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Decolourisation of Acid orange 7 in a microbial fuel cell with a laccase-based biocathode: Influence of mitigating pH changes in the cathode chamber.

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Highlights of Research

1. First Study to observe the influence of mitigating pH changes and its effect on laccase activity in a microbial fuel cell (MFC).

2. Decoupling pH and salinity in the cathode chamber of MFC.

3. Correlation of laccase activity with performance of the system.

4. Comparison on efficiency of Nafion and CEM membrane in a MFC relative to laccase activity.

Abstract

Biocathodes may be a suitable replacement of platinum in microbial fuel cells (MFCs) if the cost of MFCs is to be reduced. However, the use of enzymes as bio-cathodes is fraught with loss of activity as time progresses. A possible cause of this loss in activity might be pH increase in the cathode as pH gradients in MFCs are well known. This pH increase is however, accompanied by simultaneous increase in salinity; therefore salinity may be a confounding variable.

This study investigated various ways of mitigating pH changes in the cathode of MFCs and their effect on laccase activity and decolourisation of a model azo dye Acid orange 7 in the anode chamber. Experiments were run with catholyte pH automatically controlled via feedback control or by using acetate buffers (pH 4.5) of various strength (100 mM and 200 mM), with CMI7000 as the cation exchange membrane. A comparison was also made

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