



## Variation of annealing temperature with excess of NaOH concentration on Ag<sub>2</sub>S synthesis from argentometry titration waste as NTC thermistor

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### ABSTRACT

Utilization of AgCl from argentometric titration waste can be done by converting AgCl into silver sulfide (Ag<sub>2</sub>S) semiconductor. The variation of annealing temperature in Ag<sub>2</sub>S synthesis affects the properties and quality of the Ag<sub>2</sub>S semiconductor. Silver sulfide semiconductor can be applied as a NTC (negative temperature-coefficient) thermistor temperature sensor. The NTC thermistor shows a decrease in resistance with increasing temperature. This study aims to synthesize Ag<sub>2</sub>S from argentometric titration waste with excess NaOH concentration and variations in annealing temperature as a temperature sensor for NTC thermistors. Ag<sub>2</sub>S was synthesized using thiourea reagent in alkaline NaOH medium. The synthesized silver sulfide was then annealed at various temperatures of 100, 200 and 300 °C for 30 min. Ag<sub>2</sub>S was then characterized using Thermo Gravimetric Analysis (TGA), X-Ray Diffraction (XRD) and UV-Vis Diffuse Reflectance Spectroscopy (UV-Vis DRS). The results of TGA analysis showed that Ag<sub>2</sub>S at a temperature of 836 °C had decomposed into Ag and S<sub>2</sub>. From the XRD characterization results showed the presence of Ag<sub>2</sub>S at 2θ peaks of 22; 29; 31; 38 and 41°. Ag<sub>2</sub>S crystal size increases with increasing annealing temperature, which are 37.04; 39.55 and 41.68 nm. The results of UV-Vis DRS characterization showed that the Ag<sub>2</sub>S band gap value decreased with increasing annealing temperature, which were 0.96; 0.94; and 0.92 eV. The resistance measurement results show that the Ag<sub>2</sub>S semiconductor at annealing temperature of 300 °C is an NTC thermistor with good electrical quality, has a sensitivity of 6.85% and a thermistor constant of 6087 K.

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### 1. Introduction

Silver compounds in research in the laboratory and the organic industry are very important. One of them is the use of AgNO<sub>3</sub> as a source of silver for argentometric titration with the Fajans, Mohr and Volhard methods to analyze the analyte content accurately. However, the argentometric titration process produces large amounts of AgCl precipitate residue [1]. AgCl waste residue, if directly disposed of, will be harmful to the environment. So it is necessary to reuse AgCl waste into something useful. One of them is by reusing AgCl waste by recycling it into silver sulfide (Ag<sub>2</sub>S) which is more environmentally friendly.

Silver sulfide is the most widely used sulfide semiconductor besides lead, zinc, cadmium and copper(I) sulfides. The Ag<sub>2</sub>S semiconductor has three modified polymorphs (α-Ag<sub>2</sub>S, β-Ag<sub>2</sub>S dan γ-Ag<sub>2</sub>S) at close temperature intervals, this causes Ag<sub>2</sub>S to have different structures and properties. The transition between semiconductor α-Ag<sub>2</sub>S and superionic β-Ag<sub>2</sub>S has unique characteristics [2]. Ag<sub>2</sub>S semiconductor has a bandgap of 0.9–1.05 eV [3], chemical stability and good optical properties, so it is widely used in various fields [4] such as antibacterial agents [5], NH<sub>3</sub> sensors [6] and temperature sensors [2].

The temperature sensor is a heat sensor to detect symptoms of temperature changes in certain dimensions. Symptoms of temperature changes detected can be observed using a thermistor [7]. The thermistor is a passive resistance component that has a high sensitivity to temperature changes. One of the thermistors that are often used is the negative temperature-coefficient (NTC) which has very good sensitivity characteristics and a very fast response

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time [8]. Most of the NTC materials are solid solutions of transition metal oxides, such as NiO, Mn<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>, and Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> with a spinel-type crystal structure of the general formula AB<sub>2</sub>O<sub>4</sub>, which often exhibit poor stability and reproducibility due to high porosity and incomplete intergranular contact [9]. Therefore, in this study, the use of Ag<sub>2</sub>S as an NTC thermistor will be discussed.

Several studies related to Ag<sub>2</sub>S synthesis have been successful from Ag<sup>2+</sup> ions protected under 3-mercaptopropionic acid (Ag/MPA) conditions with annealing temperature of 200°C [10], from Ag and H<sub>2</sub>S sulfurization, from Ag-Ag<sub>2</sub>S nanohybrid NHS and its application as antibacterial [11]. However, H<sub>2</sub>S has high toxicity, nanohybrids are complicated and expensive. Meanwhile, in this experiment, Ag<sub>2</sub>S was produced from artificial AgCl waste in a high concentration NaOH base medium with thiourea and varying annealing temperature. The obtained Ag<sub>2</sub>S was then characterized using TGA, XRD, and UV–Vis DRS, as well as an analysis of the effect of annealing temperature on the quality of the Ag<sub>2</sub>S semiconductor as an NTC thermistor temperature sensor.

## 2. Experimental details

### 2.1. Ag<sub>2</sub>S synthesis with excess NaOH concentration

Artificial argentometric titration waste produced by reacting AgCl with AgNO<sub>3</sub> was employed in this study. The synthesis of silver sulfide (Ag<sub>2</sub>S) began with the preparation of artificial waste silver chloride (AgCl) by dissolving silver nitrate (AgNO<sub>3</sub> (Merck)) 20 mmol in 10 mL of distilled water and dissolving sodium chloride (NaCl (Merck)) 20 mmol in 10 mL of distilled water in a different beaker. Then a solution of silver nitrate (AgNO<sub>3</sub>) was mixed with a solution of sodium chloride to form a white precipitate of silver chloride (AgCl). Furthermore, the filtered silver chloride (AgCl) precipitate was dissolved in 100 mL of 0.1 M NaOH (Merck) and heated with a hotplate stirrer until it reached a temperature of 60 °C. When the temperature of the solution reached 60°C, thiourea (Merck) powder 10 mmol was added and a black precipitate of Ag<sub>2</sub>S was formed. The black precipitate obtained was filtered and dried in an oven at 60°C for 60 min. Then the Ag<sub>2</sub>S powder was annealed using a furnace with various annealing temperatures of 100, 200, and 300 °C.

### 2.2. Ag<sub>2</sub>S characterization

The synthesis results were analysed using Thermo Gravimetric Analysis (TGA) Exstar SII 7300 to determine the mass loss due to the synthesis temperature. Ag<sub>2</sub>S with varied annealing temperature was characterized using X-Ray Diffraction (XRD) Shimadzu XRD-7000 to determine the crystallinity and the presence of Ag<sub>2</sub>S compounds in the precipitate. Characterization with UV–Vis Diffuse Reflectance Spectroscopy (UV–Vis DRS) Shimadzu UV-2430 was used to analyse the band gap of Ag<sub>2</sub>S.

### 2.3. Preparation of thermistor temperature sensor

The annealed Ag<sub>2</sub>S powder was put in a press tool and pressed using a hammer with added copper wire on each side of the pellet. Then the pellet was coated with black paint so that the thermistor was not brittle.

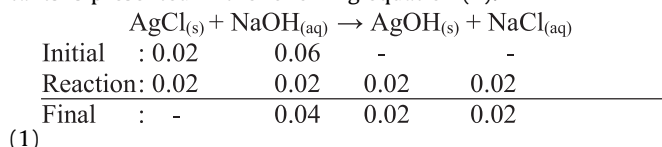
### 2.4. Ag<sub>2</sub>S thermistor resistance measurement

Resistance measurement used multimeter (Krisbow). The thermistor was immersed in a container filled with oil and heated on a hot plate with a temperature range of 25–50°C. Resistance was measured every 1°C–temperature increase.

## 3. Results and discussions

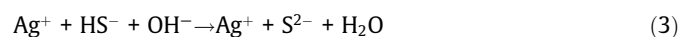
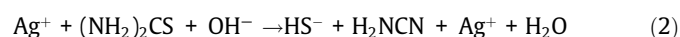
### 3.1. Ag<sub>2</sub>S synthesis

Ag<sub>2</sub>S synthesis was carried out by reacting AgCl and thiourea as a silver and sulfur sources, respectively. The synthesis was carried out by reacting AgCl and NaOH excess. Excess of NaOH will accelerate the formation of Ag<sub>2</sub>S nanoparticles [12]. The formation of Ag<sub>2</sub>S at low pH (<10) occurs slowly [13]. The ratio of moles of reactants is presented in the following equation (1):

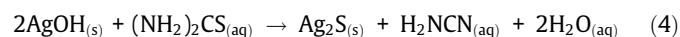
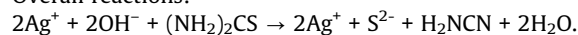


The NaOH reactant does not completely react so that there is an excess of NaOH at equilibrium. NaOH causes silver ions and sulfur ions to hydrolyze in solution to form Ag<sub>2</sub>S. AgCl (K<sub>sp</sub> AgCl 1.6 × 10<sup>-10</sup>) will be hydrolyzed by NaOH and make the solution very alkaline, so a blackish brown precipitate of AgOH is formed. The mixed solution was then stirred at 60°C in a water bath. Thiourea was added while heated and stirred to speed up the reaction. Thiourea or (NH<sub>2</sub>)<sub>2</sub>CS is an organosulfur which is used as a source of sulfur in the synthesis of metal sulfides [14].

Thiourea will be hydrolyzed by OH<sup>-</sup> thus weakening the C = S bond. The mechanism for the release of S<sup>2-</sup> in thiourea and the formation of silver sulfide in the following equation (2–4) [14]:



Overall reactions:



The synthesized Ag<sub>2</sub>S was then annealed in a furnace with temperature variations of 100, 200 and 300°C. The annealing process was carried out to recrystallize the silver sulfide.

### 3.2. Ag<sub>2</sub>S characterization

#### 3.2.1. Characterization with TGA

Ag<sub>2</sub>S samples were measured at a temperature of 27 to 1000°C with a heating rate of 10°C/min using TGA to determine the amount of Ag<sub>2</sub>S mass lost when heat treated. The results of the TGA Ag<sub>2</sub>S analysis in Fig. 1 show that the sample weight decreases with increasing temperature. The TGA curve shows that there are two stages of mass loss. The first mass loss at 253 is 12.19% which is indicated due to the evaporation of water and impurities in Ag<sub>2</sub>S crystals. These results are following the literature [15]. Then the second step up to a temperature of 836°C Ag<sub>2</sub>S loses mass of 15.59% as the process of decomposition of Ag<sub>2</sub>S into sulfur as the following reaction equation (5) [16].



Fig. 1 shows that at a temperature of more than 300°C there is a decrease in the weight or decomposition of Ag<sub>2</sub>S. Therefore, the Ag<sub>2</sub>S annealing process is limited to that temperature (annealing temperature is set at 100, 200 and 300°C).

#### 3.2.2. Characterization with XRD

X-ray characterization was carried out with Cu Kα1 (1.5406) radiation at an angle range of 2θ from 20 to 70°. The results of the Ag<sub>2</sub>S X-ray diffraction analysis used the RRUFF standard num-

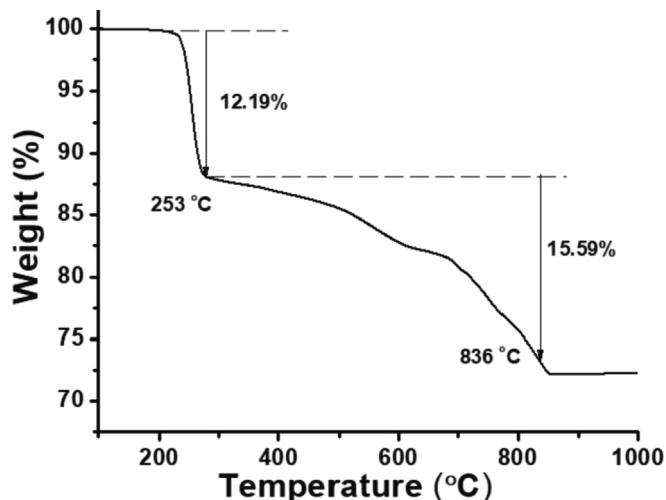


Fig. 1. TGA curve of Ag<sub>2</sub>S.

ber R080016 as a comparison. Fig. 2 shows the results of the Ag<sub>2</sub>S X-Ray Diffraction analysis with variations in annealing temperature of 100, 200 and 300°C. The diffraction pattern of each temperature variation gives a 2θ peak that is similar and dominant at 22.36° (crystallographic plane (111), 26.189° (111), 29.05° (012), 31.62° (120), 33.66° (121), 34.74° (112), 36.80° (022), 37.79° (200), 40.85° (031), 43.47° (130), 46.28° (202) and 53.21° (004). Another research group on silver sulfide [17,18], has observed a similar crystal structure with diffraction peaks suitable for different synthesis techniques. Ben Nasrallah et al. [19] reported on a Silver sulfide thin film annealed in a nitrogen atmosphere crystallized in the β-Ag<sub>2</sub>S phase with orientation (103), Barrera-Calva et al. [20] reported on an Ag<sub>2</sub>S thin film crystallized in the α-Ag<sub>2</sub>S (acanthite) phase, shows the low-intensity diffraction peaks that occur at Bragg angles of 34.48°, 36.56° and 44.28° correspond to (100), (112), and (121). This study could be determined according to the data reported for α-Ag<sub>2</sub>S (acanthite) (JCPDS Card File: 00–014–0072) [21]. This is confirmed by the dominant peak pattern which corresponds to the RRUFF standard for Ag<sub>2</sub>S data shown at 2θ peak 22; 29; 31; 38 and 41° [22] and indexed in the monoclinic. So it can be concluded that Ag<sub>2</sub>S has been formed and has been successfully synthesized.

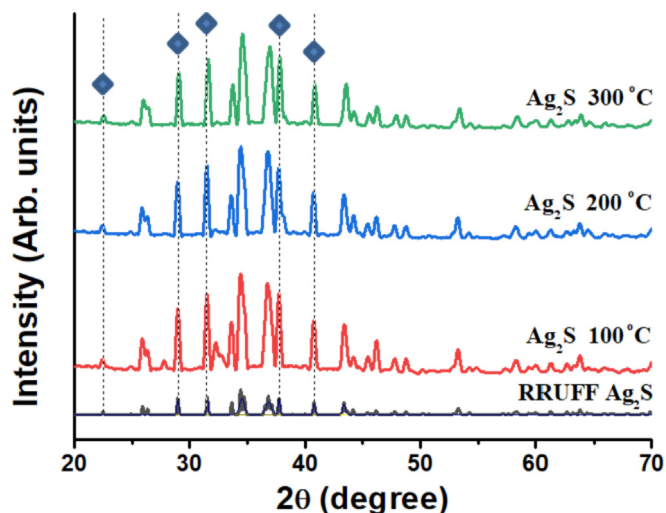


Fig. 2. XRD Diffractogram of Ag<sub>2</sub>S at RRUFF, 25°C, annealed at 100, 200 and 300°C, respectively.

The effect of increasing the annealing temperature is directly proportional to the increase in the intensity of Ag<sub>2</sub>S crystallinity. The higher the increase in temperature, the more the crystallinity of silver sulfide [23]. This is because more and more impurities are evaporated, so the crystalline material is purer and has higher intensity.

Determination of the grain size of Ag<sub>2</sub>S crystals was estimated using the Debye-Scherrer equation [24]:

$D = \frac{k\lambda}{\beta \cos \theta}$  where, D is the crystal size, k is the Scherrer constant (0.94), λ is the wavelength of X-ray radiation (0.15406 nm), β is the FWHM in radians and θ is the Bragg angle. From the results of the calculations in Table 1, it is known that the smaller the FWHM, the larger the crystal grain size and the smaller the diffraction pattern, on the contrary, the larger the FWHM value, the smaller the crystal size and the larger the diffraction pattern.

The average grain size of Ag<sub>2</sub>S crystals with variations in annealing temperature of 100, 200 and 300°C was obtained at 37.04; 39.55 and 41.68 nm. This shows that the increase in annealing temperature causes a change in the crystal grain size and Ag<sub>2</sub>S crystallization. The higher the annealing temperature, the larger the crystal size obtained, according to the literature [25]. The annealing process causes the growth of a more regular crystal structure which increases the size of the crystal grains. This could be due to a fragmentation of the crystallites at the higher annealing temperatures and/or a re-evaporation of sulphur during the annealing process [26].

### 3.2.3. Characterization with UV-Vis DRS

The characterization was carried out at a wavelength from 200 to 800 nm based on the intensity measurement of the UV-Vis light reflected by the Ag<sub>2</sub>S sample. The determination of the band gap value is obtained from the Tauc Plot calculation by extrapolating from the graph of the relationship  $E_g = h\nu$  as the abscissa and  $(\alpha h\nu)^2$  as the ordinate until it intersects the energy axis [25]. The band gap energies obtained (Fig. 3) at annealing temperature variations of 100, 200 and 300°C are 0.96, 0.94 and 0.92 eV, respectively. This shows that increasing the annealing temperature will decrease the bandgap value.

Ag<sub>2</sub>S annealing at a temperature of 100°C has the largest band-gap energy which will result in low-efficiency performance because wide energy will require a large amount of energy to jump electrons from the valence band to the conduction band to generate current. On the other hand, narrow bandgap energy at an annealing temperature of 300°C will allow the semiconductor to

Table 1  
The crystal size of synthesized Ag<sub>2</sub>S with variations of annealing.

Semiconductor	2θ	FWHM	D (nm)
Ag <sub>2</sub> S (Annealing at 100 °C)	22.36	0.236	35.81
	28.96	0.236	36.28
	31.49	0.197	43.81
	37.72	0.276	31.83
	40.73	0.236	37.47
			Average = 37.04
Ag <sub>2</sub> S (Annealing at 200 °C)	22.46	0.236	35.82
	28.94	0.197	43.55
	31.47	0.197	43.81
	37.69	0.236	37.12
	40.74	0.236	37.47
			Average = 39.55
Ag <sub>2</sub> S (Annealing at 300 °C)	22.53	0.197	42.99
	29.05	0.197	43.56
	31.62	0.197	43.82
	37.79	0.236	37.13
	40.85	0.217	40.9
			Average = 41.68

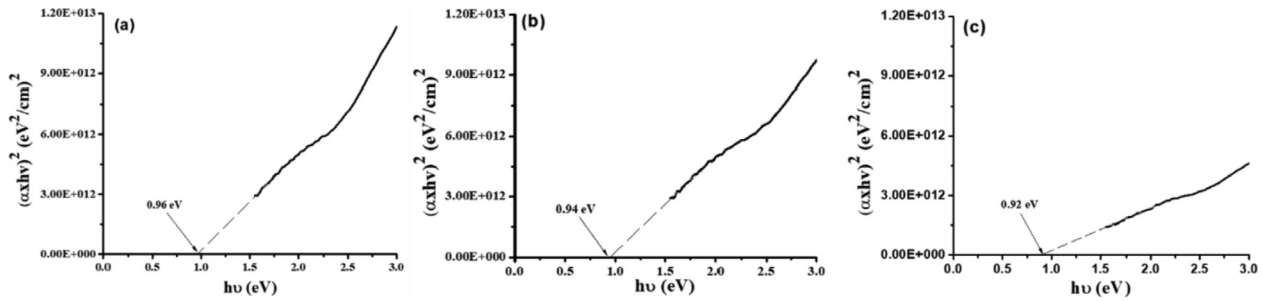


Fig. 3. Band gap of Ag<sub>2</sub>S synthesis at annealing temperature of (a) 100°C (b) 200°C (c) 300°C.

produce the best electrical current that is correlated with its resistivity and is suitable for the needs of the thermistor.

The bandgap value obtained is 0.9–1.05 eV, following previous studies [3,4,26]. So that the Ag<sub>2</sub>S obtained is a suitable semiconductor for the use of thermistors because in the bandgap the semiconductor can absorb infrared wavelengths (1290.62 – 1346.74 nm) which produces heat.

### 3.3. Preparation of Ag<sub>2</sub>S thermistor pellet

The pellets were made with Ag<sub>2</sub>S prepared by annealing variations of 100, 200, and 300°C. Then the annealed Ag<sub>2</sub>S was molded and pressed using a hammer (Fig. 4). The resulting pellet is a solid



Fig. 4. Tool for Ag<sub>2</sub>S pellet preparation.

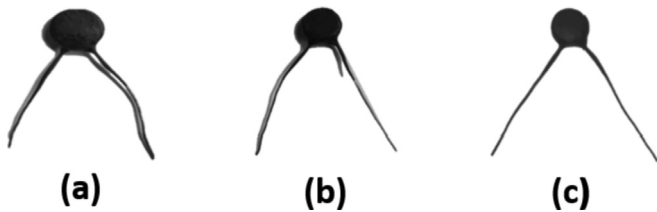


Fig. 5. Ag<sub>2</sub>S pellet prepared from Ag<sub>2</sub>S powder annealed at (a) 100°C, (b) 200°C and (c) 300°C.

cylindrical shape with a diameter of 0.5 cm and a thickness of 0.1–0.2 cm. Both sides of the pellets were wired and the pellets were coated with black paint to give the pellets rigidity. After the Ag<sub>2</sub>S powder was pressed, the Ag<sub>2</sub>S thermistor pellets are obtained as shown in Fig. 5.

### 3.4. NTC Ag<sub>2</sub>S thermistor resistance measurement

The resistance measurement of Ag<sub>2</sub>S thermistor pellets was aimed to determine the electrical characteristics of the Ag<sub>2</sub>S thermistor as an NTC thermistor temperature sensor. Resistance measurement was carried out on changes in temperature using a multimeter. Oil bath temperature for resistance measurement of Ag<sub>2</sub>S thermistor was carried out at a temperature variation of 25–50°C.

Based on the graph in Fig. 6, it can be seen that there is a decrease in resistance with increasing temperature. The decrease in resistance that occurs is not linear but exponential. This is in accordance with the theoretical NTC thermistor where the electrical resistance decreases logarithmically as the temperature increases. The inversely proportional relationship between resistance and temperature in the NTC is due to the increasing number of electrons as charge carriers in the conduction band as the temperature increases. The more charge carriers the resistance will decrease [27].

The relationship between resistivity and thermistor temperature is shown in equation (6) [28]:

$$\rho = \rho_0 \exp\left(\frac{E_a}{kT}\right) \tag{6}$$

Where,  $\rho$  = resistivity at temperature T ( $\Omega\text{cm}$ ),  $\rho_0$  = constant ( $\Omega\text{cm}$ ),  $E_a/k = B$  = constant of thermistor, and T = temperature (K). The value of constant of thermistor (B) can be obtained by plotting  $\ln \rho$  vs  $1/T$  as shown in Fig. 7.

Based on Fig. 7 the relationship between  $\ln \rho$  and  $1/T$  obtained different gradients for each variation of annealing temperature. This gradient value is used to determine the characteristics of the

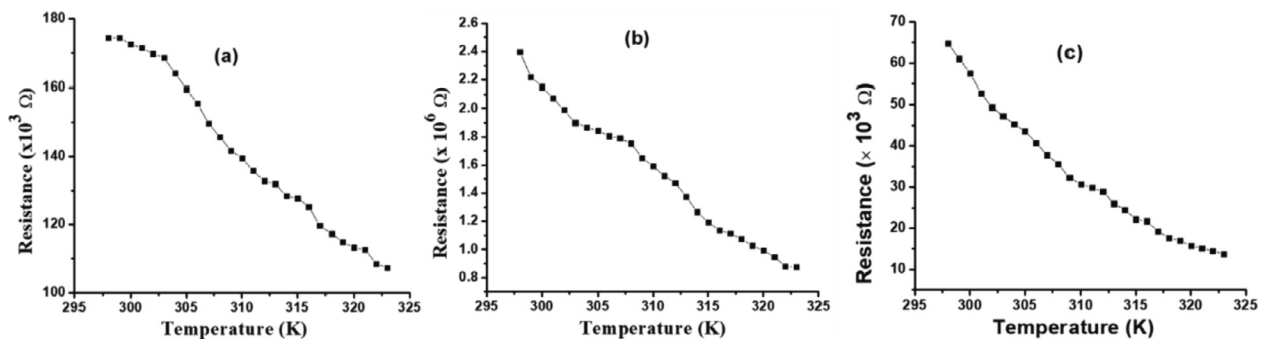


Fig. 6. Correlation graph between resistance of Ag<sub>2</sub>S thermistor vs T prepared from Ag<sub>2</sub>S powder annealed at (a) 100°C, (b) 200°C, and (c) 300°C.

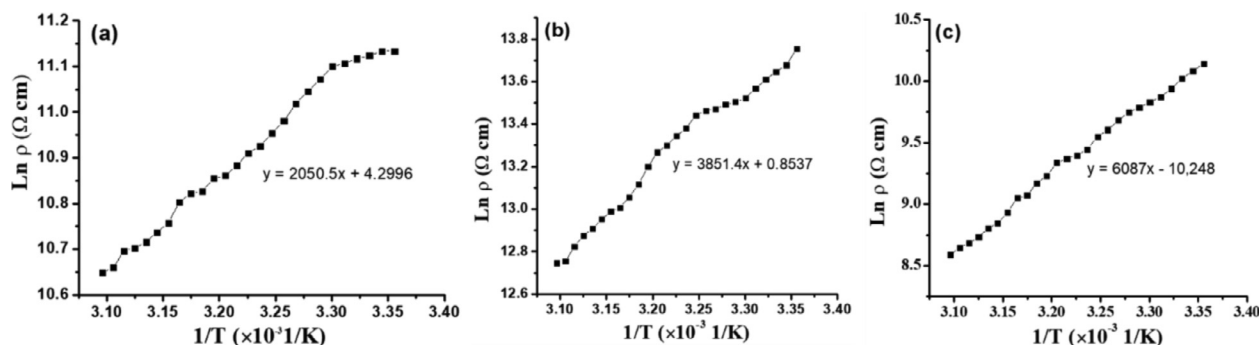


Fig. 7. Correlation graph of  $\ln \rho$  vs  $1/T$  for sample annealed at (a) 100 °C, (b) 200 °C, and (c) 300 °C.

**Table 2**  
NTC thermistor constants and sensitivity.

Annealing (°C)	B (K)	$\alpha$ (%)
100	2050	-2,30
200	3851	-4,33
300	6087	-6,85

$\text{Ag}_2\text{S}$  thermistor, namely the thermistor constant value (B). From this constant value, the thermistor sensitivity ( $\alpha$ ) can be determined by using equation (7) [27]:

$$\alpha = -\frac{B}{T^2} \times 100\% \quad (7)$$

Where,  $\alpha$  = sensitivities thermistor, B = constant of thermistor, and T = temperature (K).

The results of the calculation of the quality characteristics of the NTC thermistor from the synthesized  $\text{Ag}_2\text{S}$  are presented in Table 2, namely by obtaining the thermistor constant and sensitivity data. Based on Table 2 the characteristics of the synthesized thermistor with annealing temperature of 300 °C is the thermistor with the best response to temperature changes because it has the best sensitivity. The annealing temperature increases the thermistor constant value [24,29,30]. The increase in the thermistor constant is due to the relationship of crystal growth with higher annealing temperatures, resulting in larger crystal grains. The thermistor constants and sensitivity produced on the NTC  $\text{Ag}_2\text{S}$  thermistor at annealing temperature of 300 °C are 6087 K and 6.85%, respectively. This value is in accordance with the research of Taufik et al. [31] where the thermistor constant and sensitivity of the synthesized thermistor were 5982 K and 6.73%, respectively.

#### 4. Conclusion

The synthesis of  $\text{Ag}_2\text{S}$  with excess NaOH at various annealing temperatures causes an effect on the crystal grain size, bandgap and quality of the  $\text{Ag}_2\text{S}$  NTC thermistor. The NTC  $\text{Ag}_2\text{S}$  thermistor with annealing temperature of 300 °C is very sensitive to temperature changes. The thermistor constant and the resulting sensitivity are 6087 K and 6.85%.

#### CRedit authorship contribution statement

**Gunawan:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Project administration, Resources, Validation, Writing – review & editing. **D. Sinaga:** Data curation, Formal analysis, Investigation, Methodology, Validation, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. **M.C. Djunaedi:** Data curation, Formal analysis, Investigation, Methodology, Validation, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. **A. Haris:** Data curation, Formal analysis, Investigation,

Methodology, Validation, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing.

#### Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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