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【学位論文題目】

Effects of illumination conditions on growth of photosynthetic cells (光照射条件の光合成微生物増殖に与える影響)

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This thesis documented the effects of light dependent variables and other parameters, such as average light intensity, distribution of light intensity, illumination strategies, and concentration of essential ions on the growth stability in cultivation of photosynthetic microorganisms in flat plate photobioreactors.

In most of reports on cultivation of photosynthetic cells, growth kinetics of photosynthetic microorganisms has been studied in batch systems. A problem associated with batch cultivation of phototrophic microorganisms is that the operational parameters, such as average light intensity, distribution of light intensity, as well as physical and chemical conditions of culture, change continuously with increase in the cell concentration, which complicates the analysis of obtained results, and thus lowers the reliability of analysis based on the obtained data. On the other hand, continuous cultivation is a tedious job and needs long time operation and special equipments, which make the continuous operation considerably expensive.

In order to overcome mentioned problems, we developed a novel semi-continuous system, in which cells grew under almost a constant cell concentration by partial replacement of the culture broth with a fresh medium to keep the culture volume, cell concentration and light intensity distribution constant. With this method, the effects of the light intensity distribution and average light intensity on the specific growth rate of Rhodobacter capsulatus, purple bacterium, were quantitatively studied under various cell concentrations, light path lengths, incident and average light intensities.

The study showed that the ratio of the light intensity at main illuminated surface to that at transmitted surface affects the stability of cell growth in one side illumination and pointed out that this phenomenon must be considered for stable batch and continuous cultivation of photosynthetic cells. It was speculated that photosynthesis of pigments might be affected by the light intensity distribution. Therefore, in order to maintain the stable level of growth of photosynthetic cells, it should be considered in parallel to other general and light dependent variables.

This study also showed that the instability of the specific growth rate might be special characteristics in Rhodobacter capsulatus species, since the instability was observed in semi-continuous cultivation of two strains, R. capsulatus B-100, a wild type

strain, and R. capsulatus ST-410, a hydrogenase deficient mutant derived from R. capsulatus B-100. On the other hand, the instability of the specific growth rate was not observed in cultivation of Chlorella vulgaris, photosynthetic microalga, even at a higher cell concentration. It is worth to remind that the performance of photosystems in eukaryote and prokaryote responding to environmental parameters such as light-dark cycles is quite different, and thus, different response is normally expected. However, availability of longer adaptation time for low grown rate, such as microalgae, might be considered as another explanation.

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By increasing the ferrous ion concentration in fresh medium and culture broth, the specific growth rate was maintained at a constant level. However, the concentration of Fe²⁺ in culture was almost constant and the additional Fe²⁺ was not consumed by cells. More importantly, the results proved that the decrease in the specific growth rate was not caused by deficiency of any other nutrients in RCV medium. The increase in the Fe²⁺ concentration might increase the driving force for transport of Fe²⁺ to cells, and thus, the availability of ferrous ions, which might cause the change in physiology of the cells to sustain stable growth.

Supplemental illumination from the transmitted side of the cultivation vessels, especially at lower light intensities, was also effective to maintain constant specific growth rates. With illumination at low light intensities, such as 0.2 and 0.5 mW/cm². from the transmitted side by use of the halogen lamp, the specific growth rate reached stable growth rates, which were higher than that observed under typical conditions causing the instability with one side illumination. Under supplemental illumination with one fluorescent lamp in place of the halogen lamp, a stable level of growth rate, which was higher than those with the halogen lamp, was sustained. The different responses of cells to these light sources might be referred to the difference in spectra of their emitting light wavelengths. For example, the wavelengths emitted from the halogen lamp were distributed in longer wavelengths than those of the florescent lamp. After the decrease in the specific growth rate under conditions causing the instability, the original specific growth rate was recovered by increasing the concentration of Fe²⁺ in the cultivation broth and also in the supplied fresh medium under the same unstable conditions. It was shown

that the decrease in the specific growth rate was mainly caused by depression of metabolism of cells. Thus, the increase in the Fe2+ concentration can change physiological conditions inside cells and recover the original specific growth. We also found that the supplemental illumination by fluorescent lamp, could gradually recover the growth rate. However, the recovered specific growth rate was lower than that obtained by supplemental illumination with the fluorescent lamp from the start of cultivation. In this case, it seemed that growth stability requires a longer time to be completely recovered.

Although the physiological reason for the instability of growth rate is still unclear, we showed that the ratio of chlorophyll content per unit weight of cell can be used as a promising criterion to predict the cultivation stability of Rhodobacter capsulatus during long term cultivation.

(別紙1)

論文審査の結果の要旨

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| 論文 題目 | Effects of illumination conditions on growth of photosynthetic cells (光照射条件の光合成微生物増殖に与える影響) | | | | | | | | |
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光合成微生物は他の微生物とは異なる有用代謝産物、すなわち色素類、生体材料原料、 エネルギー素材などを産生するものが多く知られている。しかし、光合成微生物の培養には 光エネルギーを要するために、効率的なフォトバイオリアクター設計ならびに培養条件を検 討することが重要である。特に日照時間が長くなく、電気料金の高い我が国においては、光 エネルギーの有効利用が光合成微生物利用の成否を決定する。このため、照射強度、波長、 装置内の光強度分布など光照射に関連した条件が、光合成微生物増殖、および生産性に与え る影響を明らかにすることが必要である。そこで、本研究では水素、バイオポリマー生産な どに広く利用されている光合成微生物 Rhodobacter capsulatus の増殖挙動に与える光照射条 件の検討を行い、効率的フォトバイオリアクター設計のための基礎的知見を得ることを目的 として研究を行っている。

第1章は緒論であり光合成微生物や植物における光合成反応について概略を述べた後、フ オトバイオリアクターの概要とその設計における問題点を指摘し、さらに本研究の目的を説 明している。

第2章では、まず従来の回分法培養によって得られる培養の速度パラメーターが、菌体濃 度の増加にともなう光照射条件の変化の影響を受け、装置設計の指針としての信頼性に欠け る欠点を補うための、半回分培養法を提案している。この方法では、一定時間毎に培養液の 一部を抜き出し、新たな培地を加えることによって初期菌体濃度に調整することを繰り返し ている。これによって、連続培養の場合ような複雑な装置を必要とせず、長時間にわたって ほぼ一定の菌体濃度条件、したがって一定の平均光強度、培養装置内光強度分布を保つこと ができ、このような条件下で信頼性の高い光合成微生物の増殖速度パラメーターが得られる ことを示した。

さらに、この半回分培養法によって Rhodobacter capsulatus を長時間培養すると、特定の 光照射条件下では、この比増殖速度が経時的に減少する場合のあることを見いだした。 Rhodobacter capsulatus 属にこのような現象が見られることは新たな発見で、フォトバイオリ アクター設計にあたって考慮されなければならない重要な因子といえる。この現象を生じさ せる一因として、片側から光照射を行った場合のフォトバイオリアクター内の明部と暗部の 光強度の差が挙げられることを明らかにした。すなわち、菌体が著しい光強度差のある環境 におかれるとこのような現象が生じるものと考えられた。さらに、ある光強度以下ではこの ような現象が見られないことも示した。