

Accepted Manuscript

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PII: S0960-8524(18)30550-9

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.biortech.2018.04.037>

Reference: BITE 19817

To appear in: *Bioresource Technology*

Received Date: 14 February 2018

Revised Date: 7 April 2018

Accepted Date: 9 April 2018



Please cite this article as: Xiwei, X., Ren, T., Yan, S., Zhiyu, L., Enchen, J., Influence of biomass pretreatment on upgrading of bio-oil: comparison of dry and hydrothermal torrefaction, *Bioresource Technology* (2018), doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.biortech.2018.04.037>

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Influence of biomass pretreatment on upgrading of bio-oil: comparison of dry and hydrothermal torrefaction

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Abstract: The dry and hydrothermal torrefaction of Camellia Shell (CS) was carried on three different devices- batch autoclave, quartz tube, and auger reactor. The torrefied bio-char products were investigated via TGA, elemental analysis and industrial analysis. Moreover, the pyrolysis and catalytic pyrolysis properties of torrefied bio-char were investigated. The results showed torrefaction significantly influenced the content of hemicellulose in CS. And hydrothermal torrefaction via batch autoclave and dry torrefaction via auger reactors promoted the hemicellulose to strip from the CS. Quartz tube and auger reactor were beneficial for devolatilization and improving heat value of torrefied bio-char. The result showed that the main products were phenols and acids. And hydrothermal torrefaction pretreatment effectively reduced the acids content from 34.5% to 13.2% and enriched the content of phenols (from 27.23% to 60.05%) in bio-oil due to the decreasing of hemicellulose in torrefied bio-char. And the catalyst had slight influence on the bio-oil distribution.

Keywords: hydrothermal and dry torrefaction; properties of torrefied bio-char; pyrolysis; upgrading of bio-oil; phenols.

1 Introduction

Biomass dry/hydrothermal torrefaction was a mild thermochemical pre-treatment method where biomass was heated to 180-300 °C to remove most of the hemicellulose and a bit of cellulose and lignin (Tran et al., 2013; Tapasvi et al., 2015). Dry torrefaction was widely discussed because it was beneficial for overcoming the drawbacks of biomass such as low bulk density, high oxygen content, low heat value, high moisture and volatile matter, etc. (Bilgic et al., 2016; Chen et al., 2017; Xu et al., 2017). Hydrothermal torrefaction is a promising method for dealing with wet organic matter such as agricultural and forestry residuals, animal manure and human waste.

Moreover, the bio-oil from biomass pyrolysis was unstable and low value for industrial usage due to the high oxygen content. It is well known that torrefaction decreases the oxygen content of the solid product (Ibrahim et al., 2013; Atienza-Martínez et al., 2015), and is beneficial for the deoxygenation of

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