

DEVELOPMENT OF A COMPUTATIONAL MODEL FOR BIOFILM BASED MICROBIAL FUEL CELL

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Abstract

Studies on Microbial Fuel Cells (MFC) as Power production units are of increasing interest, because it can convert a variety of bio-degradable organic compounds into electricity. In a MFC; biological, chemical and electro-chemical reactions take place resulting in a change of concentration of substrate, suspended solids and growth of a biofilm leading to a production of an electrical current. In this study a dynamic mathematical model is developed that represents the behavior of microbial fuel cell using set of derived equations those describe the consumption of substrate by microorganisms, production of oxidized mediators using reduced mediators, growth of microorganisms in the bulk liquid and the biofilm attached to the anode and production of current at the electrode surface. The system consists of a bulk liquid with suspended cells and the anode with an attached biofilm.

Performance of a MFC is evaluated by analyzing the variation of production of current with time, variation of concentration of components (microorganisms, substrate, oxidized mediator and reduced mediator) in the bulk liquid with time and variation of concentration of mediators at the electrode surface with time in various combinations of selected operating parameters (reaction rate, exchange current density and total cell resistance). It was found that, higher the reaction rate the production of current by the fuel cell is high. At the same time, reaching of maximum current production is rapid in the systems simulated with high reaction rates compared to that of the others. On the other hand, high exchange current density values give relatively low current production from the cell where the low exchange current densities give somewhat high current production. Variation of total cell resistance affects in a similar manner on current production. That is, when the cell is simulated with high cell resistance values, the production of current is low. But, the current production sustain for a rather long period.

Key words: Microbial Fuel Cell, biofilm, dynamic modeling



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Contents

Declaration of the candidate and supervisor	i
Abstract	ii
Dedication	iii
Acknowledgement	iv
Table of Content	v
List of Figures	vii
List of Tables	viii
1. INTRODUCTION	01
1.1. Introduction to fuel cells	01
1.1.1. Classification of fuel cells	01
1.1.2. Applications of fuel cells	02
1.2. Introduction to MFC	03
1.2.1. Direct Electron Transfer (DET)	04
1.2.2. Mediated Electron Transfer (MET)	04
1.3. Applications of MFC	06
1.4. Modelling of MFC	08
1.4.1. Parameters for MFC modelling	08
1.5. Validation of a model using experimental results	09
2. LITERATURE REVIEW	10
2.1. Mathematical Models for Biofilms	10
2.2. Mathematical Models for Microbial Fuel Cells	12
2.3. Mathematical Models for biofilm-based Microbial Fuel Cells	14
3. METHODOLOGY	18
3.1. Model Description	18
3.2. Model Development	18
3.2.1. Bulk Liquid	20
3.2.2. Modelling Biofilm	24
3.2.3. Electrode Surface	28
3.3. Solving the Equations	32
3.4. Model Verification	35

4.	RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	37
4.1.	Simulation for reference case (case 1)	37
4.2.	Simulations for different reaction rate values	41
4.3.	Simulations for different exchange current density values	46
4.4.	Simulations for different total cell resistance values	49
4.5.	Results on Model Verification	50
5.	CONCLUSIONS	53
6.	GRAPHICAL USER INETRFACE (GUI)	55
7.	REFERENCES	56
	Appendix A	
	Faraday's laws	58
	Appendix B	
	Manual	60
	Appendix C	
	Program Files	72



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List of Figures

Figure 1.1 Different types of fuel cells (Rose, 2006).....	1
Figure 1.2 Illustration of the DET via (A) membrane bound cytochromes, (B) electronically conducting nanowires (Schroder & Uwe, 2007)	4
Figure 1.3 MET via microbial secondary metabolites. Two possible redox mechanisms have been proposed: shuttling via outer cell membrane cytochromes and via periplasmatic or cytoplasmatic redox couples (Schroder & Uwe, 2007).....	5
Figure 3.1 Schematic diagram of microbial fuel cell	19
Figure 3.2 Control volume	21
Figure 3.3 Model Solving Procedure	34
Figure 4.1 Variation of current with time (Case 1)	38
Figure 4.2 Variation of concentration of microorganisms in the bulk liquid with time (case 1)	39
Figure 4.3 Variation of concentration of substrate in the bulk liquid with time (case 1)	39
Figure 4.4 Variation of concentration of oxidized mediator in the bulk liquid with time (case 1)	40
Figure 4.5 Variation of concentration of reduced mediator in the bulk liquid with time (case 1)	40
Figure 4.6 Variation of concentration of oxidized mediator at the electrode surface with time (case 1)	41
Figure 4.7 Variation of concentration of reduced mediator at the electrode surface with time (case 1)	41
Figure 4.9 Variation of current for different reaction rates with time (case 1, case 2 and case 3).....	42
Figure 4.10 Variation of concentration of microorganisms in the bulk liquid for different reaction rates with time (case 1, case 2 and case 3)	43
Figure 4.11 Variation of concentration of substrate in the bulk liquid with time for different reaction rates (case 1, case 2 and case 3).....	43
Figure 4.12 Variation of concentration of oxidized mediator in the bulk liquid with time for different reaction rates (case 1, case 2 and case 3).....	44

Figure 4.13 Variation of concentration of reduced mediator in the bulk liquid with time for different reaction rates (case 1, case 2 and case 3).....	44
Figure 4.14 Variation of concentration of oxidized mediator at the electrode surface with time for different reaction rates (case 1, case 2 and case 3).....	45
Figure 4.15 Variation of concentration of reduced mediator at the electrode surface with time for different reaction rates (case 1, case 2 and case 3).....	45
Figure 4.16 Variation of current with time for different exchange current densities (case 1 and case 4).....	46
Figure 4.17 Variation of concentration of oxidized mediator in the bulk liquid with time for different exchange current densities (case 1 and case 4).....	47
Figure 4.18 Variation of concentration of reduced mediator in the bulk liquid with time for different exchange current densities (case 1 and case 4).....	48
Figure 4.19 Variation of concentration of oxidized mediator at the electrode surface with time for different exchange current densities (case 1 and case 4).....	48
Figure 4.20 Variation of concentration of reduced mediator at the electrode surface with time for different exchange current densities (case 1 and case 4).....	49
Figure 4.21 Variation of current with time for different total cell resistances (case 5, case 6 and case 7).....	50
Figure 4.22 Variation of current with time in two models.....	51
Figure 4.23 Variation of concentration of oxidized mediator in the bulk liquid with time in two models.....	51
Figure 4.24 Variation of concentration of reduced mediator in the bulk liquid with time in two models.....	52

List of Tables

Table 1.1 List of Electrical Parameters related to Microbial Fuel Cells.....	8
Table 3.1 Initial conditions of components.....	31
Table 3.2 Model Parameters.....	32
Table 3.3 Model Parameters used in Verification.....	36
Table 4.1 Values of Selected Parameters.....	37



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