



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

**ANAEROBIC TREATMENT OF FRESH LEACHATE FROM TRANSFER
STATION**

SEYED MOHAMMAD DARA GHASIMI

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**MASTER OF SCIENCE
UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

2008



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STATION**

By

SEYED MOHAMMAD DARA GHASIMI

**Thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia,
In fulfilment of the Requirement for the Degree of Master of Science**

July 2008



SPECIALLY DEDICATED TO:

**MY BELOVED PARENTS, BROTHER, SISTERS FOR THEIR SACRIFICES
AND INVALUABLE LOVE,**

**TO MY GRAND MOTHERS, UNCLES, AUNTS & RELATIVES WHO
ALWAYS SUPPORT ME,**

AND TO ALL



Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfillment of the requirement for the Degree of Master of Science

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By

SEYED MOHAMMAD DARA GHASIMI

July 2008

Chairman: Professor Azni Idris, PhD

Faculty: Engineering

One stage anaerobic digestion was carried out in this study where fresh leachate from Taman Beringin Transfer Station was used as a substrate to be treated in terms of chemical oxygen demand (COD) removal by using 10 L stirred tank reactor (STR) within period of two and three months for semi-continuous and batch anaerobic treatment processes, respectively, in which the maximum loading rate of the system was tested at $6\text{kg COD/m}^3\cdot\text{day}$. Palm oil mill effluent (POME) sludge was used as an inoculum in phase 2 in order to obtain high amount of COD removal. Three experiments were conducted in anaerobic treatment of fresh leachate until steady state was achieved, i.e. (1) no seed was added and pH and temperature were not controlled (phase1); (2) POME sludge was used as an inoculum and no pH adjustment and temperature control was done, fresh leachate was fed in semi-continuous mode and hydraulic retention time (HRT) 10 days was selected (phase2, run1); (3) POME sludge was used as an inoculum, pH was adjusted by using Sodium Hydroxide (NaOH) and temperature was not controlled and HRT 10 days was chosen (phase 2, run 2).



In general, anaerobic digestion using POME seed sludge shows better efficiency in COD reduction and biochemical oxygen demand (BOD_5) in comparison to batch process and unadjusted pH in run 1 which has been obtained in this study. The initial values for both COD and BOD_5 of fresh leachate were extremely high compared with the stabilized landfill leachate. COD reduction rate for the batch (phase 1) and semi-continuous process (phase 2, run1 & 2) experiments were found 43, 37 and 52.7 % for period of 91, 27 and 30 days, respectively. These results clearly show that using seed sludge as an inoculum as well as pH adjustment indicated better efficiency in terms of COD removal in comparison to phase 1 and run1 (unadjusted pH). Maximum reduction in BOD_5 occurred in run 2 (pH adjusted) with more than 90 % and 80-85 % for batch process at two ending points; day 53 and 91, respectively.

The volatile fatty acid (VFA) concentration was a rapid indicator of the reactor's stability. High concentration of VFA indicated that the reactor was unstable. It was apparent that as the total VFA concentration rose, the microbial population's ability to utilize these compounds effectively was inhibited. The major acids produced were acetic (HAc), propionic (HPr) and butyric acids (HBu). The levels of HAc acid and HPr appeared to be the VFA species that accumulated and started to cause an imbalance in the reactor. Acetic and propionic acid have been accumulated in run 2 and their concentration increased to 39 and 5 % respectively, while n-butyric decreased about 46% in comparison to day 27 in run 1. All these cases show that anaerobic treatment in run 2 has been subjected to failure.

In this study it was also found that with decrease in pH, decrease in amount of COD removal and increase in total volatile fatty acids (TVFA) was detected for run 1. TVFA was indicated at a range of 6000-9000 mg/L and 9000-10000 mg/L for run 1 and 2,

respectively, which showed despite of adjusting pH above 7 still considerable accumulations of VFA was observed in the bioreactor. Therefore, it was concluded that the methanogenic population has not reached sufficient level to convert the organic acids produced from the acidogenic bacteria.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Master Sains

**RAWATAN ANAROBİK AIR LARUTAN SAMPAH SEGAR DARI STESEN
PINDAH**

Oleh

SEYED MOHAMMAD DARA GHASIMI

Julai 2008

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Satu peringkat fermentasi telah dijalankan di dalam kajian ini yang mana air larutan sampah (*leachate*) dari Stesen Pindah Taman Beringin telah digunakan sebagai substrat untuk dirawat dari segi penyingkiran COD dengan menggunakan 10 L tangki reaktor berpengaduk dalam tempoh dua dan tiga bulan bagi masing-masing proses rawatan anarobik separa-selanjat dan berkelompok dengan kadar maksima muatan sistem diuji pada $6\text{kg COD/m}^3\cdot\text{day}$. Enapcemar POME telah digunakan sebagai inokulum di dalam fasa 2 bagi mencapai kadar penyingkiran COD yang tinggi. Tiga eksperimen telah dijalankan bagi rawatan anarobik untuk air larutan sampah segar sehingga keadaan mantap diperolehi, iaitu (1) tiada benih ditambah dan pH dan suhu tidak dikawal (fasa 1); (2) enapcemar POME telah digunakan sebagai inokulum dan tiada pengubahan pH dan kawalan suhu telah selesai, air larutan sampah segar telah disuap dalam bentuk separa-selanjat dan HRT 10 hari dipilih (fasa 2, ujikaji 1); (3) enapcemar POME telah digunakan sebagai inokulum, pH telah diubah dengan menggunakan natrium hidroksida (NaOH) dan suhu tidak dikawal dan HRT 10 hari dipilih (fasa 2, ujikaji 2).

Secara umumnya, pencernaan anarobik menggunakan benih enapcemar POME menunjukkan kecekapan yang lebih baik bagi penurunan COD dan BOD₅ berbanding dengan proses berkelompok dan tanpa kawalan pH bagi eksperimen 1 seperti yang telah diperolehi di dalam kajian ini. Nilai awalan bagi kedua-dua COD and BOD₅ air larutan sampah segar adalah sangat tinggi berbanding dengan air larutan di tapak pelupusan sampah yang telah stabil. Penurunan kadar COD bagi proses kelompok (fasa 1) dan separa-selanjara (fasa 2, ujikaji 1 & 2) diperolehi pada 43, 37 dan 52.7% untuk jangka masa masing-masing pada 91, 27 dan 30 hari. Keputusan-keputusan ini jelas menunjukkan bahawa penggunaan benih enapcemar sebagai inokulum dan juga pengubahan pH memberikan kecekapan yang lebih baik dari segi penyingkiran COD dan masa yang digunakan sebagai perbandingan fasa 1 dengan ujikaji 1 (tiada pengubahan pH). Penurunan maksima BOD₅ yang berlaku pada eksperimen 2 (pengubahan pH) dengan lebih 90% dan 80-85% telah diperolehi bagi proses berkelompok pada dua titik akhir; masing-masing pada hari 53 dan 91.

Kepekatan asid lemak meruap (VFA) merupakan penunjuk segera kepada kestabilan reaktor. Kepekatan VFA yang tinggi menunjukkan bahawa reaktor adalah tidak stabil. Jelasnya apabila jumlah kepekatan VFA meningkat, keupayaan populasi mikroorganisma untuk menggunakan campuran-campuran ini secara berkesan telah direncat. Pengeluaran asid yang terbanyak adalah asid asetik (HAc), propionik (HPr) dan asid butirik (HBu). Kadar asid HAc dan HPr didapati merupakan spesis VFA yang berkumpul dan menyebabkan permulaan ketidakstabilan di dalam reactor. Asid asetik dan propionik telah terkumpul di dalam ujikaji 2 dan kepekatannya telah meningkat masing-masing kepada 39 dan 5%, manakala kadar penurunan n-butirik sebanyak 46%

sebagai perbandingan pada hari 27 di dalam ujikaji 1. Kesemua kes ini menunjukkan rawatan anarobik di dalam ujikaji 2 telah gagal.

Di dalam kajian ini juga didapati bahawa penurunan pH, penyingkiran COD dan peningkatan asid-asid lemak meruap terkumpul (TVFA) telah dikesan pada ujikaji 1. TVFA telah didapati pada kadar masing-masing 6000-9000 mg/L dan 9000-10000 mg/L untuk ujikaji 1 dan 2, yang mana menunjukkan walaupun perubahan pH di atas 7, masih menunjukkan pengumpulan VFA di dalam bioreaktor. Oleh yang demikian, tiada benih/biojisim yang mengandungi populasi metanogenik untuk menukarkan asid organik yang dihasilkan daripada bakteria asidogenik.

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Syed Mohammad Dara Ghasimi, 2008



I certify that an examination committee has met on the 30th July 2008 to conduct the final examination of Seyed Mohammad Dara Ghasimi on his Master of Science thesis entitled “Anaerobic Treatment of Fresh Leachate from Transfer Station” in accordance with Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (High Degree) Act 1980 and Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (High Degree) Regulations 1981. The committee recommends that the candidate be awarded the relevant degree. Members of Examination Committee are as follows:

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the thesis is based on my original work except for quotations and citation, which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted for any other degree at UPM or other institutions.

SEYED MOHAMMAD DARA GHASIMI

Date: 11 August 2008



TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | Page |
|--|-------------|
| DEDICATION | ii |
| ABSTRACT | iii |
| ABSTRAK | vi |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENS | ix |
| APPROVAL | x |
| DECLARATION | xii |
| LIST OF TABLES | xvi |
| LIST OF FIGURES | xviii |
| LIST OF NOTATIONS | xx |
| CHAPTERS | |
| 1 INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| 1.1 Background | 1 |
| 1.2 Problem Statement | 2 |
| 1.3 Objectives | 3 |
| 1.4 Scope of Study | 3 |
| 2 LITERATURE REVIEW | |
| 2.1 Leachate | 4 |
| 2.2 Treatment of Leachate | 7 |
| 2.2.1 Biological Treatment Methods | 9 |
| 2.3 Anaerobic Digestion | 13 |
| 2.3.1 Mechanism | 13 |
| 2.3.2 Acidogenic Microorganism | 18 |
| 2.3.3 Methanogenic Microorganism | 18 |
| 2.4 Factors Affecting Anaerobic Treatment | 19 |
| 2.4.1 Rate-Limiting Processes | 19 |
| 2.4.2 Temperature | 20 |
| 2.4.3 pH, Acidity and Alkalinity | 22 |
| 2.4.4 Other Factors | 23 |
| 2.5 Types of Anaerobic Digesters | 25 |
| 2.5.1 Bacterial Growth-Suspended | 26 |
| 2.5.2 Bacterial Growth- Fixed Film | 28 |
| 2.5.3 Bacterial Growth Patterns in Batch Reactor | 30 |
| 2.6 Introduction to Operational Conditions | 32 |
| 3 GENERAL MATERIALS AND METHODS | |
| 3.1 Bioreactor Setup and Operation | 34 |
| 3.2 Fresh Leachate | 36 |
| 3.3 POME Sludge | 36 |



| | | |
|----------|---|-----|
| 3.4 | Chemical Reagents | 37 |
| 3.5 | Experimental Layout | 38 |
| 3.6 | Analytical Methods | 40 |
| 3.6.1 | Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD) | 40 |
| 3.6.2 | Chemical Oxygen Demand (COD) | 40 |
| 3.6.3 | Total Solids (TS) | 41 |
| 3.6.4 | Total Suspended Solids (TSS) | 41 |
| 3.6.5 | Volatile Suspended Solids (VSS) | 42 |
| 3.6.6 | Alkalinity | 42 |
| 3.6.7 | Volatile Fatty Acids (VFAs) | 43 |
| 3.6.8 | Biogas Measurement | 43 |
| 3.6.9 | Ammonia Nitrogen $\text{NH}_3\text{-N}$ | 44 |
| 3.6.10 | Phosphate (PO_4^{3-}) | 44 |
| 4 | BATCH ANAEROBIC TREATMENT OF LEACHATE | |
| 4.1 | Introduction | 45 |
| 4.2 | Taman Beringin Transfer Station | 46 |
| 4.3 | Leachate Sampling and Analysis | 49 |
| 4.4 | Results and Discussion | 49 |
| 4.5 | Conclusion | 60 |
| 5 | SEMI-CONTINUOUS ANAEROBIC TREATMENT OF LEACHATE | |
| 5.1 | Introduction | 61 |
| 5.2 | Calculation Methods | 63 |
| 5.2.1 | HRT and Organic Loading Rate (OLR) | 63 |
| 5.2.2 | Nutrient Requirement (N&P) | 63 |
| 5.3 | Anaerobic Treatment of Leachate without Biomass Retention | 64 |
| 5.4 | Results and Discussion | 66 |
| 5.4.1 | Characteristics of Fresh Leachate | 66 |
| 5.4.2 | Characteristics of POME Sludge | 67 |
| 5.4.3 | COD Reduction Rate | 68 |
| 5.4.4 | Nutrients | 77 |
| 5.4.5 | VFAs Speciation | 84 |
| 5.4.6 | Biogas and Acid Production | 91 |
| 5.4.7 | Analysis | 94 |
| 5.5 | Comparison of Leachate Anaerobic Treatment in Batch and Semi-continuous Process | 111 |
| 5.6 | Conclusions | 109 |
| 6 | CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS | |
| 6.1 | Summary | 112 |
| 6.2 | Conclusions | 113 |
| 6.3 | Suggestions for Future Work | 114 |

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| REFERENCES | 117 |
| APPENDICES | 132 |
| BIODATA OF STUDENT | 142 |



LIST OF TABLES

| Table | | Page |
|--------------|--|-------------|
| 2.1 | Leachate composition COD, BOD, COD/BOD, pH, SS, NH ₃ -N | 6 |
| 2.2 | Landfill leachate classification vs. age | 6 |
| 2.3 | Advantages and disadvantages of different landfill leachate treatment methods | 8 |
| 2.4 | Advantages of mixing digester content | 24 |
| 2.5 | Types and configurations of anaerobic digesters | 27 |
| 2.6 | Advantages and disadvantages of suspended growth anaerobic digesters | 27 |
| 2.7 | Operational Conditions for Acceptable Activity of Methane-forming Bacteria and Methane Production | 33 |
| 4.1 | Characteristic of treated leachate from treatment plant located at Taman Beringin Transfer Station | 48 |
| 4.2 | Leachate characteristic in batch process for day 53 and 91 | 50 |
| 4.3 | The proposed bacteria growth cycle in batch process for fresh leachate | 57 |
| 4.4 | Percentage removal of COD, BOD and TS during Day 53 and 91 of | 60 |
| 5.1 | Classification and conditions of experiments | 64 |
| 5.2 | Characteristics of fresh leachate | 66 |
| 5.3 | POME sludge initial conditions | 66 |
| 5.4 | Chemical composition of the methanogenic microorganism | 77 |
| 5.5 | Average leachate characteristics for run 1 and 2 | 78 |
| 5.6 | Effect of free ammonia on anaerobic process | 81 |
| 5.7 | Average percentages of VFAs production for run1 and 2 | 85 |
| 5.8 | Biogas component percentage for day 33 and 61 of run 2 | 92 |



| | | |
|------|---|-----|
| 5.9 | Leachate characteristics in semi- continuous process | 106 |
| 5.10 | Batch and semi-continuous processes results | 107 |
| 5.11 | Biological treatment of landfill leachate (stabilized leachate) | 109 |



LIST OF FIGURES

| Figure | | Page |
|--------|--|------|
| 2.1 | Schematic of a trickling filter | 11 |
| 2.2 | Schematic diagram of anaerobic digestion of organic compounds | 14 |
| 2.3 | Schematic of anaerobic suspended growth system | 26 |
| 2.4 | Schematic of anaerobic fixed-film system | 28 |
| 2.5 | Fixed-film system (upflow) | 29 |
| 2.6 | Fixed-films system (downflow) | 29 |
| 2.7 | Batch process biomass growth phases with changes in substrate and biomass versus time | 30 |
| 3.1 | The 10 L bioreactor complete set-up | 35 |
| 3.2 | Configuration of the bioreactor | 35 |
| 3.3 | Experimental layout for batch and semi-continuous state | 39 |
| 4.1 | Horizontal Compact Transfer Station | 47 |
| 4.2 | Profile of COD versus day of the anaerobic treatment of leachate | 52 |
| 4.3 | Duration of treatment at which COD reduction in log phase (Day 16-53) | 54 |
| 4.4 | Duration of treatment at which COD reduction in log phase (Day 67-91) | 55 |
| 4.5 | Profile of TSS and VSS versus day of the anaerobic treatment of leachate | 56 |
| 4.6 | Profile of TS vs. day of the anaerobic treatment of leachate from transfer | 58 |
| 4.7 | Profile of NH ₃ -N versus day of the anaerobic treatment of leachate | 59 |
| 5.1 | Variation of initial COD, COD effluent and COD removal percentage versus duration of treatment (Day) | 68 |

| | | |
|------|--|-----|
| 5.2 | Variation of COD effluent and pH versus duration of treatment (Day) | 71 |
| 5.3 | Variation of COD effluent and NH ₃ -N versus duration of treatment (Day) | 72 |
| 5.4 | Variation of acetic acid, propionic acid and COD effluent versus duration of treatment (Day) | 74 |
| 5.5 | Variation of ammonia nitrogen and phosphate and pH versus duration of treatment (Day) | 80 |
| 5.6 | Variation of VSS vs. PO ₄ ³⁻ for run 1 and 2 | 82 |
| 5.7 | Variation of VSS and pH versus Duration of treatment (Day) | 83 |
| 5.8 | Percent composition of VFAs in Run 1 and 2 | 86 |
| 5.9 | Variation on VFAs versus duration of treatment (Day) | 87 |
| 5.10 | Average VFAs concentration for Run 1 and 2 | 89 |
| 5.11 | Variation of acetic acid and propionic acid vs. biogas production | 91 |
| 5.12 | Variation of COD Effluent versus pH for run 1 and 2 | 94 |
| 5.13 | Variation of inlet and outlet pH in run 1 and 2 | 97 |
| 5.14 | Variation of COD versus NH ₃ -N for run 1 and 2 | 99 |
| 5.15 | Variation of TVFA and COD removal versus pH for Run1 and 2 | 101 |
| 5.16 | Variation of TVFA, HAc and HPr versus pH for Run 1 and 2 | 103 |



LIST OF NOTATIONS

| | |
|--------|---------------------------------|
| μ | Specific growth rate |
| Alk | Alkalinity |
| APB | Acid producing bacteria |
| BOD | Biochemical oxygen demand |
| C | Carbon |
| Cm | Centimeter |
| COD | Chemical oxygen demand |
| CODrem | COD removal |
| CSTR | Continuous stirred tank reactor |
| DO | Dissolved oxygen |
| FID | Flame ionization detector |
| FSS | Fixed suspended solids |
| g/L | Gram per liter |
| GC | Gas chromatography |
| HAc | Acetic acid |
| HBr | Butyric acid |
| HPr | Propionic acid |
| HPr | Propionic acid |
| HRT | Hydraulic retention time |
| HVc | Valeric acid |
| ID | Ionized detector |
| I-HBu | Isobutyrate acid |
| I-HVa | Isovalerate acid |
| L | Liter |
| LLR | Leachate loading rate |
| M | Molar |
| Mm | Millimeter |
| mM | Mili mol |
| MSW | Municipal solid waste |



| | |
|----------------|--|
| N | Nitrogen |
| NADH | Nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide, reduced |
| N-HBu | N-butyrate acid |
| N-HVa | N-valerate acid |
| Nm | Nanometer |
| °C | Celsius |
| OLR | Organic loading rate |
| ORP | Oxidation-reduction potential |
| P | Phosphorous |
| PID | Proportional integral derivative |
| POME | Palm oil mill effluent |
| Q | Flow rate |
| RBC | Rotating biological contactors |
| Rpm | Rotation per second |
| S ₀ | Influent substrate concentration |
| SBR | Sequencing batch reactors |
| SMP | Soluble microbial product |
| SRT | Solids retention time |
| TCD | Thermal conductivity detector |
| TDS | Total dissolved solids |
| TF | Trickling filters |
| TKN | Total kjeldhal nitrogen |
| TS | Total solids |
| TSS | Total suspended solids |
| TVFA | Total volatile fatty acids |
| UVFA | Un-ionized acids |
| VFA | Volatile fatty acids |
| VS | Volatile solid |
| VSS | Volatile suspended solids |

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

It has been observed that the solid waste generation in Malaysia has increased concurrently with the development of the country. For the past 20 years, Malaysia has undergone an economic growth with the rate of 5.2% (Agamuthu, 2001). The solid waste generated per capital has increased from 0.5kg/capital/day in the 1980's to current volume of 1kg/capital/day. This represents a 100% increase in 20 years (Agamuthu, 2001).

Municipal solid waste (MSW) is one of the major environmental problems faced by the Malaysian municipalities. Each year, there are about 8 million tonnes of solid waste being generated which accounts to each person generates about 1kg of solid waste per day (LUMES, 2000). Majority of the landfills in Malaysia are crude dumping ground and thus cause various environmental problems such as health hazards, surface water and ground water contamination, odour, etc. Sanitary landfills offer a viable option for the Malaysian municipalities to deal with the environmental hazards caused by open dumps practice within its financial constraints.

Because of low cost and short term solution to solid waste problems, landfills are usually used in solid waste disposal. However, in modern cities such as Kuala Lumpur, there is a growing interest to use transfer station as an economic mode of transportation of MSW before it goes to the landfill. Leachate from wet constituents of solid wastes and water production from biological degradation of solid wastes becomes a source of



water resource pollution. As leachate migrates away from landfill or transfer station it may cause a serious pollution to ground water aquifer as well as adjacent surface waters.

1.2 Problem Statement

There is growing concern about surface and ground water pollution from leachate. Different methods have been introduced for leachate treatment. Treatment of leachate is very complicated, expensive and requires various process applications due to high concentration of COD, BOD, nitrogen, heavy metals as well as colour. Biological, chemical and physical processes have been used to treat leachate. High COD, BOD, ammonia, sulfate and presence of heavy metal in leachate cause different removal efficiency in each method. BOD/COD ratio is one of the factors in selecting treatment methods to remove organic matters. Biological treatment is usually used when BOD/COD ratio is equal or greater than 0.4 (Badkoubi *et al.*, 2002).

In biological processes aerobic and anaerobic organisms are used to treat high concentration of COD. Activated sludge, sequencing batch reactors, aerated lagoon, trickling filters, rotating biological contactors (RBCs) and anaerobic system are used to treat leachate from municipal solid waste landfills.

Anaerobic treatment systems to treat leachate have suffered many difficulties and it leads to instability of bioreactor systems as reported in many studies. Such instability is usually witnessed as a drop in the methane production rate, a drop in the pH, a rise in the volatile fatty acid (VFA) concentration, causing reactor failure.