

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**TAILORING THE ELECTRICAL,
ANTIBACTERIAL, DURABILITY
PROPERTIES OF ELECTROACTIVE
FABRIC-BASED POLYANILINE FOR
POTENTIAL USES IN WEARABLE
BIOELECTRONICS**

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the development and investigation of electroactive fabric-based conducting polymer (CP), specifically polyaniline (PANI) for potential uses in wearable bioelectronics. PANI has gained substantial interest in scientific research due to its tunable structural and electrical conductivity. However, in its pristine form, PANI exhibits low conductivity values of less than 1 S cm^{-1} , which remains a challenge and limits its potential applications. Therefore, the first part of the study attempts to increase the electrical conductivity of PANI utilizing *para*-toluene sulfonic acid (*p*TSA) as a doping agent, thereby optimizing its value to fall within the acceptable range for conductive materials, particularly on human skin ($\sim 10^{-4} \text{ S cm}^{-1}$ to 10^2 S cm^{-1}). In addition, another comparable CP, poly(3,4-ethylenedioxythiophene): polystyrene sulfonate (PEDOT: PSS) doped with dimethyl sulfoxide (DMSO), is also examined to unveil its potential and provide a more comprehensive understanding of the electrical properties when embedded into fabric materials. The conductivity values of these CPs are critical for ensuring efficient signal transduction and smooth data transmittance when in use. After evaluating the properties of the two CPs, PANI fabric was identified as a more promising option compared to PEDOT: PSS fabric due to its ease of synthesis and superior mechanical properties, making it a better fit for wearable bioelectronics. Nevertheless, the antibacterial properties of the fabric-based CPs are also important, especially when used in contact with skin. Therefore, the second part of the thesis explores the behavior of PANI fabrics against bacterial colonisation. The study found that PANI fabric exhibits high antibacterial activities against both Gram-positive bacteria and Gram-negative bacteria, including methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Staphylococcus epidermidis*, *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*, *Escherichia coli*, and *Salmonella typhi*. While antibacterial properties are important, the stability and durability of the electroactive fabrics are also crucial for their practical application. The third part of the thesis proposes a novel approach to maximizing the surface adhesion and holding capability of PANI within the fabric structure. This approach improves the stability of the conductive PANI fabric, which has been found to experience instability and conductivity decay due to weak physical attachment between the conductive coating and fabric substrates. The washing evaluation, a standard test for fabrics, shows that PANI fabrics are able to retain their electrical functionalities, with conductivity values of $10^{-3} \text{ S cm}^{-1}$, for up to 10 washing cycles. Overall, this thesis provides a comprehensive understanding of the properties and characteristics of electroactive fabrics-based CPs, with a focus on the development of PANI-based fabrics. The findings have significant potential for future use in wearable bioelectronics, as they address the critical issues of electrical conductivity, antibacterial, and durability properties.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
CONFIRMATION BY PANEL OF EXAMINERS	ii
AUTHOR'S DECLARATION	iii
ABSTRACT	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
LIST OF TABLES	xi
LIST OF FIGURES	xiv
LIST OF SYMBOLS	xxviii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xxx
CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Research Background	1
1.2 Problem Statement	4
1.3 Significance of Study	6
1.4 Objectives of Study	7
1.5 Scopes of Study	7
1.6 Thesis Structure	8
CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW	10
2.1 Research Background	10
2.2 Wearable Bioelectronics	11
2.3 Introduction to the Electroactive/Conductive Fabrics	12
2.4 Electronic Fabrics Components	17
2.4.1 Metal	17
2.4.2 Carbon	18
2.4.3 Conducting Polymers (CPs): Types and Conductivity Mechanism	20
2.5 Conducting Polymers as the Conductive Elements	22
2.5.1 Polyaniline (PANI)	22
2.5.2 Poly (3,4-ethylene dioxythiophene) (PEDOT)	25

2.6	Synthesis of PANI and PEDOT: PSS	28
2.6.1	Chemical Oxidation	28
2.6.2	Electrochemical Oxidation	30
2.7	Electronic Fabrics: Fabrication and Applications	31
2.7.1	Direct Weaving of Conductive Fibres into Fabrics	32
2.7.2	Integration of Electronic Fibres into Commercial Fabrics	34
2.7.3	Coating Conductive Materials on Commercial Fabrics	35
2.8	Antibacterial Fabrics Based PANI	39
2.8.1	Polyaniline (PANI) Integrated Fabrics as The Antibacterial Agent	43
2.8.2	Antibacterial Mechanism of PANI	44
2.8.3	Evaluation of Antibacterial Activities	46
2.8.4	Scavenging Activities (Antioxidant) Assessment	48
2.9	Surface Modification of Polyester Fabric	49
2.9.1	Physical Modification via Surface Coating	50
2.9.2	Plasma Modification on Polyester Surface	52
2.9.3	Chemical Reaction via Alkaline Treatment	53
2.10	Characterization of Conductive Fabrics	57
2.10.1	Electrical Conductivity Measurements	57
2.10.2	Morphological Analysis	60
2.10.3	Structural Identification Analysis	62
2.10.4	Surface Chemistry Study	64
2.11	Washing Durability Evaluation	66
CHAPTER THREE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY		69
3.1	Introduction	69
3.2	Materials	70
3.3	Synthesis of PANI via Chemical Oxidative Polymerization	71
3.4	Preparation of Doped PANI with Acids	72
3.5	Fabrication of Conductive PANI Fabric	73
3.6	Synthesis of PEDOT: PSS Solution	74
3.7	Secondary Doping and Fabrication of PEDOT: PSS Solution with DMSO	74
3.8	Fabrication of PEDOT: PSS Fabric	74
3.9	Physical and Chemical Characterisations	77
3.9.1	Attenuated Total Reflectance-Fourier Transform Infrared (ATR-FTIR)	