

# A Study on Synthesis of Micro/Nano Silver-Copper Core-Shell Powder with an Electric Conductivity of Silver

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to fabricate the silver-copper core-shell powders with a comparable electric conductivity of silver. Silver-copper core-shell powders are copper powders coated with a thin layer of silver which have sizes less than 10  $\mu$  m. They have the potential of replacing silver powders and can provide a new price-competitive material for electronic industry. In this study, the silver-copper core-shell powders were synthesized by the silver-copper co-reduction method and the copper electroless plating silver method.

In the silver-copper co-reduction method, reducing agents, molar ratios of metal – to-reducing agent, and adding points of the silver sulfate solution were chosen as the primary factors to fabricate silver-copper core-shell powders. The synthetic powders obtained by the silver-copper co-reduction method do not have silver-copper core-shell structure after analyzing by SEM. Also, its electric conductivity is too poor to be measured by the electric conductivity test. Therefore, powders which fabricated by silver-copper co-reduction method can not reach the goal of this research.

In the copper electroless plating silver method, silver-copper core-shell powders were fabricated in two stages. Pure copper powders were produced in the first stage and its optimal conditions which concluded by the Taguchi robust design method were: 21.5 kg of copper sulphate and 18.91 kg of phosphate were dissolved into 150 liters pure water at 70 and 300 RPM. The obtained copper powders have a average size of 7.36  $\mu$  m. In the second stage, the obtained Cu powders will be subjected to electroless plating method to produce silver-copper core-shell powders. The optimal procedure found in this study were: (1) 2.53 g of Cu powders and 0.08 g of sodium citrate were dissolved into 100 ml pure water for copper powders dispersion, and (2) 1.17 g of silver sulphate and 0.065 g of sodium citrate were dissolved into 250 ml pure water for silver-salt solution, and (3) the silver-salt solution was fast added into copper dispersion under 1000 RPM for 10 min. The obtained optimal powders have a silver-copper core-shell structure which can be proved by using SEM and ESCA. Also, these powders have the same volume resistivity ( $1.43 \times 10^{-4}$  . cm) as pure silver powders when they are analyzed by electric conductivity test. The anti-oxidation property (0.1465 Wt%/min) of these powders is found to be significantly slower than pure copper (0.5745 Wt%/min) by TGA.

To conclude, the silver-copper core-shell powders with an electric conductivity of silver and good anti-oxidation properties can be successfully synthesized by the copper electroless plating silver method. The advantage is that their production costs are much cheaper than pure silver powders. Thus, they are suitable to replace silver in electronic conductivity material.

Keywords : Co-reduction、 Electroless plating、 Micron/Nano、 Taguchi robust design、 Silver、 Copper、 Electric conductivity、 Core-shell

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