

Improvement of biomethane potential of sewage sludge anaerobic co-digestion by addition of “sherry-wine” distillery wastewater

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Abstract

Co-digestion of sewage sludge (SS) with other unusually treated residues has been reported as an efficient method to improve biomethane production. In this work, Sherry-wine distillery wastewater (SWDW) has been proposed as co-substrate in order to increase biomethane production and as a breakthrough solution in the management of both types of waste. In order to achieve this goal, different SS:SW-DW mixtures were employed as substrates in Biomethane Potential (BMP) tests. The biodegradability and biomethane potential of each mixture was determined selecting the optimal co-substrate ratio. Results showed that the addition of SW-DW as a co-substrate improves the anaerobic digestion of SS in a proportionally way in terms of CODs and biomethane production. The optimal co-substrates ratio was 50:50 of SS:SW-DW obtaining $\%VS_{\text{removal}} = 54.5\%$; $Y_{\text{CH}_4} = 225.1 \text{ L}_{\text{H}_4}/\text{kg}_{\text{sv}}$ or $154 \text{ L}_{\text{CH}_4}/\text{kg}_{\text{CODt}}$ and microbial population of 5.5 times higher than sole SS. In this case, $\%VS_{\text{removal}} = 48.1 \%$; $Y_{\text{CH}_4} = 183 \text{ L}_{\text{CH}_4}/\text{kg}_{\text{sv}}$ or $135 \text{ L}_{\text{CH}_4}/\text{kg}_{\text{CODt}}$. The modified Gompertz equation was used for the kinetic modelling of biogas production with successful fitting results ($r^2 \approx 0.99$). In this sense, at optimal conditions, the maximum productivity reached at an infinite digestion time was ($Y^{\text{MAX}}_{\text{CH}_4}$) = $229 \pm 5.0 \text{ NL}/\text{kg}_{\text{sv}}$; the specific constant was $K = 25.0 \pm 2.3 \text{ NL}/\text{kg}_{\text{sv}}\text{d}$; and the lag phase time constant was (λ) = 2.49 ± 0.19 .

Keywords: Biochemical methane potential; Anaerobic digestion and co-digestion; Sewage sludge; Kinetic parameters; Biogas production.

1. Introduction

Sewage sludge is produced in large quantities in urban areas all over the world. This waste is usually managed by wastewater treatment plants (WWTP) where digesters are often oversized and the cost of sludge treatment representing approximately 50% of the total running cost of WWTPs. For this reason, in the context of circular economy established in H2020 European strategy, Anaerobic Digestion (AD) process is of great importance due to that this process achieve the highest utility of the sewage sludge (SS), replacing other energy resources and limiting the associated CO₂ emissions derived from SS disposal ([Gherghel et al., 2019](#)). There have been multiple studies about how improve the production of biomethane in WWTP such as pretreatments or co-digestion ([Kor-Bicakci, and Eskicioglu, 2019](#)). In this sense, co-digestion with agroindustrial wastes has been reported as an efficient method to improve biomethane production of SS as well as to manage other unusually treated residues ([Maragkaki et al., 2017](#)). In general, the main advantages of anaerobic co-digestion (ACoD) are related to the optimization of the required ratio of nutrients, the dilution of potential toxic compounds ([Sosnowski et al., 2003](#)), as well as supplying buffering capacity and establishing the required moisture content ([Mshandete et al., 2004](#)).

In the South of Spain (Cadiz region) there were 83 WWTP according to Andalusian Ministry of Environment and Town Planning ([AMET, 2017](#)). Seven 7 of them were located in the “Sherry-wine” cellar region. “Sherry-wine” (SW) is the most important wine produced in Cadiz region. The winemaking process of Sherry wine is marked by specific climatic conditions and unique industrial process (“solera” system) used exclusively in the Sherry area ([Rold_an et al., 2010](#)). In this region, according to Regulatory Council of D.O “Jerez-Xeres-Sherry”-“Manzanilla-Sanlúcar de Barrameda” -

“Vinagre de Jerez”; [RCDO Sherry \(2017\)](#) there are 63 cellars focusing not only on wine aging but also winemaking. However, as others winemaking industries, these generate large volumes of sherrywine distillery wastewater (SW-DW) (also called wine vinasses). SW-DW is a mixture of produced wastewater on the bottom of the distillery unit, grape juice spills and chemical cleaning products of equipment and tanks. This waste constitutes an environmental issue due to its strongly acidic pH and high organic load (around Chemical oxygen demand (COD) = 40 g_{O2}/L), which includes several recalcitrant pollutants such as polyphenols (e.g tannins) ([Petta et al., 2017](#)) and other chemical compounds such as melanoidins ([Yavuz, 2007](#)), fertilizer and pesticides (rich in nitrogen and phosphorous) or caustic soda ([Ioannou and Fatta-Kassinos, 2013](#)). Consequently, wineries must manage this waste using effective technologies in order to comply with environmental policies ([Siles et al., 2011](#)). In this sense, these industrial wastes are generated in a limited production period, so ACoD with SS could be economically advantageous in terms of sharing installations, ease of handling of the wastes (avoiding disposal) and improving economic viability ([Mata-Alvarez et al., 2014](#)). In addition, the co-digestion of both substrates will avoid the disposal of SW-DW on soils/evaporation lagoon. Moreover, in the case of using SW-DW as an agroindustrial co-substrate, it could enhance the C/N ratio of SS substrate ([Zeshan et al., 2012](#)). This is a simple way of improving biomethane production of SS, avoiding other expensive and complex techniques proposed in bibliography such as pretreatments ([Siles et al., 2011](#)).

Furthermore, a proper kinetic study is helpful for reproducing the AD process and understanding the feasible inhibitory mechanism. In addition, it is important to develop an up-to-date model taking into account the different variables involved:

operational conditions, mode of operations, origin of feed, type of inoculum, etc. Continuing with this approach, several mathematical models such as Logistic, Gompertz, Sigmoid (Martín et al., 2018) or Chen- Hashimoto model (Borja et al., 2003) have been applied.

AD kinetics models have been developed mainly in sewage sludge feedstock as well as in pig and crop wastes and recently, in other ago-wastes (Martín et al., 2010). In this sense, the AD of sole SW-DW has been previously studied (including kinetic evaluation) as a successful biological treatment for controlling the pollution of this waste and to recover energy in semicontinuous mode in different technologies: fixed-film reactors (Perez Garcia et al., 2005a); high rate reactors (Perez Garcia et al., 2005b) and after different pre-treatments such as biological (Jimenez et al., 2006) and advanced oxidation (Siles et al., 2011). However, there are no kinetics contributions to batch mode of the co-digestion of these both residues without any pretreatment. So, it is important to study its potential, operational feasibility and kinetic in order to evaluate the possibility of scaling-up such process as method of management of these both substrates together (Chowdhary et al., 2018).

In the present study, ACoD of sewage sludge (SS) and SW-DW is proposed as an effective new alternative in order to improve biomethane production in WWTPs from Sherry-wine region. The main objective of this work has been to study the influence of SW-DW in anaerobic co-digestion with SS on biodegradability and biomethane production. In addition, a kinetic model as a previous step for co-digestion scaling up process has been proposed.

2. Material and methods

2.1. Substrates and co-digestion mixtures

The substrates used in the experimental stage were collected directly from two real industrial facilities. The SS came from a secondary treatment floatation unit from Guadalete WWTP in Jerez (Cadiz, Spain). The SW-DW was obtained from Gonzalez-Byass, an ethanol producing wine-distillery plant located in Jerez. Substrates were collected fresh and stored at 4 °C for a maximum of one month. The pH values of co-digestion mixtures were in the range of 6.0-7.0 for this reason it was adjusted to 7.0-8.0 using 2 M sodium hydroxide solution prior to digestion. Different mixtures of SS:SW-DW (% v/v) were employed in the present study (75:25; 50:50; 25:75), as well as sole SS and sole SW-DW.

2.2. Inoculum characteristics

The inoculum was collected from a mesophilic 5-L laboratory scale Continuously Stirred Tank Reactor (CSTR) available in the Research Group operating at HRT = 20 d and fed with SS coming from secondary decanter of WWTP from Jerez (C_adiz-Spain). The characteristics of the inoculum are shown in [Table 1](#).

2.3. Experimental set-up and procedures

BMP tests were carried out according to [Angelidaki et al. \(2009\)](#). Serum bottles were used as reactors with total volume of 250 mL. The effective volume was 150 mL and the head space was 100 ml. Reactors were placed in an orbital shaker at 85 rpm under mesophilic conditions (35 ± 1 °C). The digesters were loaded with a mixture of inoculum and substrate, resulting in a final concentration of 40% w/w of inoculum which is considered optimum for biogas production and substrate acclimatization ([Montanes et al.,2014](#)). The wastes were then added to the reactors in different proportions to obtain the following SS:SW-DW (% v/v) ratios: 75:25, 50:50, 25:75 ([Table 2](#)) as well as only SS and SW-DW. The control reactor, containing only anaerobic

inoculums and water, was also incubated in order to determine background gas production.

Due to the strong influence of the microbial activity of the inoculum on methane yield and methane production rate, preincubation of the inoculum was carried out at 35 °C for 7 days before starting the BMP assays. This procedure, which is used to reduce the endogenous methane production of the inoculum, is recommended by several authors with the aim of developing a standardized method for BMP assays ([Hollinger et al., 2016](#)). All the reactors were run in triplicate and the averages of the data collected were calculated and reported.

All the reactors were subsequently purged with 100% N₂ for 3e4 min to maintain anaerobic conditions at the appropriate pH and then sealed with natural rubber stoppers and plastic screw caps. BMP tests were performed until daily methane production meant less than 1% of total (25 days).

Biogas production and biogas composition were determined daily during the digestion period. At the end of the digestion period, pH and data on total and volatile solids (TS, VS), Volatile Fatty Acids (VFA) and total and soluble chemical oxygen demand (COD_t, COD_s) were collected for all the reactors so as to calculate the efficiency of the biological treatment.

2.4. Analytical methods

pH, TS, VS, COD_t, COD_s and TN were determined according to Standard Methods ([APHA, 2005](#)). pH determination was taken by pHmeter type CRISON MICROPH 2001 with a temperature probe. For TS, VS and FTS, samples were weighed in ceramic boats in laboratory balance Cobos type and drying in oven type ELF14 de CARBOLITE.

TN was determined by using a total nitrogen analyzer provided by Skalar Company, mod. FormacsHT and FormacsTN.

VFA (acetic, propionic, iso-butyric, butyric, iso-valeric, valeric, iso-caproic, caproic and heptanoic acid) were determined by gas chromatography (GC-2010 Plus Shimadzu).

Total acidity was calculated by the sum of the individual fatty acids.

Gas composition was determined employing a gas chromatography technique (GC-2010 Shimadzu). The analysed gases (H₂, CH₄, CO₂, O₂ and N₂) were measured by means of a thermal conductivity detector (TCD) at 250 °C using a Supelco Carboxen 1010 Plot column. The oven temperature was programmed between 35 and 200 °C. Manual injection was carried out employing a sample volume of 250 µL. The carrier gas was helium at 35 kPa of pressure ([Montanes et al., 2014](#)).

2.5. Microbial analysis

FISH technique was used to determine the percentage of each microbial population group in best operational condition and in sample with sole SS in order to compare them. In FISH methodology, probe(s) 16S ribosomal ribonucleic acid (rRNA)-targeted oligonucleotide were used to identify the group of microorganisms ([Zahedi et al., 2018](#)). The counting of microorganisms had been developed using an Axio Imager Upright epifluorescence microscope (Zeiss) equipped with a 100 W mercury lamp and a 100x oil objective. Microbial groups determined were: *Eubacteria*, *Archaea*, butyrate utilising acetogens (BUA) propionate utilising acetogens (PUA), hydrogen utilising methanogens (HUM) and acetate utilising methanogens (AUM). Percentages of each group were calculated taking as total the sum of the relative amounts of *Eubacteria* and *Archaea*. Acetogens were calculated as the sum of the relative amounts of PUA and BUA. Hydrolytic acidogen bacteria (HAB) were calculated as the difference in the

relative amounts of *Eubacteria* and Acetogens (Zahedi et al., 2018). The microbiological analyses were carried out in triplicate at the end of BMP test.

2.6. Data analysis

2.6.1. Methane production and methane productivity

Biogas production was daily determined by indirect measuring of the cumulative pressure inside the bottles with pressure transducers. Pressure data were used to infer the volume of biogas at standard temperature and pressure conditions, according to the ideal law of gases, Eq. (1).

$$P * V = n * R * T \quad (1)$$

where P is absolute pressure (kPa), V is volume (m³), n is amount of substance (moles), T is temperature (K), and R is the universal gas constant (8.3145 L kPa/K*mol).

Cumulative methane volume production was calculated by means of the sum of the daily methane volume as indicated in Eq.(2):

$$V^t_{CH_4} (NL) = \Sigma(V^i_{CH_4} - V^i_{control}) \quad (2)$$

where $V^t_{CH_4}$ is the net volume of methane, $V^i_{CH_4}$ is the experimental volume of methane measured when co-substrate is used and $V^i_{control}$ is the volume of methane produced in the control experiment. Methane productivity (Y_{CH_4}) in base of initial VS was calculated as $V^t_{CH_4}$ per kg of initial VS (NL_{CH₄}/kg_{VS}) in order to developed the kinetic modelling. Experimental biomethane potential (BMP_{exp}) was calculated as the asymptote of the methane productivity curve. Methane productivity (Y_{CH_4}) in base of initial COD was calculated as $V^t_{CH_4}$ per kg of initial COD (NL_{CH₄}/kg_{COD_t}) in order to compare the results with bibliography.

2.6.2. Substrate biodegradability

Substrate biodegradability was related to the removal rates obtained after AD in terms of biodegradability parameters removal as shown in Eq. (3):

$$\text{Parameter "P" removal(\%)} = (P_0 - P_t) / P_0 * 100 \quad (3)$$

where "P" is the biodegradability parameter analysed in this study: COD_t, COD_s, VS, VFA and P₀ and P_t are the initial and final value of the respective parameter.

2.6.3. Kinetic modelling

Biogas production during AD involves a complex reactions network with many stages (hydrolysis, acidogenesis, acetogenesis, and methanogenesis). Therefore, it is necessary to assume several simplifications in order to mathematically describe the macroscopic system behaviour. In the present study, the modified Gompertz model (Eq. (5)) was used to predict biogas production. This model has been the most widely applied kinetic model for describing anaerobic digestion by previous studies (Awais et al., 2016; Zhen et al., 2016; Zhao et al., 2018). The modified Gompertz model assumes that biogas production is proportional to microbial activity and that gas production follows an exponential rise to reach maximum level.

$$Y_{CH_4} (NL_{CH_4}/kg_{SV0}) = Y_{CH_4}^{MAX} * \exp [-\exp(-(K * e * (\lambda - t) / Y_{CH_4}^{MAX} + 1))] \quad (5)$$

Three kinetic parameters are required in the modified Gompertz model to predict the evolution of the methane productivity: the maximum yield reached at an infinite digestion time ($Y_{CH_4}^{MAX}$), the specific constant rate (K) and the lag phase time constant (λ).

Kinetic modelling was performed employing OriginPro® software. Simple non-linear curve fitting was carried out to reproduce the biogas methane production for each assay.

3. Results and discussion

The characteristics of raw co-substrates are shown in [Table 1](#). As it can be observed the characterization values in SS are in the common range presented in bibliography ([Thorin et al., 2018](#)). SW-DW also showed values of COD, TS, VS, and pH in the common range reported by bibliography: COD_t = 0.8e182 g O₂/L, TS = 2e127 g/L, VS = 0.12-1.33 g/L and pH = 3.5-7.3 ([Beltrán et al., 1999](#); [Petrucciouli et al., 2000](#); [Benítez et al., 2003](#); [Eusebio et al., 2004](#); [Pérez et al., 2006](#); [Lucas et al., 2009](#)). However, VFA value was lower than bibliography (VFA = 1.33-77 g/L). This fact can be explained because the type of grape that was used in the sherry-wine making process ("palomino" grape) which contains low values of total acidity and high pH values ([García et al., 2009](#)).

Moreover, SS showed a low C/N ratio ([Table 2](#)). Using only SS could affect AD by rapid consumption of nitrogen. This could affect AD operation by accumulation of VFAs ([Li et al., 2011](#)) and inhibiting methanogens leading to low biogas production. However, when SW-DW was increased, the C/N ratios were higher ([Table 2](#)) contributing to enhance AD development. In spite of C/N ratio varies with type of substrates ([Li et al., 2011](#)); it is known that the optimal C/N ratio for a proper AD is 20-30 ([Zeshan et al., 2012](#)); which is reached in this work when concentrations of SW-DW were 75 and 100 %.

3.1. Substrate biodegradability

Substrate biodegradability was measured by removal of initial characteristics in serum bottle. Characterization parameters at the beginning and at the end of the BMP tests are shown in [Table 2](#). In general, all the parameters were slightly reduced when SW-DW was increased because the lower content of organic matter. In order to compare reduction tendency, it has been calculated the removal percentage of each parameter

(Fig. 1). The biodegradability of SS in terms of COD_{removal} is similar than co-substrate mixtures when SS > 50% obtaining values around $48.5 \pm 1.11\%$. Whereas, the biodegradability values of co-substrates were enhanced when proportion of SS < 50% obtaining, %COD_{removal} values of $56.3\% \pm 4.1$ for 25:75 and $66.5 \pm 8.7\%$ for SW-DW. The increasing in COD_{removal} tendency is more remarkable regarding CODs. In this case, in order of decreasing removal of CODs: 86% for SW-DW > 76.7% for 25:75 of SS:SW-DW (v/v) > 65% for 50:50 of SS:SW-DW (v/v) > 54% for 75:25 of SS:SW-DW (v/v) > 40.8% for only SS. In fact, there was a linear relationship ($\% \text{CODs}_{\text{removal}} = 0.452 \% \text{SW-DW} + 41.9$; $r^2 = 0.995$) for this parameter as it can be seen in Fig. 1. So, in spite of linear augmentation of CODs elimination, COD_t removal did not follow this tendency until proportion of SW-DW was >50%. At this point, SW-DW soluble compounds were in high quantity and the contribution of CODs in the mixture with SS COD_t was higher (70%).

Attending to %VS_{removal}, a similar tendency that COD_t was observed. In this case, the %VS_{removal} values obtained for SS, 75:25 and for 50:50 of SS:SW-DW (%v/v) were $50.0\% \pm 0.8$. After that, when SW-DW was 75% the values were increased to $54\% \pm 0.4$ and when SW-DW was 100% the %VS_{removal} was $61.4\% \pm 2.7$. So, in general the increment of SW-DW proportion in the co-substrate mixture improves the removal rate of main biodegradability parameters of SS after biological treatment, due to the higher content of dissolved organic matter provided.

Finally, in general, the analysis of VFA content at the end of BMP test showed that there was an accumulation of 8% of VFA after AD of SS as it was expected by poor C/N ratio. However, this accumulation is not enough for inhibiting the whole process of AD but reducing biomethane production as it can be seen in the next section. However,

after ACoD the elimination of VFA was higher when %SWDW was increased, being complete at concentration 75% of SWDW where C/N ratio was between 20 and 30.

3.2. Biogas production in BMP tests

The evolution of the cumulative gross methane volume for each run (including the control test) can be observed in Fig. 2 (A). It can be seen that the methane production was increasing with content of SS. The highest methane production was obtained for both anaerobic digestion of SS and 75:25% v/v of SS:SW-DW, and the lowest methane production was obtained when the substrate was only SW-DW. In all the cases, the maximum percentage of CH₄ in biogas was 70%. Initial characterization of the employed substrates showed that SS contains a higher organic load (in terms of VS, as well as COD_t) than SW-DW (Table 2). Thus, the higher net amount of biodegradable organic matter in SS leads to a higher gross methane volume production.

However, in order to compare the biomethane potential from different wastes, methane productivity in base of organic matter (VS and COD_t) must be calculated to normalize the values. In this sense, the evolutions of the methane yield during the sole digestion of SS and SW-DW and the co-digestion of different mixtures are shown in Fig. 2 (B). According to these results, the methane yield in base of VS of co-digested mixtures was proportional to the composition employed. In this respect, the addition of SW-DW as a co-substrate in the anaerobic digestion of SS improved the methane yield in all the studied cases. In order of decreasing it was obtained 300 NL_{CH₄}/kg_{VS0} for SWDW > 250 NL_{CH₄}/kg_{VS0} for 75% of SW-DW > 225 NL_{CH₄}/kg_{VS0} for 50% v/v of SW-DW > 210 NL_{CH₄}/kg_{VS0} for 25% v/v of SW-DW > 175 NL_{CH₄}/kg_{VS0} for SS (Fig. 2A).

Regarding CH₄ yield with respect COD_{t0} (data not shown), the maximum yield was 154 L_{CH₄}/kg_{COD_t} for 50:50% v/v of SS:SWDW; following by 146 L_{CH₄}/kg_{COD_t} for 75:25% v/v of

SS:SW-DW and 135 LCH₄/kg_{CODt} for the rest (sole digestions of SW-DW and SS and co-digestion at 25:75% v/v SS:SW-DW proportion). So, the maximum productivity obtained was achieved by mixing 50:50% v/v of both co-substrates. Similar CH₄ yield results were obtained from previous studies using pretreated sludge by microwave disintegration as a substrate of anaerobic digestion (Kavitha et al., 2018), being the mixture with SW-DW more economically feasible.

It should be noted that pre-incubation of the inoculum at mesophilic temperature for 7 days was found to be an appropriate treatment to reduce endogenous methane production, as it can be seen from the results of the blank assay. Some authors have previously established that inoculum production should be below 20 % of total methane production in the BMP test (Hollinger et al., 2016). In the present study, endogenous methane production did not exceed 11 % of the production from co-digestion of the studied substrates. Furthermore, the inoculum still remained metabolically active after pre-incubation, as it is assumed in initial methane production in BMP tests. Therefore, the results obtained in this work validate the experimental procedure.

3.3. Kinetic modelling

For each assay, the modified Gompertz model was fitted to experimental data as shown in Fig. 3. Generally, there is an excellent overall agreement between the model prediction and the experimental data, reaching the highest regression coefficients in all cases (r^2 results above 0.99). This means that this model might explain 99% of the total variation of experimental data (Fig. 3). As it can be seen in Fig. 3, when proportion of SW-DW was increased, the inflection point (K/e) appeared sooner: 7.5 d (A) > 7 d (B) > 6.5 d (C) > 5d (D) > 4d (E). So, the slope of the lineal growing from ending

of lag phase to inflection point was higher when higher SW-DW was used, leading to higher growing velocity.

The values for each kinetic parameter and their statistical errors as well as those for the experimental BMP are summarized in [Table 3](#). When proportion of SW-DW was increased, the K was augmented and the lag phase was reduced. These both facts are the consequence of more available organic matter that permit microorganisms to grow sooner (lower l) and easily, reaching higher K values. In this sense, methanogenic population growing lead to more production of methane and hence higher $Y^{\text{MAX}}_{\text{CH}_4}$ values. Regarding this parameter, the meaning of the theoretical kinetic parameter is directly related to the experimental one. The relative error between both parameters had a difference below 7% in all runs ([Table 4](#)), showing an excellent model prediction of the studied system. It is also important to remark that the lag phase is higher when higher proportion of SS is used in the codigestion.

[Table 4](#) also summarizes the values of the kinetic parameter of the modified Gompertz model previously published by other authors. When SW-DW is used as co-substrate, the $Y^{\text{MAX}}_{\text{CH}_4}$ parameter is higher (218e294 NL/kgVS) than those obtained using only SS (167 NL/kgVS) ([Cordova et al., 2017](#)) or in co-digestion with synthetic organic fraction of municipal WWTP or microalgae (148 and 164 NL/kg_{VS} respectively) ([Nielfa et al., 2015](#); [Zhen et al., 2016](#)).

However, when SS was used as substrate the kinetic parameters K and $Y^{\text{MAX}}_{\text{CH}_4}$ were similar than bibliography values ([Table 4](#)) supporting the repeatability and reliability of the BMP method. Only lag phase was higher when using inadapted inoculum.

In this study, when SW-DW is used alone or as co-substrate, the $Y^{\text{MAX}}_{\text{CH}_4}$ parameter was also higher than those obtained for only SWDW in previous research ([Syaichurroz et](#)

al., 2013 and Budiyo and Sumardiono, 2013e2014, Table 4) probably because the origin of the vinasses was the sugarcane production instead of sherry-wine production. This underline the availability of organic matter presents in SW-DW that is also reflected in higher K and lower λ parameters.

The influence of feedstock composition on the value of the kinetic parameters is shown in Fig. 4. As previously stated, BMP depends directly on the composition of the employed substrate, being proportional to the ratio of the mixture.

The influence of substrate composition on the specific constant rate seems to be analogous to the observed trend for maximum methane production. The lowest value was obtained for anaerobic digestion of SS, while the highest value was observed for SW-DW. In the co-digestion assays, the specific constant rate is proportional to the composition of the mixture. Consequently, codigestion of SS with SW-DW leads to a faster rate of anaerobic degradation and its associated biogas production than anaerobic digestion of SS alone.

Finally, the lag phase time constant (I) shows the duration of the first stage of the process, during which methane production occurs at a slow rate. This macroscopic kinetic parameter is probably associated with the hydrolysis stage, which is the main rate-determining step in anaerobic digestion. In this sense, SWDW contains many simple organic compounds that anaerobic bacteria are able to metabolize easily into biogas such as organic acids, carbohydrates and ethanol (Nayak et al., 2018). On the other hand, SS contains a high amount of lignocellulosic compounds, which need more time to be degraded increasing the lag phase (Syaichurrozi et al., 2013). Regarding the results of this work, biogas started to be produced after a lag phase of 0.43 days during SW-DW fermentation, compared to 2.58 days in SS fermentation. It should be

emphasized that co-digestion reduces lag phase time considerably, as it can be seen in [Fig. 4 \(C\)](#).

3.4. Microbial population at optimal conditions

A summary of the main microbial groups involved in the codigestion of SS:SW-DW % v/v 50:50 (the best conditions) and mono-digestion of SS is shown in [Table 5](#). [Fig. 5](#) shows some photomicrograph of microbial groups in the SS:SW-DW 50:50% BMP test. Increasing in biomethane production is mainly reflected in total microbial population augmentation. Total microbial population obtained in BMP of SS:SW-DW% v/v 50:50 was $2.46 \cdot 10^{10}$ cell/ml, 5.5 times higher than those obtained in SS BMP test ($4.49 \cdot 10^9$ cell/ml). Microbial population groups also showed different profiles at these both conditions. Thus, Eubacteria percentage was higher in the case of using only SS as substrate than in the case of 50:50% v/v of SS:SW-DW. Specifically, acetogenic bacteria was 53.4% in the case of SS and 18% in the case of 50:50% v/v SS:SW-DW. However, because higher population in the former case, it was $2.39 \cdot 10^9$ cell/ml of acetogenic bacteria in SS against $4.42 \cdot 10^9$ cell/ml of 50:50% v/v SS:SW-DW. Attending subgroups in acetogenic bacteria the proportion BUA/PUA were 2.23 and 3 for SS and 50:50% v/v of SS:SW-DW respectively. On the other hand, in both cases HAB was low (0-1%) due to hydrolytic stage had been concluded. In addition, when 50:50% v/v of SS:SW-DW was used, 81.9% of population was *Archaea* (being the majority AUM, 74.4%) against only 45.2% when SS is used as substrate (being the majority also AUM, 41.8%). Hence, in general, it can be said that the different ratios *Eubacteria:Archaea* were observed in the SS and SS:SW-DW BMP tests: 54.8:45.2 and 18.1:81.9, respectively; making co-digestion microbial population more rich in *Archaea* (above all aceticlastic methanogens).

4. Conclusions

The addition of SW-DW, as a co-substrate, improves the anaerobic digestion of SS in a proportionally way in terms of $COD_{S_{removal}}$ and biomethane production. Optimal conditions were 50:50% v/v SS:SW-DW with removal values of $\%VS_{removal}=54.5\%$; $BMP_{exp}= 225 L_{CH_4}/kg_{VS}$ and productivity values of $154 L_{CH_4}/kg_{CODt}$. The experimental results indicate that, the Gompertz model can explain the final behaviour and kinetics of the process with high degree of reliability ($r^2 > 0.99$) and pointing to the best co-digestion configuration. In this sense, kinetic parameters determined at optimal conditions 50:50% v/v of SS:SW-DW were ($K = 25.0 \pm 2.3 NL/kg_{VS}\cdot d$; $\lambda = 2.49 \pm 0.19$ and $Y_{MAX} = 229 \pm 5.0 (NL/kg_{VS})$). These results are also supported by microbial analysis where there was an enrichment of Archaea group in co-digestion, particularly in acetoclastic methanogens. This optimal co-digestion mixture, can be used as starting point in order to study the scaling up of the process. Controlled codigestion of SS and SW-DW should be desirable in order to obtain higher amount of methane in WWTPs of “Sherry-wine” area by regularly addition of SW-DW collected. In this sense, because the proximity and the volume of generation of both substrates, “Sherry-wine” region can be considered as being well placed geographically for a successful management of both substrates by co-digestion without using any pre-treatment saving energy and cost.

Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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Nomenclature

Acet	Acetogenic bacteria
Arch	Archaea
AUM	Acetogens utili
BMP	Biomethane potential (NL_{CH_4}/kg_{SV})
BUA	Butyrate utilising acetogens
CODs	Chemical oxygen demand (soluble)
CODt	Chemical oxygen demand (total)
Eub	Eubacteria
g_{H-Ac}/L	Acetic acid concentration (g/L)
HAB	Hydrolitic acidogenic bacteria
HRT	Hydraulic retention time (d)
HUM	Hydrogen utilising bacteria
K	Kinetic parameter from the modified Gompertz model ($NL_{CH_4}/kg_{SV}\cdot d$)
PUA	Butirate utilising acetogens
TS	Total solids
SS	Sewage sludge
Y_{CH_4}	Methane yield (NL_{CH_4}/kg_{SV})
$Y_{CH_4}^{MAX}$	Maximum methane yield from the modified Gompertz model measured (NL_{CH_4}/kg_{SV})
V_{tCH_4}	Net volume of methane (NL_{CH_4})
VFA	Volatile Fatty Acids
VS	Volatile solids
SW-DW	Sherry-wine distillery wastewater

WWTP Wastewater treatment plant

Λ Lag-phase parameter from the modified Gompertz model (d)

Subscript

t Relating to time t

0 Relating to the initial condition

H-Ac Relating to acetic acid

Tables

Table 1 Inoculum and raw co-substrates characteristics

Parameters	Inoculum	SS	SW-DW
pH	7.8	7.6	6.4
COD _t (kg/m ³)	19.9 ± 0.4	53.9 ± 1.2	24.6 ± 2.2
COD _s (kg/m ³)	9.7 ± 0.3	19.0 ± 0.3	20.7 ± 0.6
TS (%)	2.09 ± 0.03	3.67 ± 0.01	1.47 ± 0.11
VS (%)	1.21 ± 0.01	2.69 ± 0.03	1.06 ± 0.09
VS/TS (%)	58.0 ± 1.3	73.8 ± 0.5	72.6 ± 2.9
Alkalinity (g _{CaCO3} /L)	5.81	3.53	0.019
VFA _t (g _{H-Ac} /L)	0.41	2.85	0.75
TN (kg/m ³)	2.15	14.8	1.09
C/N	9.2	5.2	17.5

Table 2 Initial and final characteristics of substrates in serum bottle

Parameters (kg/m ³)	SW-DW (% v/v)				
	0	25	50	75	100
COD _{t0}	35.5 ± 0.2	32.0 ± 1.3	26.7 ± 0.4	24.5 ± 0.4	20.6 ± 0.9
COD _{tr}	18.8 ± 0.4	16.1 ± 1.0	13.7 ± 0.6	10.7 ± 0.6	6.9 ± 0.6
COD _{s0}	15.7 ± 0.3	16.2 ± 0.2	16.3 ± 0.3	17.2 ± 0.1	16.2 ± 0.4
COD _{sr}	9.3 ± 0.4	7.4 ± 0.4	5.7 ± 0.3	5.9 ± 0.6	2.3 ± 0.1
VS ₀ ^a	1.96 ± 0.05	1.73 ± 0.04	1.52 ± 0.09	1.20 ± 0.02	0.95 ± 0.03
VS _r ^a	1.03 ± 0.01	0.89 ± 0.01	0.70 ± 0.01	0.54 ± 0.02	0.37 ± 0.01
VFA _{t0} ^b	1.68	1.21	1.19	0.92	0.63
VFA _{tr} ^b	0.12	0.05	0.0247	n. d.	n. d.
C/N ₀	5.2	10.8	16.4	21.9	27.5

^a Unit: %.

^b Unit: g_{H-Ac}/L.

Table 3 Kinetic parameter of the modified Gompertz model

SS:SW-DW (% v/v)	Y _{CH4} ^{MAX} (NL/kg _{VS})	K (NL/kg _{VS} ·d)	λ (d)	r ²	BMP _{exp} (NL/kg _{VS})	Relative error (%)
SS	195.8 ± 4.6	13.4 ± 0.9	2.58 ± 0.22	0.995	183 ± 11.6	6.7
75:25	218.8 ± 5.8	19.8 ± 1.8	2.60 ± 0.24	0.989	210 ± 16.2	4.0
50:50	229.8 ± 5.0	25.0 ± 2.3	2.49 ± 0.19	0.990	225 ± 23.4	2.1
25:75	256.0 ± 2.0	26.2 ± 0.8	1.25 ± 0.07	0.998	255 ± 13.4	0.2
SW-DW	294.6 ± 3.5	31.7 ± 1.8	0.43 ± 0.12	0.995	301 ± 15.4	2.5

Table 4 Summary of published studies on kinetic modelling of SS and wine distillery wastewater employing the modified Gompertz model: value of the kinetic parameter of the model

Feedstock	Y _{CH4} ^{MAX} (NL/kg _{VS})	K (NL/kg _{VS} ·d)	λ (d)	r ²	Reference
Sewage Sludge	148.1	31.4	0.00	0.96	Nielfa et al. (2015)
	167.0	32.4	<0.01	0.98	Cordova et al. (2017)
	163.5	13.4	0.00	0.94	Zhen et al. (2016)
	195.8	13.4	2.58	0.99	This study
Wine Distillery Wastewater	140.1	16.1	0.21	0.97	Syaichurrozi et al. (2013)
	115.0	24.7	0.80	0.99	Budiyono et al. (2013)
	39.4	7.0	0.96	0.99	Budiyono et al. (2014)
	296.6	31.7	0.43	0.99	This study

Table 5 Percentages of groups of microbiota for sole SS and 50:50% v/v of SS:SW-DW

% SW-DW	Microbial population							
	Eub	HAB	Acet	PUA	BUA	Arch	HUM	AUM
0%	54.8	1.5	53.4	16.2	37.2	45.2	3.4	41.8
50%	18.1	0.1	18.0	4.41	13.5	81.9	7.5	74.4

Figures

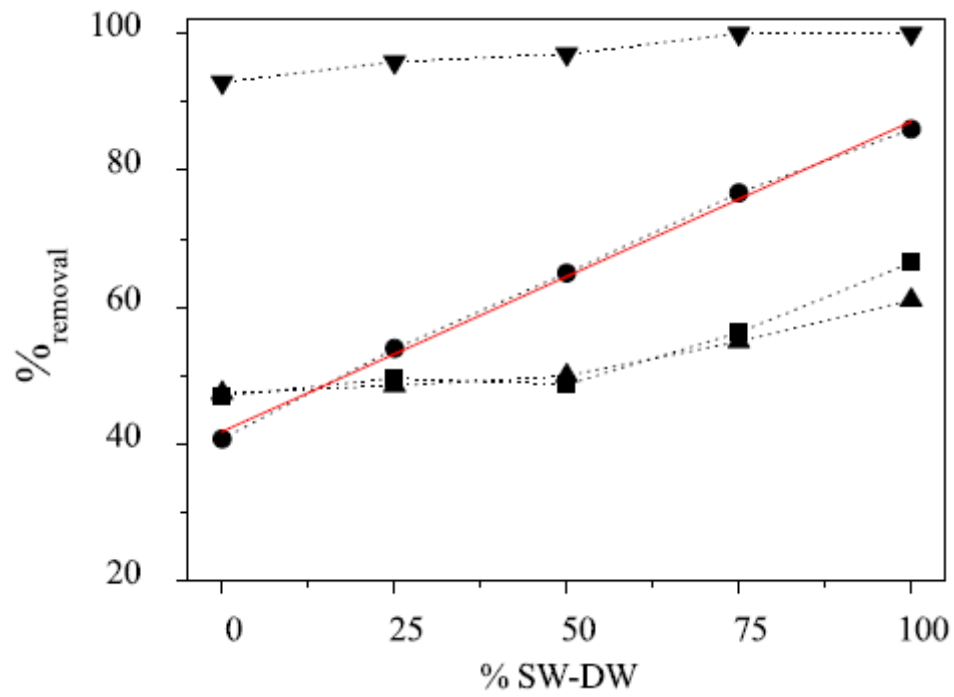


Figure 1 CODt: square; CODs: circle; VS: upward triangle; VFA: downward triangle

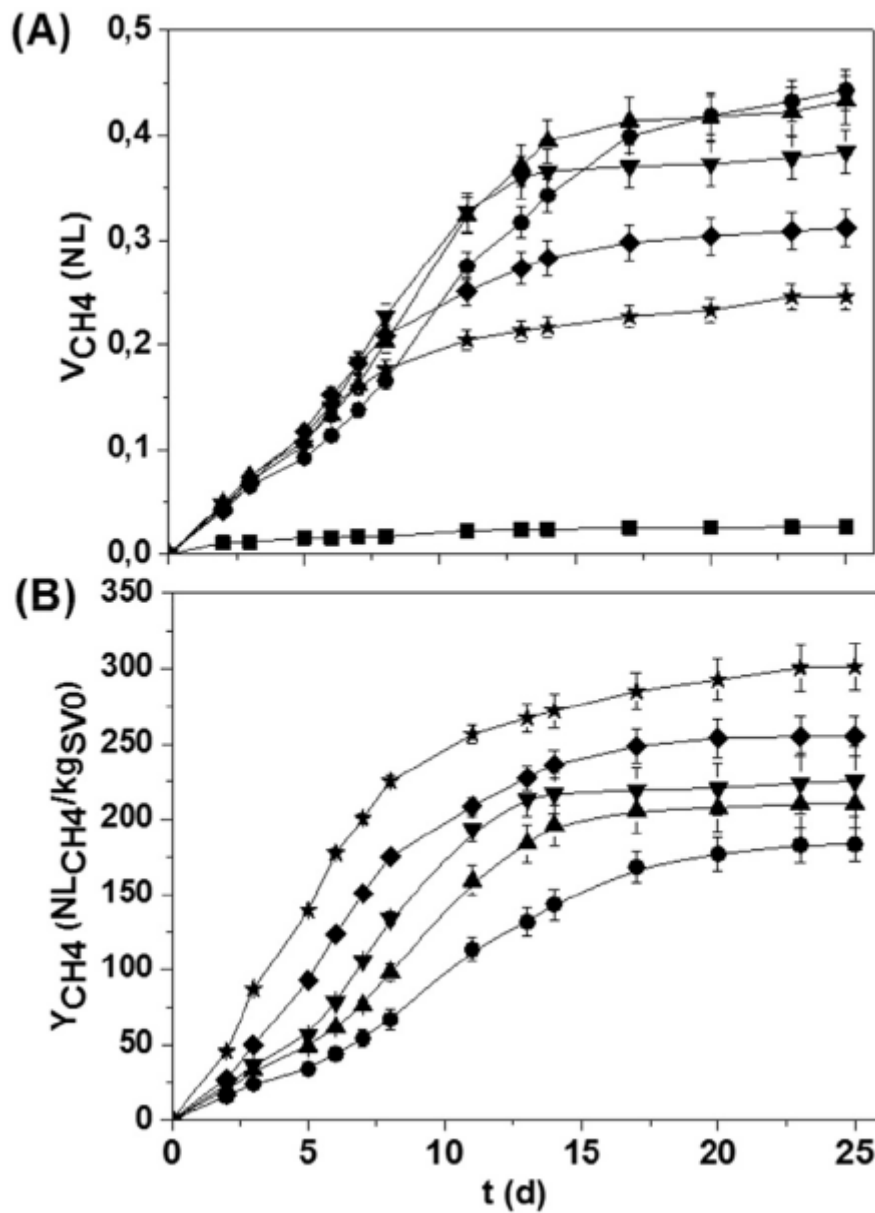


Figure 2 Control: square; SS:circle; 75:25 (% SS:SW-DW): upward triangle; 50:50 (% SS:SW-DW): downward triangle; 25:75 (% SS:SW-DW): diamond; SW-DW: star.

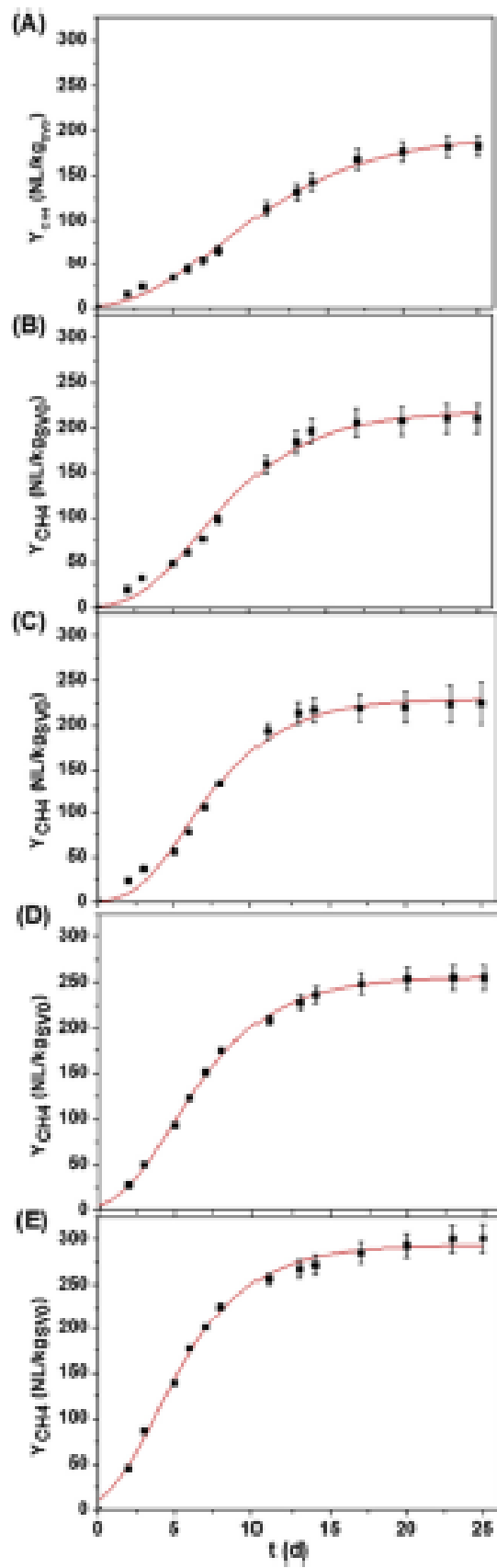


Figure 3 Methane yield: square; kinetic Gompertz model prediction: line.

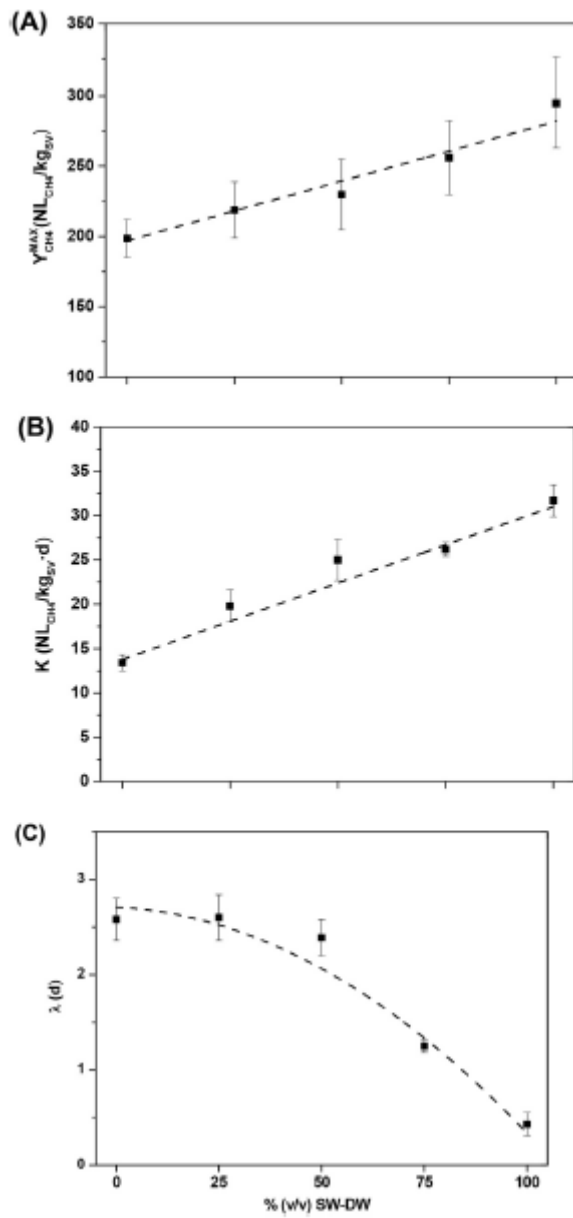


Figure 4 Kinetic parameters of the modified Gompertz model.

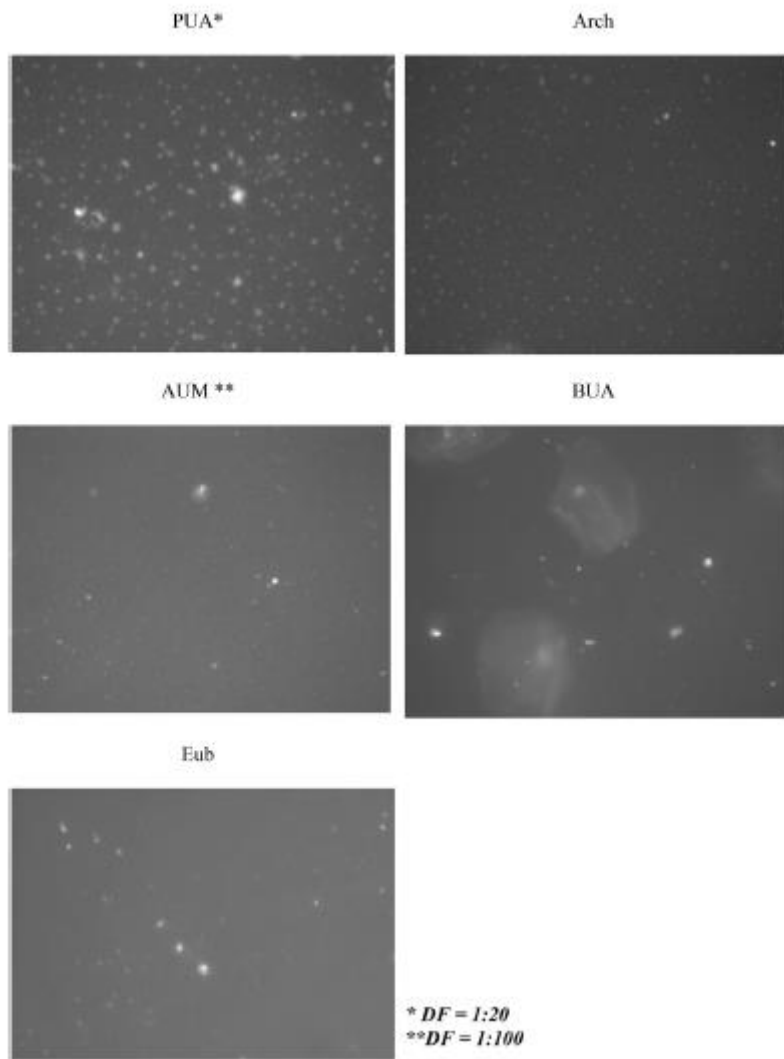


Figure 5 White dots: ufc.

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