Structural and electronic properties of bimetallic Au$_n$Ag$_m$, (n + m = 20, n:m = 1:0, 3:1, 1:1, 0:1) clusters and their ions: a relativistic DFT study

Bertha Molina$^1$, Alonso E. Viladomat$^1$, Jorge R. Soto$^1$, and Jorge J. Castro$^2$

$^1$Departamento de Física, Facultad de Ciencias, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Apdo. Postal 70-646, 04510, México, D.F., México.
$^2$Departamento de Física, CINVESTAV del IPN, Apdo. Postal 14-740, 07000, México, D.F., México.

Abstract

In recent years, the study of the Au-Ag bimetallic nanoparticles has attracted considerable attention due to the possibility of tuning their optical and electronic properties as a function of the gold and silver proportions. In general, from a theoretical point of view, the search for the lowest energy bimetallic structures presents a challenging problem due to the large number of skeletal geometric structures and homotopic distributions to be considered. Furthermore, the analysis of the Au-Ag system introduces the additional component of the relativistic effects, present in the gold atom, that have to be considered. In this work, using the relativistic approach ZORA-DFT, we report the local minima in the potential energy surface of bimetallic Au$_n$Ag$_m$, (n + m = 20) clusters and their ions in selected proportions (n:m=1:0, 3:1, 1:1, 0:1) in the gas-phase. We also discussed their respective electronic properties and possible aggregation or segregation structural motifs.

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