



**UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

***DEVELOPMENT OF HETEROGENEOUS CATALYSTS FOR  
TRANSESTERIFICATION OF NON-EDIBLE OIL TO BIODIESEL***

**LEE HWEI VOON**

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**DEVELOPMENT OF HETEROGENEOUS CATALYSTS FOR  
TRANSESTERIFICATION OF NON-EDIBLE OIL TO BIODIESEL**

**By**

**LEE HWEI VOON**

**Thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia,  
in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**May 2012**

## **DEDICATION**

### **Dedication to my family with love**

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my loving parents, Lee Kian Guan and Chong Siew Ying, my lovely brother and sister, Lee Yen Yen and Lee Hwei May for their priceless support and endless encouragement.



Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

**DEVELOPMENT OF HETEROGENEOUS CATALYSTS FOR  
TRANSESTERIFICATION OF NON-EDIBLE OIL TO BIODIESEL**

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**May 2012**

**Chairman: Professor Taufiq-Yap Yun Hin, PhD, CChem, FRSC (UK)**

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The critical problem arises from the fossil fuels has stimulated recent interests in alternative sources for petroleum-based fuel. An alternative fuel should be technically feasible, readily available, environment acceptable and techno-economically competitive. Biodiesel, which is considered as a potential replacement of conventional diesel fuel is commonly, composed of mono-alkyl ester of long chain that can be prepared from triglycerides which is available in renewable feedstock (vegetable oils or animal fats) utilizing transesterification technology. The feedstock used for the production of biodiesel mainly come from edible vegetable oil which is highly available in most of the countries around the world. However, the competition between food and fuel economies towards the same oil resources may bring global imbalance to the food supply and demand market. The focus on this research is to produce biodiesel using non-edible feedstock (*Jatropha Curcas* oil) via heterogeneous catalyzed transesterification reaction. The solid base mixed metal oxide catalysts (CaO-MgO, CaO-ZnO, MgO-ZnO and CaO-La<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>) were synthesized via co-precipitation method. The physico-chemical properties of

binary oxide catalysts were characterized by using X-ray diffraction (XRD), temperature-programmed desorption of carbon dioxide ( $\text{CO}_2$ -TPD), temperature-programmed desorption of ammonia ( $\text{NH}_3$ -TPD), scanning electron microscopy coupled with energy dispersive spectroscopy (SEM-EDX),  $\text{N}_2$  adsorption (BET), inductively coupled plasma atomic emission spectroscopy (ICP-AES) and atomic absorption spectroscopy (AAS). Furthermore, the catalytic activity of mixed metal oxides with different stoichiometric ratios (0.5- 10.0 atomic ratio) of Ca/Mg, Ca/Zn, Mg/Zn and Ca/La corresponding to CaO-MgO, CaO-ZnO, MgO-ZnO and CaO-La<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>, respectively, was investigated. The optimum ratios for each binary metal oxides catalyst with highest activity were CaO-MgO with 0.5 atomic ratio (90 %), CaO-ZnO with 8.0 atomic ratio (94 %), MgO-ZnO with 8.0 atomic ratio (83 %) at transesterification temperature of 120 °C, 25 methanol/oil molar ratio, 3 wt.% of catalyst loading within 3 h reaction time. Whereas, CaO-La<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> with 8.0 atomic ratio (98 %) showed the highest activity among the series at 160 °C reaction temperature, 25 methanol/oil molar ratio, 3 wt.% of catalyst loading and 3 h reaction time. The transesterification activity was greatly influenced by the basicity of the active site on the catalyst. Optimization study for jatropha-based biodiesel production using CaO-MgO, CaO-ZnO, CaO-La<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> and MgO-ZnO mixed oxides solid base catalysts was conducted in this study. The effects of variables including reaction temperature (40-200 °C), catalyst loading (1-5 wt. %), methanol/oil molar ratio (15-30) and reaction time (1-5 h) on biodiesel yield was examined and optimized using response surface methodology (RSM) coupled with central composite design (CCD). Confirmation experiment was further conducted to validate the efficacy of the model. The CaO-MgO, CaO-ZnO, MgO-ZnO and CaO-La<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> catalyzed reaction model generated from RSM showed reasonable predictability and sufficient accuracy of the examined catalyzed

reaction. Furthermore, the physical and chemical characteristics of the jatropha-based biodiesel produced from CaO-MgO, CaO-ZnO, MgO-ZnO and CaO-La<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> catalyzed transesterification reaction was tested with compliance to ASTM D7851 and EN 14124 standards.



Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

**PEMBANGUNAN PEMANGKIN HETEROGEN BAGI TRANSESTERIFIKASI  
MINYAK BUKAN KONSUMSI UNTUK MENGHASILKAN BIODIESEL**

By

**LEE HWEI VOON**

**Mei 2012**

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Kehausan bahan minyak bakar telah menjadi salah satu masalah dalam bidang sumber tenaga dan ianya telah merangsang minat para penyelidik untuk mencari sumber alternatif yang boleh diperbaharui untuk menggantikan sumber minyak fosil. Sumber minyak alternatif harus memiliki ciri-ciri seperti mudah untuk diperolehi, mesra alam, mesra teknologi dan ia juga harus kompetitif dari segi ekonomi. Biodiesel merupakan sejenis minyak alternatif yang diakui untuk menggantikan sumber minyak fosil yang digunakan pada masa kini. Biodiesel merupakan rantai ester mono-alkil yang dihasilkan daripada sumber trigliserida yang boleh diperbaharui (minyak sayuran dan minyak haiwan) melalui proses transesterifikasi bermangkin. Majoriti bahan mentah yang digunakan untuk penghasilan biodiesel di negara ini adalah sumber minyak sayuran. Ini telah membangkitkan kebimbangan terhadap ketidakseimbangan sumber minyak sayuran yang menjadi sumber makanan digunakan untuk penghasilan biodiesel secara komersial. Penyelidikan ini tertumpu kepada penghasilan biodiesel dengan menggunakan sumber

minyak bukan-konsumsi (Minyak *Jathropa Curcas*) sebagai sumber bahan mentah dalam proses transesterifikasi dengan pemangkin heterogen. Pemangkin-pemangkin gabungan logam alkali yaitu CaO-MgO, CaO-ZnO, MgO-ZnO dan CaO-La<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> telah disintesiskan melalui teknik pemendakan beriring. Sifat-sifat kimia fisik pemangkin oksida perduaan telah diuji menggunakan pembelauan sinar-X (XRD), penyahjerapan CO<sub>2</sub> Suhu Berprogram (CO<sub>2</sub>-TPD), penyahjerapan NH<sub>3</sub> Suhu Berprogram (NH<sub>3</sub>-TPD), mikroskopi electron imbasan dengan spektroskopi sebaran tenaga (SEM-EDX), penjerapan N<sub>2</sub> (BET), spektroskopi pancaran atom plasma gandingan induktif (ICP-AES) dan spektroskopi penyerapan atom (AAS). Dalam penyelidikan tersebut, tindakbalas pemangkin oksida logam gabungan dengan pelbagai nisbah stoikiometri (0.5- 10.0 nisbah atom) bagi Ca/Mg, Ca/Zn, Mg/Zn and Ca/La berbanding dengan CaO-MgO, CaO-ZnO, MgO-ZnO and CaO-La<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> masing-masing dalam tindakbalas transesterifikasi telah dikaji dalam nisbah molar methanol kepada minyak 25:1, suhu tindakbalas pada 120 °C, muatan pemangkin pada 3 wt. % dan tempoh tindakbalas pada 3 jam. Hasil kajian tersebut menunjukkan penghasilan biodiesel oleh pemangkin dengan nisbah atom Ca/Mg=0.5 %, Ca/Zn=8.0%, Mg/Zn=8.0% dan Ca/La=8.0% adalah sebanyak 90 %, 94 %, 83% dan 98% masing-masing manakala CaO-La<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> dengan nisbah atom 8.0% menunjukkan kadar tindak balas tertinggi pada nisbah molar methanol kepada minyak 25:1, suhu tindakbalas pada 160 °C, muatan pemangkin pada 3 wt. % dan tempoh tindakbalas pada 3 jam. Kajian ini menunjukkan bilangan tapak aktif pemangkin yang beralkali adalah amat penting untuk meningkatkan aktiviti transesterifikasi. Selain itu, kajian pengoptimuman tindakbalas transesterifikasi menggunakan pemangkin CaO-MgO, CaO-ZnO, CaO-La<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> and MgO-ZnO turut dijalankan. Kesan-kesan pembolehubah seperti suhu tindakbalas (40-200 °C), muatan pemangkin (1-5 wt. %), nisbah kemolaran methanol/minyak (15-30) dan tempoh



tindakbalas (1-5h) terhadap efisiensi penghasilan biodiesel telah dikaji menggunakan kaedah tindakbalas permukaan (RSM) dengan rekabentuk komposit pusat (CCD). Model yang dijana melalui RSM ditentukkan melalui eksperimen untuk mengesahkan ketepatan dan efikasi model tersebut. Hasil daripada eksperimen yang dijalankan menunjukkan bahawa model yang dihasilkan menunjukkan kejituan dan kepersisan yang amat memuaskan. Selain itu, ciri-ciri biodiesel yang dihasilkan melalui tindakbalas transesterifikasi dengan CaO-MgO, CaO-ZnO, MgO-ZnO dan CaO-La<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> telah diuji supaya setaraf dengan kualiti diesel fosil yang digunakan pada masa kini dan mematuhi piawaian biodiesel ASTM D7851 dan EN14124.

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I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on 21 May 2012 to conduct the final examination of Lee Hwei Voon on her thesis entitled "Development of Heterogeneous Catalysts for the Transesterification of Non-Edible Oil to Biodiesel" in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U.(A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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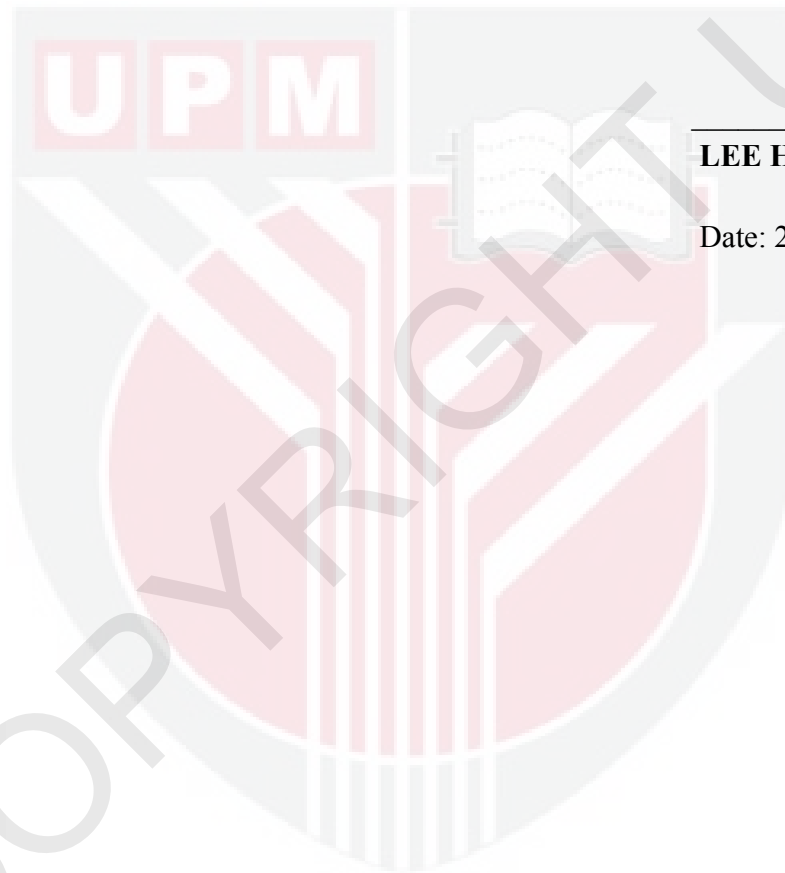
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## DECLARATION

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 concurrently, submitted for any other degree at Universiti Putra Malaysia or at any other institution.



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**LEE HWEI VOON**

Date: 21 May 2012

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<b>Page</b>
<b>DEDICATION</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>ABSTRACT</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>ABSTRAK</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	<b>ix</b>
<b>APPROVAL</b>	<b>xi</b>
<b>DECLARATION</b>	<b>xiii</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b>	<b>xviii</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b>	<b>xxi</b>
<b>LIST OF APPENDICES</b>	<b>xxv</b>
<b>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS</b>	<b>xxvi</b>
<b>CHAPTER</b>	
<b>1.0 INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Background	1
1.2 Biodiesel	4
1.3 Problem statement	6
1.4 Scope of study	8
1.5 Objectives	9
1.6 Organization of the thesis	9
<b>2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	<b>11</b>
2.1 General Background	11
2.1.1 Vegetable oil as fuel	11
2.1.2 Biodiesel	12
2.2 Transesterification	15
2.2.1 General aspect of transesterification	15
2.2.2 Chemistry of transesterification process	16
2.3 Biodiesel production process	19
2.4 Biodiesel production costs	20
2.5 Catalytic transesterification reaction	22
2.6 Heterogeneous base catalyst for transesterification reaction	24
2.6.1 Single metal oxide	24
2.6.2 Supported metal oxide	36
2.6.3 Binary metal oxide	62
2.7 <i>Jatropha curcas</i> oil as a feedstock for biodiesel production	79
2.7.1 Background	79
2.7.2 <i>Jatropha</i> oil- Non edible oil as fuel	80
2.7.3 Current techniques available for converting non-edible <i>jatropha</i> oil to biodiesel	82
2.7.4 Homogeneous and heterogeneous catalyzed transesterification of <i>jatropha</i> oil	85

2.8 Process optimization design for biodiesel production using response surface methodology (RSM)	94
<b>3.0 DEVELOPMENT OF SOLID BASE CATALYST FOR BIODIESEL PRODUCTION</b>	<b>98</b>
3.1 Introduction	98
3.2 Raw materials, chemicals and equipments	98
3.2.1 Raw materials	98
3.2.2 Chemicals	99
3.2.3 Equipmetn	101
3.3 Physical properties testing of <i>Jatropha curcas</i> oil	102
3.3.1 Saponification value testing PORIM test method (1995) p3.1	102
3.3.2 Acidity testing by PORIM test method (1995) p2.5	103
3.4 Catalyst preparation	103
3.4.1 Preparation of mixed metal oxide catalysts (CaO-MgO, CaO-ZnO, MgO-ZnO and CaO-La <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub> )	103
3.4.2 Preparation of single metal oxide (CaO, MgO, ZnO and La <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub> )	105
3.5 Catalyst characterization	105
3.5.1 X-ray Diffraction (XRD) Analysis	105
3.5.2 Brunauer-Emmett-Teller Method (BET)	106
3.5.3 Temperature Programmed Desorption (TPD) in CO <sub>2</sub> and NH <sub>3</sub>	107
3.5.4 Scanning Electron Microscopy (SEM)	108
3.5.5 Induced Coupled Plasma (ICP-AES)	109
3.5.6 Atomic Absorption Spectroscopy (AAS)	109
3.6 Catalytic testing	110
3.6.1 Preliminary study of biodiesel production at reflux condition	110
3.6.2 Biodiesel production via heterogeneous catalyzed transesterification reaction at closed system condition with high temperature	111
3.6.3 Optimization study by using Response Surface Methodology (RSM)	111
3.6.3.3 Optimization study	115
3.7 Catalyst reusability and leaching test	116
3.8 Biodiesel quantitative analysis	117
3.8.1 Oil conversion measurement by using glycerol content	117
3.8.2 Determining ester and linoleic acid methyl ester content to comply with EN14103	118
3.9 Biodiesel quality evaluation	120
<b>4.0 CALCIUM-BASED MIXED METAL OXIDE CATALYSTS FOR METHANOLYSIS OF JATROPHA CURCAS OIL TO BIODIESEL</b>	<b>122</b>
4.1 Introduction	122
4.2 Physico-chemical properties of mixed metal oxides catalysts	123
4.3 Catalytic activity in transesterification process	130
4.3.1 Effect of preparation parameters on JCO conversion	131
4.4 Catalyst reusability	136
4.5 Conclusions	138



<b>5.0</b>	<b>TRANSESTERIFICATION OF NON-EDIBLE JATROPHA CURCAS OIL TO BIODIESEL VIA CaO-MgO MIXED METAL OXIDE CATALYST: EFFECT OF STOICHIOMETRIC STUDY</b>	<b>139</b>
5.1	Introduction	139
5.2	Physicochemical properties of CaO-MgO catalysts	140
5.3	Catalytic activity	147
5.3.1	Effect of the Ca/Mg atomic ratio on the transesterification activity	147
5.3.2	Correlation between FAME yield and catalyst's basicity	148
5.4	Reusability study	150
5.5	Conclusions	153
<b>6.0</b>	<b>CaO-ZnO HETEROGENEOUS CATALYTIC SYSTEM DESIGN FOR TRANSESTERIFICATION OF NON-EDIBLE JATROPHA CURCAS OIL TO BIODIESEL</b>	<b>155</b>
6.1	Introduction	155
6.2	Physicochemical properties of CaO-ZnO Catalysts	156
6.3	Catalytic Test	163
6.3.1	Effect of Calcium loading towards transesterification activity	163
6.3.2	Correlation between basicity and the FAME yield	164
6.4	Reusability and leaching study	166
6.5	Conclusions	168
<b>7.0</b>	<b>TRANSESTERIFICATION OF JATROPHA OIL WITH METHANOL OVER MgZn MIXED.METAL OXIDE.CATALYST</b>	<b>170</b>
7.1	Introduction	170
7.2	Physico-chemical Properties of MgO-ZnO Catalysts	171
7.3	Catalytic activity in transesterification process	178
7.3.1	Optimization study for the Catalyst Composition of Mg/Zn ratio	178
7.3.2	Correlation between total basicity of catalyst with FAME yield	179
7.4	Reusability and catalyst leaching test	180
7.5	Conclusion	182
<b>8.0</b>	<b>PREPARATION AND APPLICATION OF CaO-La<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> WITH BINARY ACID-BASE SYSTEM FOR BIODIESEL PRODUCTION</b>	<b>183</b>
8.1	Introduction	183
8.2	Physicochemical Properties of CaO-La <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub> catalysts	184
8.3	Catalytic test for transesterification process	191
8.4	Reusability and leaching test	193
8.5	Conclusion	196
<b>9.0</b>	<b>OPTIMIZATION STUDY OF HETEROGENEOUS BASE CATALYZED TRANSESTERIFICATION SYSTEM FOR BIODIESEL PRODUCTION</b>	<b>197</b>

9.1 Introduction	197
9.2 Development of quadratic polynomial equation	198
9.3 Effects of transesterification process variables	209
9.3.1 CaO-MgO catalyzed transesterification reaction	209
9.3.2 CaO-ZnO catalyzed transesterification reaction	213
9.3.3 MgO-ZnO catalyzed transesterification reaction	216
9.3.4 CaO-La <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub> catalyzed transesterification reaction	219
9.4 Optimization of biodiesel yield	222
9.5 Biodiesel quality evaluations	226
9.6 Conclusion	231
<b>10.0 SUMMARY AND GENERAL CONCLUSION</b>	<b>234</b>
<b>RECOMMENDATION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH</b>	<b>238</b>
<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>240</b>
<b>APPENDICES</b>	<b>259</b>
<b>BIODATA OF STUDENT</b>	<b>270</b>
<b>LIST OF PUBLICATIONS</b>	<b>271</b>