.2	Dissolution of Oil Palm Biomass	39
3.3.3	Dissolution of Cellulose Fiber	39
3.3.4	Evaluation of Dissolved Solution	40
3.3.5	Regeneration of Dissolved Materials	40
3.3.6	Enzymatic Hydrolysis	41
3.4	Analytical Methods	42
3.4.1	Fourier Transform-Infrared Spectroscopy (FT-IR)	42
3.4.2	Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (NMR) Spectroscopy	42
3.4.3	X-Ray Diffraction (XRD)	44
3.4.4	High-Performance Liquid Chromatography (HPLC)	44
3.4.5	Microscopy Analysis	44
3.4.5.1	Digital Imaging Microscopy	45
3.4.5.2	Optical Microscope	45
3.4.5.3	Scanning Electron Microscopy (SEM)	45

4	RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	
4.1	Dissolution of Lignocellulosic Materials in ILs	47
4.1.1	Dissolution of Cellulose Fibers	47
4.1.2	Dissolution of Oil Palm Biomass	48
4.2	Evaluation of Process Variables	49
4.2.1	Effect of ILs	49
4.2.2	Effect of Fibers of Different Oil Palm Biomass	53
4.2.2.1	Solubility	53
4.2.2.2	Fibers' Length	57
4.2.2.3	Quantification of Lignin Content	59
4.3	Fourier Transform Infra Red (FT-IR) Analysis	62
4.3.1	Oil Palm Biomass	62
4.3.2	Solubilisation of Cellulose Fibers in ILs	65
4.4	Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (NMR) Spectroscopy	67
4.5	X-Ray Diffraction (XRD)	69
4.6	High-Performance Liquid Chromatography (HPLC)	74
4.6.1	Enzymatic Hydrolysis	74
4.6.1.1	Effect of ILs Treatment	74
4.6.1.2	Effect of Incubation Time	77
i)	Oil Palm Biomass	77
ii)	Cellulose Fibers	82
4.7	Microscopy Analysis	87
4.7.1	Optical Microscopy (OM)	87
4.7.1.1	Oil Palm Biomass	87
4.7.1.2	Cellulose Fibers	90
4.8	Scanning Electron Microscope (SEM)	95
5	CONCLUSIONS	
5.1	Recommendation for Further Studies	101
	REFERENCES	102
	APPENDIX A	121
	APPENDIX B	128