



ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Study of the Adsorption Performance of a Cationic Dye onto a Moroccan Clay

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KEYWORDS

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ABSTRACT: The purpose of this study is to examine the adsorption process of a cationic dye, in this case Methylene Blue (MB), on Moroccan natural clay collected from Marrakech region. The influence of physicochemical parameters (contact time, pH, mass of the adsorbent, initial Methylene Blue concentration and temperature) on MB adsorption performance on clay was studied. Experimental results showed a remarkable and rapid elimination within the first twenty minutes of contact of the two phases. The adsorption kinetics of Methylene Blue was evaluated applying pseudo first and second order kinetic models. The kinetic study demonstrates that adsorption obeys the pseudo second order model. The adsorption process was determined by applying the Langmuir and Freundlich isotherms. The maximum adsorption capacity of the raw clay is about 32 mg g⁻¹. The temperature effect on dye adsorption was also examined and thermodynamic parameters were calculated.

INTRODUCTION

The discharges from the textile industry are a huge nuisance to human health and the aquatic life [1, 2]. In particular, the various dyes used cause grave problems due to their low biodegradability and their high stability [3, 4]. As a result of this great threat to the environment, a lot of work has been done on water pollution control in recent years and several pollution control processes have been developed [5, 6]. These processes include ion exchange resin, electro dialysis, chemical precipitation, nanofiltration, adsorption, etc. [7, 8]. However, adsorption is still a relatively widely used method in wastewater treatment. Because of its high removal

efficiency, and its easy-to-implement technique in liquid waste treatment processes [9]. Activated Carbon was the highly commonly used adsorbent due to its elevated adsorption capacity due to its highly developed porosity, large surface area, and high reactivity [10, 11]. However, this adsorbent is expensive and remains hard to regenerate [12]. The search for another efficient and cheaper adsorbent is interesting. In this regard, the usage of clay as an adsorbent is of great interest because of its efficiency, availability in nature and abundance [13]. The purpose of this work is to investigate the effect of physicochemical parameters (contact time, Clay mass,

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solution pH, dye concentration and temperature) on the kinetics and thermodynamics of the adsorption of a cationic dye (MB), on a natural clay (taken from Marrakech region). The experimental results revealed that the retention of this dye onto clay depends on the initial concentration of the dye and the amount of raw clay and insignificantly influenced by the temperature of the medium and the solution pH. The kinetics of MB adsorption by the clay was evaluated applying the pseudo first and second order equations. The raw clay adsorption process was determined by Langmuir and Freundlich isotherms. Thermodynamic parameters such as the enthalpy ΔH , entropy ΔS , and free enthalpy ΔG were evaluated.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Adsorbent

The adsorbent utilized in this study is a natural clay used in its raw state without prior physical or chemical pretreatment, collected from region of Marrakech in southern Morocco, crushed and the obtained material is sieved to obtain homogeneous fractions, lower than 112 μm and then dried, for 24 hours, at 100 $^{\circ}\text{C}$ to exclude any water molecules that may be present in the material.

Adsorbate

Methylene Blue was purchased from Solvachim (Morocco). The structure of the molecule of MB, which is a cationic dye, of chemical formula $\text{C}_{16}\text{H}_{18}\text{N}_3\text{S}^+\text{Cl}^-$ and molar mass of 319.85 mol g^{-1} , is given in Figure 1.

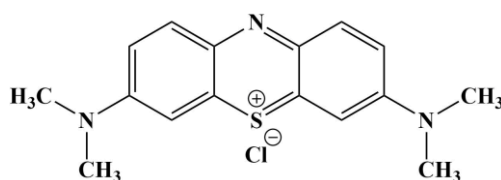


Figure 1. Methylene Blue Molecular Structure

The stock dye solution (1 g L^{-1}) was made by dissolving a precisely weighed amount of dye powder in 1000 mL of bidistilled water. All desirable working concentrations were obtained by diluting the stock solution.

Adsorption studies

The adsorption experiments were carried out by introducing an accurately weighed amount of raw clay into a 0.1 L volume of colored solution at the desired concentration, pH, and temperature. Samples were taken in a regular time interval, and separated from the adsorbent by centrifugation. The filtrate absorbance was determined by a UV/Visible spectrophotometer (Selecta P, Model UV-2005) at the maximum absorption wavelength of MB ($\lambda_{\text{max}} = 665 \text{ nm}$).

The adsorption efficiency $R\%$ and capacity q_t (mg g^{-1}) were determined using the following equations:

$$R\% = \frac{(C_0 - C_t)}{C_0} \times 100$$

$$q_t = \frac{(C_0 - C_t)}{m} V$$

With C_0 (ppm) is the dye initial concentration, C_t (ppm) is the concentration dye at moment t , V (L) is the solution volume and m (g) is the amount of the clay.

The pH effect on MB adsorption was studied over a pH interval (1.5-11). The pH was adjusted utilizing 10^{-1} M solutions from NaOH and HCl. The effect of the adsorbent mass (0.02-0.16 g) and the adsorbate initial concentration (10-300 ppm) were also studied.

The kinetic study was performed by shaking the previously determined optimum clay mass in 10 ppm methylene blue solution. Dye removal was monitored during 3 hours of contact with the adsorbent. Pseudo first and second order kinetic models were used to evaluate adsorption Kinetics. The adsorption equilibrium isotherms of Langmuir and Freundlich were studied and their parameters were determined. On the other hand, the temperature was varied from 25 to 55 $^{\circ}\text{C}$ to inspect the effect of this parameter on the adsorption phenomenon and to deduce the thermodynamic parameters.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Characterization of the adsorbent

X-ray fluorescence spectroscopy

Table 1 represents the chemical composition of the raw clay. As can be seen from the table, silica and alumina are the predominant constituents, with a $\text{SiO}_2/\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3$ ratio

equal to 3.64 which refers to the high presence of free quartz in our clay sample [14, 15]. Total composition of Fe_2O_3 , K_2O , Na_2O and MgO attains 8.16%, which indicates that the analyzed clay contains impurities [16]. In addition, the high content of these oxides compared to the level of other oxides probably shows that the clay contains exchangeable cations such as Mg^{2+} , K^+ or Na^+ . The low percentage of CaO implies a low content of CaCO_3 [17].

Table 1. Clay chemical composition.

Constituent	Concentration%	Constituent	Concentration %
SiO_2	65.80	TiO_2	0.76
Al_2O_3	18.10	P_2O_5	0.17
Fe_2O_3	3.56	SO_3	0.12
K_2O	2.12	MnO_2	0.08
MgO	1.41	BaO	0.06
Na_2O	1.07	ZrO_2	0.06
CaO	0.78	Cl	0.05
LoI	5.77	ZnO	0.01

Infrared Fourier Transform Spectroscopy (FTIR)

The analysis of the raw clay by Fourier Transform Infrared Spectroscopy was done by utilizing a Vertex 70 spectrometer with scanning range $[4000\text{-}400\text{ cm}^{-1}]$. The IR spectra shown in Figure 2, show a band located at 3420 cm^{-1} refers to the elongation vibrations of OH [18, 19] and the wide band at 1628 cm^{-1} is attributed to H_2O

deformation. The bands located at 1030, 787 and 693 cm^{-1} refer to the Si–O stretching vibrations [20, 21]. Intense peaks observed at 533 cm^{-1} and 472 cm^{-1} assignable respectively to the deformation of Si–O–Al and Si–O–Mg [22]. The bands at 3622 and 923 cm^{-1} are assigned to the deformation of Al–OH–Al [23].

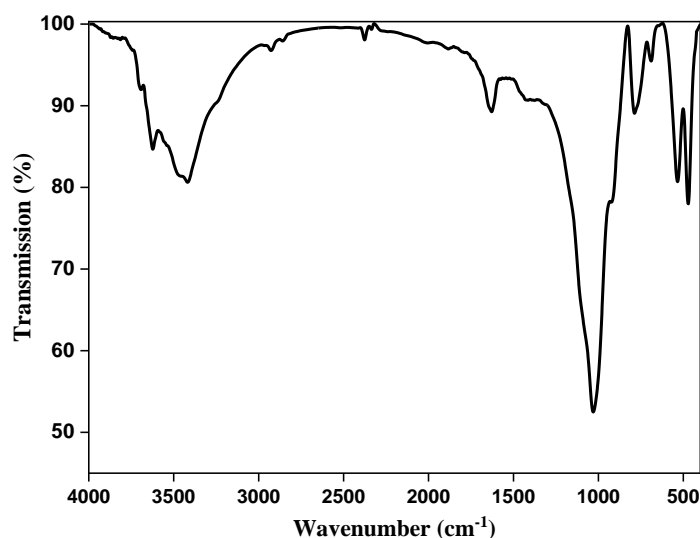


Figure 2. Infrared spectrum of raw clay.

pH zero point charge (pHpzc)

The pH zero point charge corresponds to the pH value for which, the net charge of the adsorbent surface is zero. When the $pH < pH_{pzc}$ the clay has a positive charge on the surface and has a negative charge on the surface when $pH > pH_{pzc}$ [24].

To determine the pH_{pzc} value, in a series of 12 beakers, 20 mL of a 10^{-2} M NaCl solution is placed and the pH of each beaker is adjusted (values between 1 and 12) by

adding a 10^{-1} M NaOH/HCl solution. 0.1 g of the clay is then introduced to each beaker. The suspension was stirred for 24 h and the final pH is then determined. The PZC of the sample was found by plotting $\Delta pH = f(pH_i)$ the intersection of the curve with x-axis gives the point pH_{pzc} [24]. According to Figure 3, the pH_{pzc} for our adsorbent was 8.4.

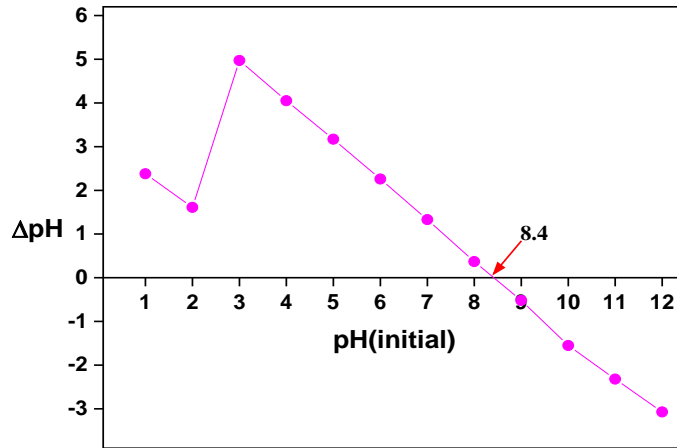


Figure 3. pH_{pzc} of clay material

Effect of clay dose

To investigate the effect of the clay dose on dye removal, volumes of 100 mL of 10 ppm MB solution were contacted with adsorbent masses between 0.02 and 0.16 g, under constant agitation for 180 min, at 25°C and initial solution pH of 5.5. Figure 4 indicates that the removal percentage of dye increases significantly from

0.02 g to 0.1 g. The increase in clay dose implies an increase in the specific surface area and the active sites of adsorption [25, 26]. Above 0.1 g, there is no significant change since the elimination percentage remains unchanged and close to 100%. Thus, the optimal mass of adsorbent will be set at 0.1 g for subsequent experiments.

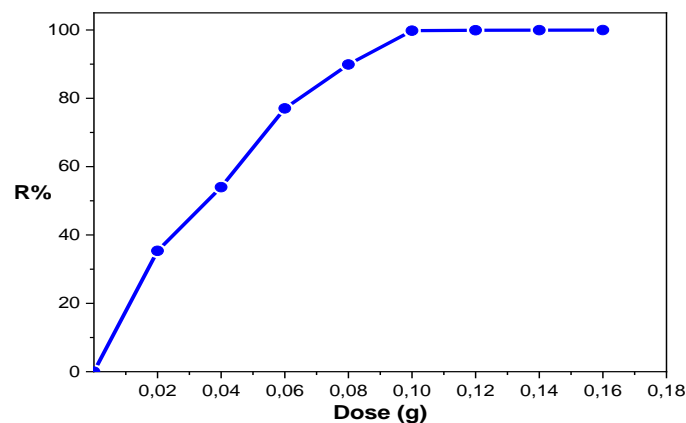


Figure 4. Variation of the MB elimination efficiency in function of the clay mass.

Adsorption kinetics

The kinetic study of MB adsorption by raw clay was conducted, at room temperature and pH 5.5, by

introducing a clay mass equivalent to 0.1 g in 0.1 L of the MB colored solution of a concentration equal to 10 ppm.

Figure 5 represents the time effect on MB adsorption. A rapid elimination of MB was recorded for the first 20 min and equilibrium is observed at approximately 60 min of contact. This rapid adsorption can be attributed to the significant availability of abundant active sites located on the clay surface. Subsequently, with the progressive

occupation of the active sites, the adsorption became less important. The decrease in MB concentration from 9.50 to 0.02 ppm is accompanied by an increase in pH values from 5.5 to 6.8, which shows that the clay substrate balances with the colored solution by capturing H^+ proton and MB^+ cations.

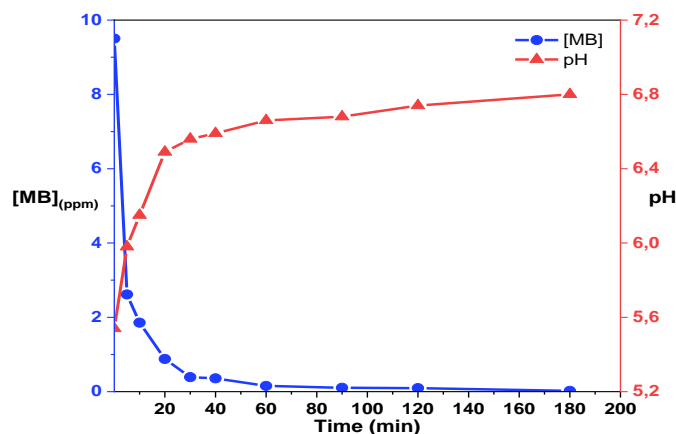


Figure 5. Simultaneous variation of pH and [MB] as a function of time.

Effect of pH

The pH is a significant parameter that should be considered during an adsorption study. The effect of this parameter on the adsorption capacity was examined over a pH interval from 1.5 to 11. The results shown in Figure 6 show that the rate of elimination of the dye is generally very little influenced by the pH variations [27, 28]. This indicates the high affinity of the dye for clay and that the H^+ and OH^- ions have a small effect on the adsorption

capacity of dye. This also indicates that the ionic exchange between the solution and the clay is not the only mechanism in this system, other types of interactions can also probably occur (hydrogen bonding, van der Waals interactions) [29]. Other studies for different dyes were also found to be independent of pH [11, 29-31].

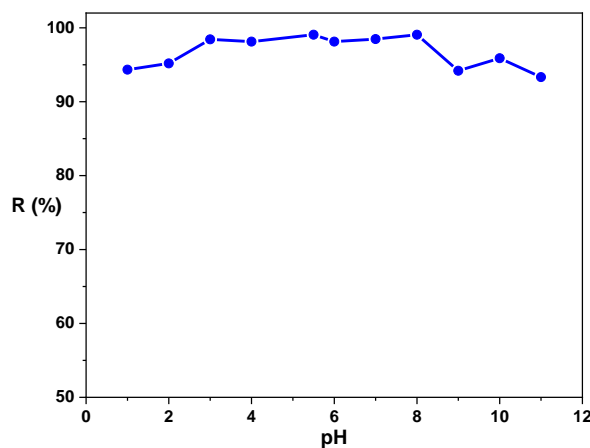


Figure 6. Initial pH effect on dye uptake by clay ($m_{\text{clay}} = 0.1$ g, $[MB] = 10$ ppm, $V = 0.1$ L, $T = 25^\circ\text{C}$).

Effect of MB initial concentration

The initial concentration effect on MB adsorption was studied. The initial dye concentration effect on clay

adsorption rates is explored in the concentration range of 10 to 300 ppm (Figure 7). It's clear from the graph that

the amount of MB adsorbed increases from 9.48 to 31.55 mg g⁻¹. It is obvious that the elimination of the MB by the clay adsorbent depends on the concentration of Methylene Blue solution since increasing the initial

concentration promotes the adsorption process. In fact, increasing concentration causes concentration gradient elevation, thus increasing the diffusion of MB molecules across the adsorbent surface [32].

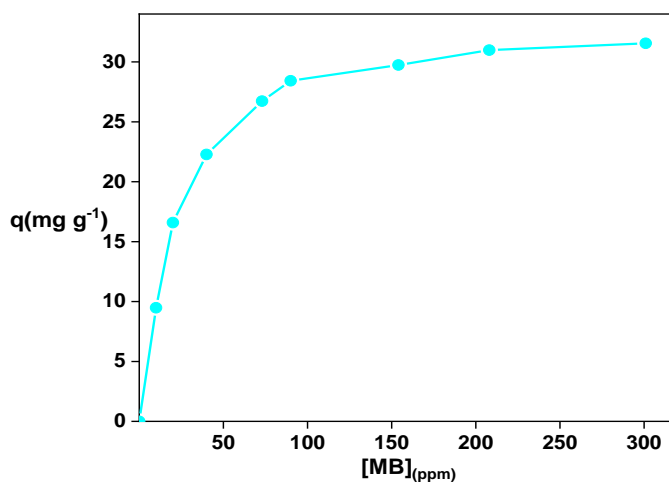


Figure 7. Variations of q(mg g⁻¹) as a function of MB initial concentration.

A similar trend was found for the removal of different dyes such as Methylene Blue on Coriandrum Sativum seeds [33], Reactive Blue 221 on Kaolinite [34], and Activated Carbon for the removal of Methyl Violet and Methyl Orange [35].

Effect of temperature

The temperature effect on adsorption phenomenon were studied by changing this parameter from 25 to 55°C. The

tests were performed by adding 0.1 g of raw clay to 100 mL of the 10 ppm Methylene Blue solution.

Figure 8 illustrates the variation in the efficiency of MB adsorption versus temperature. We noticed that the efficiency of adsorption increases moderately with increasing temperature, which indicate that temperature has no significant effect on MB adsorption onto clay [36].

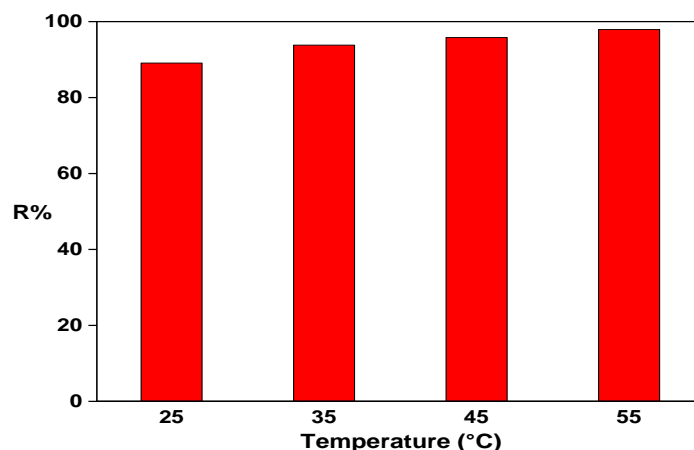


Figure 8. Variations in MB adsorption efficiency at different temperature values as a function of time.

Kinetic study

Pseudo first order

This model was suggested by Lagergren [37] and assumes that the rate of adsorption at a time t is proportional to the difference between the adsorbed

amount at equilibrium and at time t. The model is given by the following relation:

$$\log(q_e - q_t) = \log q_e - \frac{k_1}{2.303} t$$

where q_e and q_t are respectively the quantities of the dye adsorbed on the clay at equilibrium and at time t expressed in (mg g^{-1}). $k_1(\text{min}^{-1})$: speed constant. k_1 and q_e are obtained by representing $\log(q_e - q_t)$ versus t .

Pseudo second order

The adsorption data were examined according to pseudo second order kinetic model equation [38] :

$$\frac{t}{q_t} = \frac{1}{k_2 q_e^2} + \frac{1}{q_e} t$$

With $q_e(\text{mg g}^{-1})$ is the adsorbed dye amount onto clay at equilibrium, $k_2(\text{g mg}^{-1}.\text{min}^{-1})$ is the pseudo second order rate constant. q_e and k_2 are obtained by representing $t/q_t = f(t)$.

Figure 9 shows the two kinetic models, according to this representation the pseudo second order is the best suited kinetic model to translate the dye adsorption by clay.

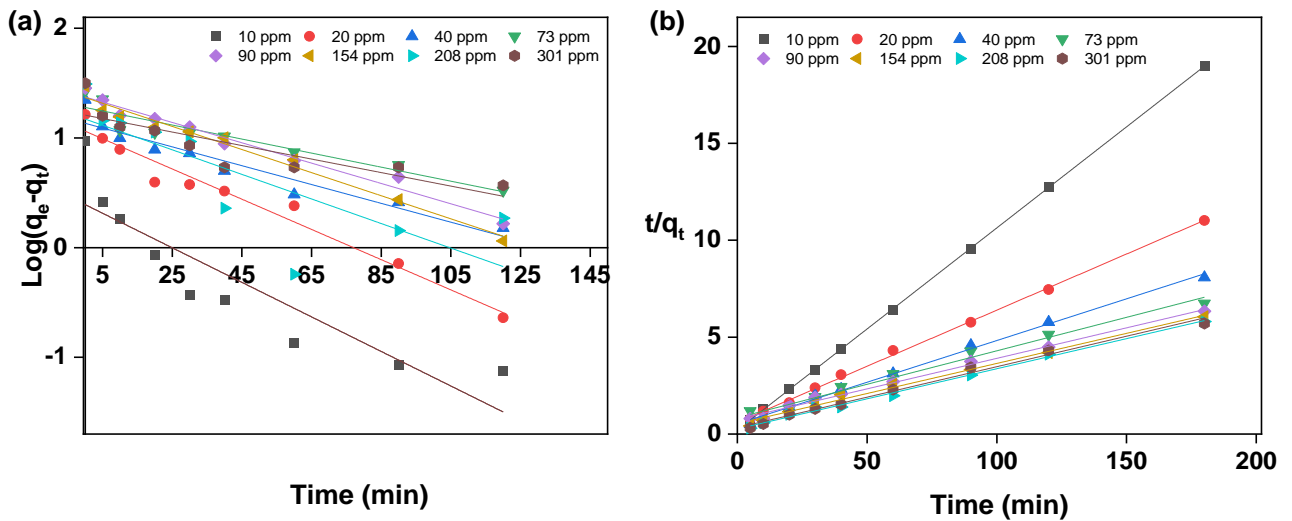


Figure 9. Representation of pseudo first order model (a) and pseudo second order model (b).

The kinetic parameters determined by these two models verify the conformity of the pseudo second order model to best describe MB adsorption onto raw clay. As shown

in Table 2, R^2 is close to unity and the values of the adsorption capacity (q_e) determined by the pseudo second order model are close to those found experimentally.

Table 2. Kinetic parameters of MB adsorption dyes at various concentration.

[MB](ppm)	$q_e(\text{exp})$	Pseudo first order			Pseudo second order		
		$q_e(\text{cal})$	K_1	R_1^2	$q_e(\text{cal})$	K_2	R_2^2
10	9.48	2.47	0.0364	0.8078	9.59	0.0532	0.9999
20	16.59	11.52	0.0318	0.9661	17.27	0.0060	0.9987
40	22.28	13.60	0.0198	0.9185	23.26	0.0039	0.9964
70	26.73	18.97	0.0147	0.8886	28.99	0.0017	0.9798
90	28.42	23.60	0.0214	0.9757	31.75	0.0016	0.9938
150	29.74	23.37	0.0242	0.9781	32.26	0.0021	0.9916
200	30.98	14.86	0.0258	0.6248	32.26	0.0039	0.9954
300	31.55	16.14	0.0143	0.7440	31.85	0.0030	0.9906

Isotherms of adsorption

To interpret the phenomenon of MB adsorption onto the clay studied, we applied Langmuir [39] and Freundlich [40] models.

Langmuir Model

The Langmuir isotherm is founded on the assumption of a limited number of active sites uniformly dispersed over the adsorbent surface. It is then assumed that once an MB

dye molecule occupies a site, no additional adsorption can take place in that site. The Langmuir isotherm equation is expressed by the following linear form:

$$\frac{C_e}{q_e} = \frac{1}{K_L q_m} + \frac{C_e}{q_m}$$

With: K_L ($L\ mg^{-1}$) adsorption Langmuir constant, q_m ($mg\ g^{-1}$): maximum adsorbed amount of solute on the solid phase, q_e ($mg\ g^{-1}$): adsorbed amount of solute at equilibrium per one gram of adsorbent and C_e : the adsorbate concentration at equilibrium in (ppm).

The straight line is obtained by plotting C_e/q_e versus C_e in the dye concentration range from 10 to 300 ppm for the raw clay (Figure 10(a)). It can be seen (Table 3) that the correlation coefficient ($R^2 = 0.999$) is near to 1. This evidences the homogeneous nature of the raw clay surface [41]. q_m and K_L were obtained, respectively, from the intercept and the slope of the plot $C_e/q_e = f(C_e)$. The maximum adsorption capacity is $31.55\ mg\ g^{-1}$.

To verify if the adsorption is favorable, we calculated R_L

the separation factor defined by:

$$R_L = \frac{1}{(1 + K_L C_0)}$$

With C_0 : initial concentration (ppm) and K_L : Langmuir constant ($L\ mg^{-1}$).

- $R_L > 1$ signifies that the adsorption is unfavorable.
- $R_L = 1$ indicates that the adsorption is linear.
- $0 < R_L < 1$ indicates that the adsorption is favorable.
- $R_L = 0$ implies that the adsorption is irreversible.

The variation of R_L values is shown in Figure 10(b), the R_L values are between 0 and 1 implying that adsorption is favorable.

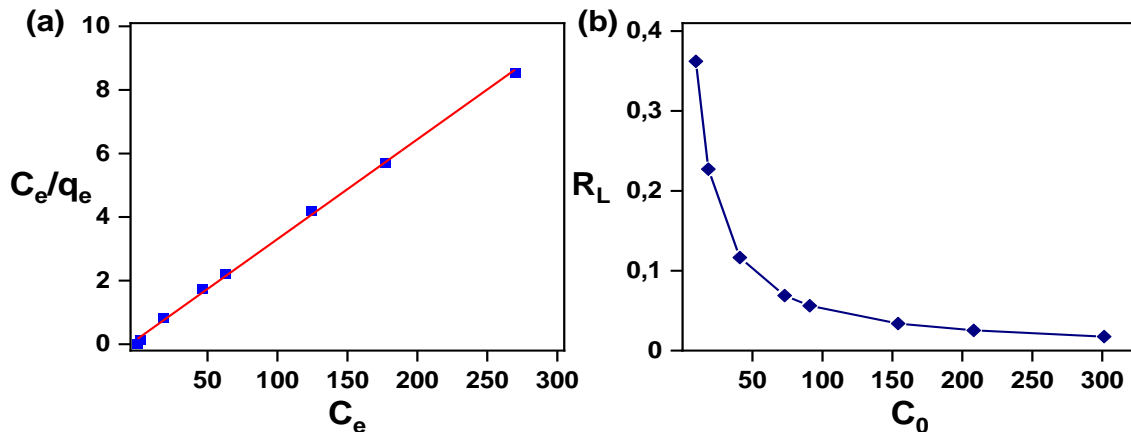


Figure 10. (a) Langmuir isotherm for MB adsorption onto clay, (b) Evolution of separation factors versus MB concentration.

Freundlich model

The Freundlich isotherm supposes that the adsorbent surface is heterogeneous and the active sites located on the surface have a non-uniform distribution of energy.

The linear form of this model is represented by:

$$\log q_e = \log K_F + \frac{1}{n} \log C_e$$

With: $1/n$: the adsorption intensity, K_F the adsorption capacity, q_e ($mg\ g^{-1}$): the adsorbed quantities at

equilibrium per one gram of adsorbent and C_e (ppm): the adsorbate concentration at equilibrium.

The value of $1/n$ is an indicator on the adsorption validity, a value of $1/n$ between 0 and 1 implies a favorable adsorption. A high K_F value means that the adsorption power of the solid phase is important.

The graphical representation of $\log (q_e) = f(\log(C_e))$ is a straight line of the steering coefficient $1/n$ and intercept

log (K_F) (Figure 11). The value of 1/n is between 0 and 1,

which indicates that the adsorption is favorable (Table 3).

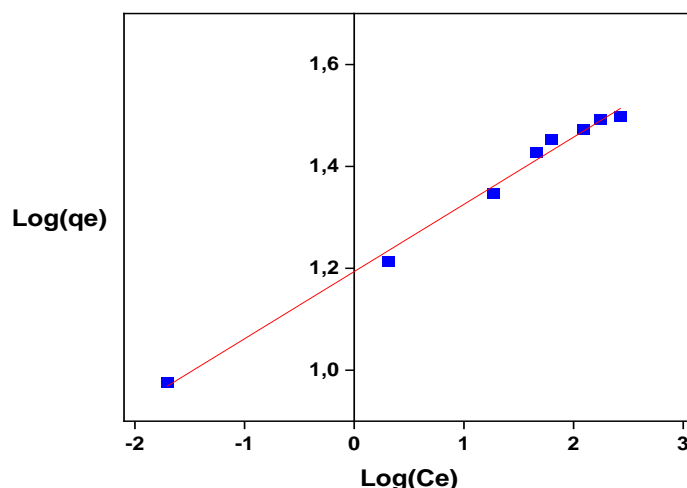


Figure 11. Freundlich isotherm for adsorption of MB onto clay.

Table 3. Parameters of the Langmuir and Freundlich adsorption model.

Freundlich	K _F		1/n	n	R ²
	15.621		0.132	7.587	0.993
Langmuir	q _{m,exp}	q _{m,calc}	K _L	DR%	R ²
	31.552	31.847	0.185	0.936	0.999

The adsorption isotherms models of MB onto clay are satisfactorily described by the two isotherms models of Langmuir and Freundlich. On the basis of the correlation coefficients presented in Table 3, we conclude that Langmuir isotherm (R² = 0.999) is better adapted to adsorption than Freundlich isotherm (R² = 0.993).

Thermodynamic parameters

The thermodynamic parameters are important in the comprehension of adsorption process, the parameters ΔG, ΔH and ΔS can be determined applying the following relations:

$$\Delta G = -RT \ln K_d$$

$$\ln K_d = -\frac{\Delta H}{RT} + \frac{\Delta S}{R}$$

Where T (K): temperature, R (J mol⁻¹ K⁻¹): universal gas constant, and K_d: equilibrium constant.

The plot of Ln (K_d) versus $\frac{1}{T}$ (Figure 12) is a straight line with a slope $\frac{\Delta H}{R}$ and an intercept $\frac{\Delta S}{R}$.

The adsorption thermodynamic parameters were calculated from the experimental data obtained at various temperatures (Table 4).

Table 4. Thermodynamic parameters of adsorption.

T(k)	K _d (g L ⁻¹)	ΔG (KJ mol ⁻¹)	ΔH(KJ mol ⁻¹)	ΔS(KJ mol ⁻¹ K ⁻¹)
298	14.19	-6.571		
308	28.20	-8.551		
318	32.73	-9.223	30.731	0.126
328	47.32	-10.518		

The negative values of ΔG signify that the adsorption of the Methylene Blue onto raw clay is spontaneous. The endothermic nature of the process is verified by the positive value of the enthalpy ΔH, the low value of ΔH (<

40 KJ mol⁻¹) shows that it is a physisorption [42], while the positive value of ΔS reveals an increase in randomness at the clay/solution interface during the process of adsorption [43, 44].

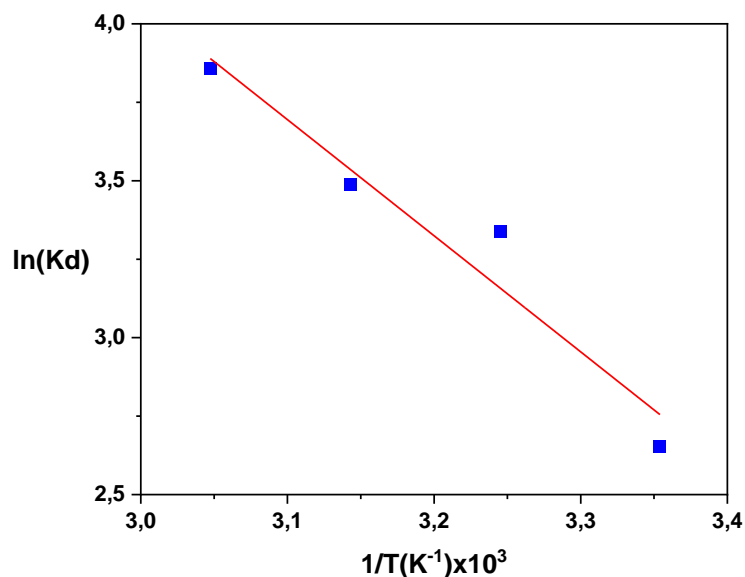


Figure 12. Representation of $\ln(K_d)$ as a function of temperature ($1/T$).

CONCLUSIONS

The study of the Methylene Blue adsorption process onto clay was the subject of this work. The results showed that the removal percentage $R\%$ is related to the clay dose: an increase of $R\%$ from 35.4% to 99.7% was observed when the clay dose was increased from 0.02 to 0.16 g. The percentage of discoloration is little influenced by the variation of the pH and temperature.

Modelling of the adsorption results showed that the pseudo second order model provides a better correlation of kinetic data and that the Langmuir model better describes the adsorption isotherm, so the dye molecules adsorb in monolayers and without any interactions between them. The maximum adsorption capacity of methylene blue dye is 31.85 mg g^{-1} . The thermodynamic parameters obtained revealed that the adsorption of the MB cationic dye onto the raw clay is a spontaneous and endothermic process. All these results indicate that Clay as a low-cost and efficient adsorbent material can potentially contribute to the elimination of dyes from textile effluents.

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