

# The Effect of Waste Magnesium to Boric Acid Ratio in Hydrothermal Magnesium Borate Synthesis at 70°C

E. Moroydor Derun, A. S. Kipcak, A. Kaplan, and S. Piskin

**Abstract**—Magnesium wastes are produced by many industrial activities. This waste problem is becoming a future problem for the world. Magnesium borates have many advantages such as; high corrosion resistance, heat resistance, high coefficient of elasticity and can also be used in the production of material against radiation. Addition, magnesium borates have great potential in sectors including ceramic and detergents industry and superconducting materials.

In this study, using the starting materials of waste magnesium and  $H_3BO_3$ , the hydrothermal method was applied at a moderate temperature of 70°C. Several mole ratios of waste magnesium to  $H_3BO_3$  are selected as; 1:2, 1:4, 1:6, 1:8, 1:10. Reaction time was determined as 1 hour. After the synthesis, X-Ray Diffraction (XRD) and Fourier Transform Infrared Spectroscopy (FT-IR) techniques are applied to products. As a result the forms of mcallisterite " $Mg_2(B_6O_7(OH)_6)_2 \cdot 9(H_2O)$ ", admontite " $MgO(B_2O_3)_3 \cdot 7(H_2O)$ " and magnesium boron hydrate ( $MgO(B_2O_3)_3 \cdot 6(H_2O)$ " are obtained.

**Keywords**—Hydrothermal synthesis, magnesium borates, waste magnesium.

## I. INTRODUCTION

RESPONDING to unlimited human needs on higher levels with the help of technology makes it inevitable for the environment and human health to be faced with serious threats as the natural resources are increasingly destroyed and each product manufactured is finally transformed into waste [1]. One of the dangerous wastes is metal wastes and scraps. Distribution of waste per person in the United States and Turkey are 8.9% and 7% of metal waste, respectively [2].

Both in the production and marketing phases, through minimizing the production of waste materials, the excessive pressure on the natural resources should be prevented; of course in the consumption phase, the production of wastes should be minimized and the remaining waste materials should be recycled and transformed from waste to an input to the economy [1].

Magnesium is a chemical element with the symbol Mg, atomic number 12, and common oxidation number +2. Magnesium is the lightest of all design metals. It's light in

weight just like a plastic material and also tough like a metal. It's high specific toughness and rigidity, good machinability, castability and weldability with known methods makes it attractive for chemical industry. Also magnesium's scrap material can be used in recycling processes all over the world [3].

Boron, the fifth element in the periodic table, has widespread commercial uses. Boron (B) has an atomic weight of 10.81 g/mol with two isotopes,  $^{10}B$  and  $^{11}B$ , neither of which is radioactive [4], [5]. Because boron is electron-deficient, it has a strong affinity for electron donors such as oxygen, which explains the absence of boron in its elemental form in nature. Boron containing minerals are almost all inorganic salts of boron and commercially important deposits are found in the United States, Turkey, South America, Russia, and China [6]. In addition, boron as borates or boric acid is ubiquitously present in soil, water, and food where its presence is due to its being an essential element for plant growth [4], [5].

In the United States today, the major uses of boron minerals and chemicals include manufacture of glass, especially glass fibers, ceramics, detergents and bleaches, alloys and metals, fire retardants, fertilizers and increasingly wood preservatives. The European Borates Association listed EU uses as including glass (insulation fiberglass, textile fiberglass, borosilicate glass), ceramics, detergents (perborates), cleaning materials, cosmetics, flame retardants, fertilizers, wood preservatives, industrial fluids (metal-working, antifreeze, brake fluids, motor oil), metallurgy, and miscellaneous chemical formulations. The Chinese Mining Association reported that borax and boric acid are used in the chemical industry, the light industry, in medicines, building materials, and other uses [6].

Boric acid can be produced from the reactions of various boron minerals (such as colemanite, ulexite and borax) with various acid solutions (such as hydrochloric acid, phosphoric acid, sulfuric acid, propionic acid, acetic acid, and nitric acid) and these reactions were widely investigated in earlier studies which were mostly focused on determining reaction kinetics and the effects of reaction temperature, stirring rate, particle size of the colemanite ore, and acid concentration on the reaction rate [7]. Commercially, the most used boron compound is boric acid. In Turkey, boric acid is produced through the reaction between colemanite and sulphuric acid [8].

Boric acid is an inexpensive, nontoxic compound, and it is generally considered a green material. It is an excellent

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precursor for the preparation of various types of organoboranes and is also used as a mild Lewis acid catalyst for several organic transformations.  $\alpha$ -Hydroxyamides are important synthetic intermediates in organic synthesis and also serve as valuable agents in medicinal chemistry [9].

Metal borates are remarkable ceramic materials with excellent mechanical properties and high resistance to corrosion and they possess attractive thermal properties [10]. There are many kinds of metal borates found not only in nature but also synthesized in the laboratory [11]. Some of these metal borates have different application areas due to their useful properties [12]. Magnesium borate which can be synthesized in the laboratory has been shown to be a thermoluminescence phosphor, a good antiwear, high heat resistance, corrosion resistance, supermechanical strength, superinsulation, light weight, high coefficient of elasticity and a reducing friction additive.  $Mg_2B_2O_5$  is also a ferroelastic material. Thus, one-dimensional metal borate nanostructures can have potential applications in the fields of nanocomposites, nanomechanics, and nanoelectronics [9], [10].

Magnesium borates like the other metal borates are not only found in nature but also produced synthetically in the laboratory. Five hydrated magnesium borates belong to  $MgO \cdot 3B_2O_3 \cdot nH_2O$  ( $n = 7.5, 7, 6, 5$  and  $3.5$ ) are found up to now. It is also known that magnesium borates exist as compounds such as  $3MgO \cdot B_2O_3$  ( $Mg_3B_2O_6$ ),  $2MgO \cdot B_2O_3$  ( $Mg_2B_2O_5$ ), and  $MgO \cdot B_2O_3$  ( $MgB_2O_4$ ). These magnesium borates have many potential application areas such as catalysts useful for the conversion of hydrocarbons and as luminescent materials for use in fluorescent discharge lamps, cathode ray tube screens, and X-ray screens. It may be also used as fused cast refractory that possesses corrosion-erosion resistance in basic oxygen steel making environments and high degree of thermal shock resistance. Finally, it is used as electroconductive treating agent or as a reinforcing material for plastics [12].

Magnesium borates can be synthesized by liquid-state or solid-state methods. In literature, synthesized magnesium borate minerals with liquid-state method can be listed as;  $MgBO_2(OH)$  [13],  $MgO \cdot 3B_2O_3 \cdot 17H_2O$  [14],  $MgO \cdot 3B_2O_3 \cdot 3.5H_2O$  [15],  $2MgO \cdot 2B_2O_3 \cdot MgCl_2 \cdot 14H_2O$  [16],  $2MgO \cdot B_2O_3 \cdot H_2O$  and  $MgO \cdot 3B_2O_3 \cdot 7H_2O$  [17]. Synthesized magnesium borate minerals with solid-state method can be listed  $Mg_2B_2O_5$  [18]-[20],  $Mg_3B_2O_6$  [21], [22]. The common feature of all studies done as a raw material  $MgO$  or  $Mg(OH)_2$  is to use in synthesis.

In this study, magnesium borate was synthesized by hydrothermal technique and magnesium wastes were used as magnesium source. It can be sample as a new perspective in evaluation of metal wastes.

## II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

### A. Raw Material Preparation and Characterization

Magnesium wastes (Fig. 1 (a)) were taken from local gold factory in Turkey. These wastes were occurred from the instance of plastic molding in the manufacturing processes

where these wastes stored in the factory.

Boric acid (Fig. 1 (b)) was retrieved from the Boron Management Plant in Bandırma, Turkey. It was grinded with agate mortar (Fig. 1 (c)) and sieved (Fig. 1 (d)) to a particle size below 74 microns.

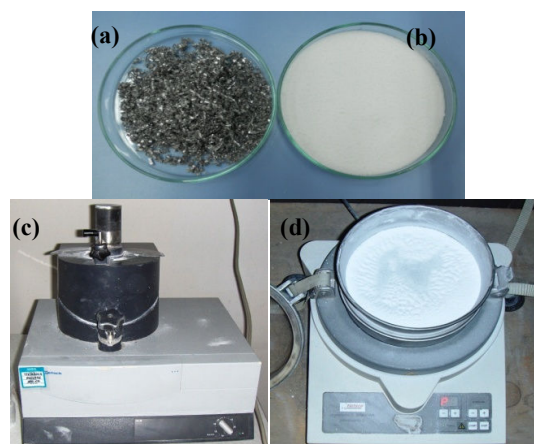


Fig.1 (a) Waste Mg, (b) Boric acid (c) Grinding process (d) Sieving process

Magnesium wastes and boric acid were subjected to X-Ray Diffraction (XRD) analysis with Philips PANalytical brand (Fig. 2 (a)) where in this equipment X-rays were produced from Cu-K $\alpha$  tube at the parameters of 45kV and 40mA [4].

Magnesium wastes were subjected to X-Ray Fluorescence (Fig. 2 (b)) analysis by Philips PANalytical brand Minipal Model 4 with silicon drift detector [23].

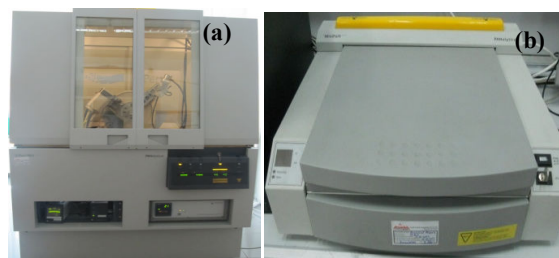


Fig. 2 (a) Philips PANalytical XRD (b) Philips PANalytical XRF

Also magnesium wastes were analyzed with Scanning electron microscope with Energy Disperse Spectroscopy (SEM-EDX) by CamScan Apollo 300 field-emission SEM (Fig. 3) and EDS detector brand is Oxford.

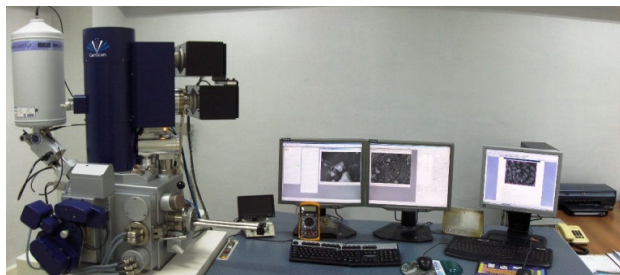


Fig. 3 CamScan Apollo 300 SEM

Boric acid was subjected to Perkin Elmer Spectrum One (Fig. 4) Fourier Transform Infrared Spectroscopy (FT-IR) and Perkin Elmer Brand, techniques. In the FT-IR technique Universal ATR sampling accessory – Diamond / ZnSe is used and measurement range is selected as  $4000\text{--}650\text{cm}^{-1}$ , scan number is 4 and resolution set as  $4\text{cm}^{-1}$ .



Fig. 4 Perkin Elmer Spectrum One FT-IR

### B. Hydrothermal Synthesis of Magnesium Borates

For the hydrothermal synthesis, starting molar ratio of waste magnesium to boric acid was selected as 1:2, 1:4, 1:6, 1:8, 1:10. The liquid phase was used as ultra-pure water ( $18.3\text{ m}\Omega\cdot\text{cm}$ ) that was produced from the equipment of Human Power I+ Water Purification System.

Experiment temperature was selected as  $70^\circ\text{C}$ , and four different reaction concentrations (1:2, 1:4, 1:6, 1:8, 1:10) were conducted to investigate the phase transition between different types of magnesium borates according to the reaction concentration changes.

After the reaction, the first filtration process was used for the removal of excess magnesium and other trace amount of metals inside the waste magnesium. In this process,  $70^\circ\text{C}$  water was used for the washing and dispersing the synthesized magnesium borates below the filter paper. After that the slurry content was dried in Ecocell model oven at  $40^\circ\text{C}$ . The dried content was washed and filtered with pure alcohol ( $96^\circ$ ), supplied from Merck Chemicals, in order to remove excess boric acid content that was unreacted in the hydrothermal reaction. Then the filtered content was dried in Ecocell model oven again at  $40^\circ\text{C}$ .

### C. Characterization of the Synthesized Magnesium Borates

At this step synthesized materials were subjected to XRD and FT-IR techniques with the parameter set explained at part

II.A.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### A. Raw Material Characterization Results

XRD patterns of the waste magnesium and boric acid were shown in Figs. 5 and 6 respectively.

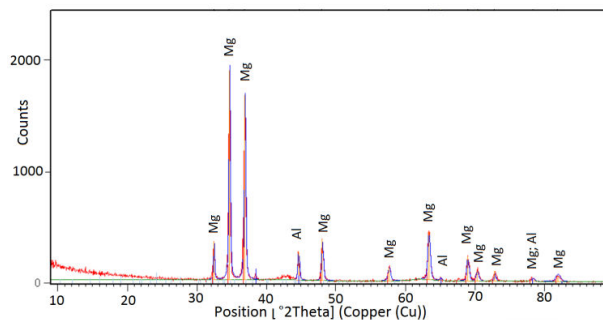


Fig. 5 XRD pattern of waste magnesium [24].

From the waste magnesium XRD pattern, the major peaks represent the 01-089-5003 numbered powder diffraction file (pdf) magnesium also some aluminum minor peaks are observed with pdf number of 01-089-2769 [24].

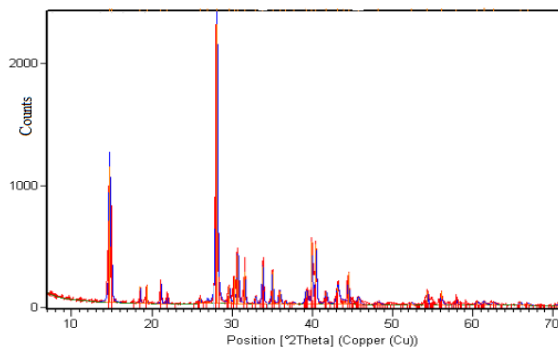


Fig. 6 XRD pattern of boric acid

From the boric acid XRD pattern, peaks represent the “ $\text{H}_3\text{BO}_3$  (Sassolite)” formulated and pdf numbered “01-073-2158” boric acid.

XRF and SEM-EDS results of the waste magnesium were shown in Table I.

TABLE I  
XRF AND SEM-EDS RESULTS OF THE WASTE MAGNESIUM [24]

Elements	XRF Content (%)	SEM-EDS Content (%)
Mg	93.30	93.12
Al	3.67	3.54
Zn	0.88	1.72
Mn	0.90	1.02
S	0.08	0.21
Ca	0.11	0.14
Cr	0.03	-
Fe	0.93	-
Cu	0.14	0.25

Both XRF and SEM-EDS results showed that the major element in the waste magnesium is “magnesium” and the minor element is “aluminum”. Other elements can be classified as trace elements. XRF and SEM-EDS analysis supports the XRD analysis.

FT-IR spectrum of the boric acid is shown in Fig. 7.

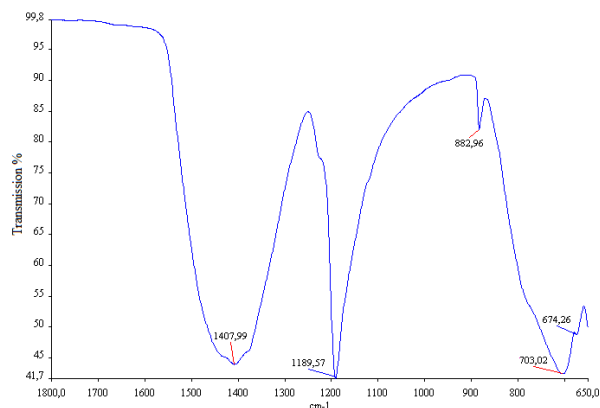


Fig. 7 FT-IR spectrum of the boric acid

According to the FT-IR analysis of the boric acid, the first peak at  $1407.99\text{ cm}^{-1}$  shows the asymmetric stretching of tri-coordinate boron ( $\text{B}_{(3)}\text{-O}$ ). The peaks at  $1189.57\text{ cm}^{-1}$  represents four coordinate boron asymmetrical stretching. Symmetric stretching of  $\text{B}_{(3)}\text{-O}$  can be seen at  $882.96\text{ cm}^{-1}$ . The last peaks with  $703.02$  and  $674.26\text{ cm}^{-1}$  explains the out-of-plane  $\text{OH}^{-1}$  bending band and stretching of  $\text{B}_{(3)}\text{-O}$  in the structure.

#### B. Synthesized Magnesium Borate XRD Results

XRD patterns and results of the synthesized magnesium borates were shown in Fig. 8 and Table II respectively.

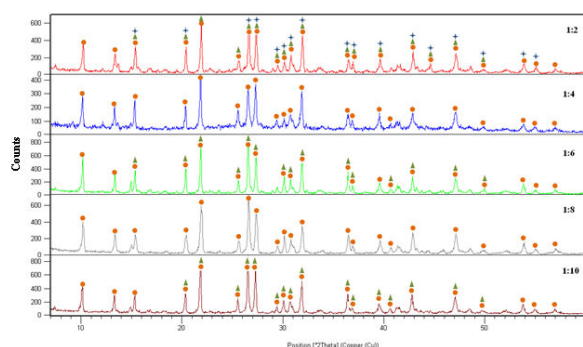


Fig. 8 XRD patterns of the synthesized magnesium borates;  
● Mcallisterite, ▲ Admontite

TABLE II  
XRD RESULTS OF THE SYNTHESIZED MAGNESIUM BORATES

Reac. Time	Mineral Code	Mineral Formula	Score
1:2	Admontite	$\text{MgO}(\text{B}_2\text{O}_3)_3 \cdot 7\text{H}_2\text{O}$	28
	Mcallisterite	$\text{Mg}_2((\text{B}_6\text{O}_7)(\text{OH})_6)_2 \cdot 9\text{H}_2\text{O}$	82
1:4	MgBH*	$\text{MgO}(\text{B}_2\text{O}_3)_3 \cdot 3(\text{H}_2\text{O})_6$	26
	Mcallisterite	$\text{Mg}_2((\text{B}_6\text{O}_7)(\text{OH})_6)_2 \cdot 9\text{H}_2\text{O}$	76
1:6	Admontite	$\text{MgO}(\text{B}_2\text{O}_3)_3 \cdot 7\text{H}_2\text{O}$	20
	Mcallisterite	$\text{Mg}_2((\text{B}_6\text{O}_7)(\text{OH})_6)_2 \cdot 9\text{H}_2\text{O}$	85
1:8	Mcallisterite	$\text{Mg}_2((\text{B}_6\text{O}_7)(\text{OH})_6)_2 \cdot 9\text{H}_2\text{O}$	83
	Admontite	$\text{MgO}(\text{B}_2\text{O}_3)_3 \cdot 7\text{H}_2\text{O}$	12
1:10	Admontite	$\text{MgO}(\text{B}_2\text{O}_3)_3 \cdot 7\text{H}_2\text{O}$	12
	Mcallisterite	$\text{Mg}_2((\text{B}_6\text{O}_7)(\text{OH})_6)_2 \cdot 9\text{H}_2\text{O}$	79

\*Magnesium Boron Hydrate

From the XRD results obtained it is seen that “01-076-0540”, “01-070-1902” and “01-076-0539” pdf numbered “Admontite”, “Mcallisterite” and “Magnesium Boron Hydrate” minerals were found at all the reaction concentrations. From the waste magnesium XRD pattern, the major peaks represent mcallisterite minerals and the minor peaks represent admontite and magnesium borate hydrate minerals. The highest mcallisterite and admontite formations were seen on 1:2 and 1:6; pure mcallisterite formation was obtained in 1:4 and 1:8 rates of reaction concentration. Magnesium boron hydrate formation was only seen on 1:2 rate of reaction concentration.

#### C. Synthesized Magnesium Borate FT-IR Results

FT-IR spectrums of synthesized minerals were shown in Fig 9.

TABLE III  
XRD POWDER DIFFRACTION FILES OF MINERALS

Pdf #	Mineral Code
01-076-0540	Admontite
01-070-1902	Mcallisterite
01-076-0539	MgBH

TABLE IV  
FT-IR PEAK INTERPRETATIONS

Peaks ( $\text{cm}^{-1}$ )	Peak Interpretation
1600-1400	$\text{B}_3\text{-O}$ asymmetrical stretching
1400-1200	$\text{OH}^{-1}$ in plane stretching
1200-950	$\text{B}_4\text{-O}$ asymmetrical stretching
950-850	$\text{B}_3\text{-O}$ symmetrical stretching
850-750	$\text{OH}^{-1}$ out of plane stretching
750-650	$\text{B}_3\text{-O}$ stretching

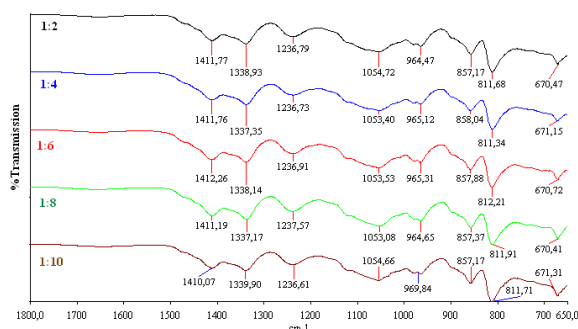


Fig. 9 FT-IR spectrums of synthesized minerals

In the FT-IR spectrums the peak values between  $1412.26$  and  $1410.07\text{cm}^{-1}$  represents the three coordinate boron asymmetrical stretching. Other two peaks at around  $1339.90$  and  $1236.61\text{cm}^{-1}$  was  $\text{OH}^{-1}$  in plane stretching due to the crystal waters inside the magnesium borates. The peaks with  $1054.72$  and  $954.65\text{cm}^{-1}$  represents four coordinate boron asymmetrical stretching. Symmetric stretching of  $\text{B}_{(3)}\text{-O}$  can be seen between  $858.04$  and  $857.08\text{cm}^{-1}$ . Also in magnesium borates  $\text{OH}^{-1}$  out of plane stretching was seen between  $812.21$  and  $811.34\text{cm}^{-1}$ . The last peak represents the stretching of three coordinate boron with the peaks values at around  $670\text{cm}^{-1}$ .

#### IV. CONCLUSIONS

Amount of the waste products are increasing all over the world. Also the storage of this waste is the other serious problem. The use of waste, as a raw material provides energy efficiency and decreases the cost of raw materials. Therefore in this study magnesium wastes were used as a raw material in magnesium borate production. From the results of this study it is seen that magnesium wastes can be used in the hydrothermal synthesis of magnesium borates at such a moderate temperature of  $70^{\circ}\text{C}$ . The analysis results (XRD and FT-IR) showed that combined hydrothermal synthesis of magnesium borates in different concentrations. From the experiment results obtained the overall yields of the productions were found between 45-75 %.

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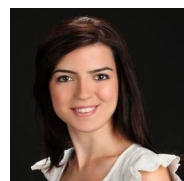
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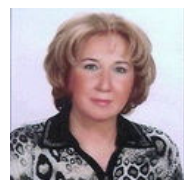
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**Aycin Kaplan** was graduated from Chemical Engineering Department in 2012 at Yildiz Technical University, Istanbul. After B.Sc., she started her M.Sc. studies about Chemical Engineering in 2012. Her research interest is in synthesis and characterization of boron minerals and waste management.



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