Carbon dioxide sequestration and methane production promotion by wollastonite in sludge anaerobic digestion

Yan Zhang, Lihui Zhang, He Liu, Linlin Gong, Qianqian Jiang, Hongbo Liu, Bo Fu

Abstract

This study investigated the feasibility and performance of simultaneous in-situ CO2 sequestration and CH4 production promotion by wollastonite addition in sludge AD. A maximum CH4 yield increment of 30.8% and maximum methane production rate increment of 64.9% with wollastonite addition at dosage of 16.25 g/L were achieved. CO2 was efficiently sequestered by wollastonite addition and resulted in a higher CH4 content of 81.7%–82.4%. The mechanism of CO2 sequestration by wollastonite was confirmed as Ca2+ release and subsequently carbonation based on cation and precipitates analysis. The results demonstrated that wollastonite could be applied as an effective additive for simultaneous in-situ CO2 sequestration and CH4 production promotion of sludge AD.

1. Introduction

As a byproduct of biological wastewater treatment, vast amounts of waste activated sludge (WAS) is produced during the operation of wastewater treatment plants (WWTPs) (Wang et al., 2015). In the U.S., the amount of annually generated sewage sludge is greater than 8 million (Liu et al., 2016). In China, the WAS yield increased year by year with rapid urbanization and high-speed development of wastewater treatment industry, and has reached 55 million tons with water content of 80% in 2014 (Liu et al., 2017). WAS disposal is a critical and challenging issue accompanying wastewater treatment, but also provides an opportunity for energy and resource recovery owing to high organic content of the WAS. Harnessing energy from WAS could play a crucial role to reduce energy consumption of wastewater and WAS
Aerobic digestion (AD), comprises of hydrolysis, acidogenesis, acetogenesis, and methanogenesis processes, could effectively achieve mass reduction, pathogen reduction, and convert biodegradable organics to a combustible biogas composed principally of methane (CH₄) and carbon dioxide (CO₂). For its sludge stabilization, especially energy recovery ability, AD is the most widely used sludge treatment technology in developed countries. The energy produced by AD was estimated to cover 70-80% of energy consumption of a WWTP, if the AD process performs high efficiency (Jenicek et al., 2012). However, high content of CO₂ (15-60 vol%) may contained in the biogas produced by AD, with CH₄ content of 40-75% and trace amounts of other components like hydrogen sulfide and siloxanes (García-Gutierrez et al., 2016). Utilization of biogas requires cleanup and upgrading processes, primarily, for CO₂ removal (Lombardi and Carnevale, 2013; Makaruk et al., 2010). Current biogas upgrading technologies may cause a methane loss of 0.1-8% (Linville et al., 2016a), and increases biogas production costs by 20-72% (Linville et al., 2016b). In addition, CO₂ is usually released into the atmosphere during regeneration of the adsorbent media in the upgrading process, which aggravates climate warming. Therefore, its essential to develop in-situ CO₂ sequestration and biogas production enhancement technologies for AD process (Fernandez et al., 2017).

Carbonation of CO₂ is a process where CO₂ is fixed in the form of carbonates by divalent cations like Ca²⁺, Mg²⁺. In nature, alkaline silicate minerals such as wollastonite (CaSiO₃) and olivine (mainly Mg₂SiO₄) can potentially sequester CO₂ via mineral carbonation. As carbonate precipitates forms under neutral and alkaline pH, and the release of divalent cations favors acidic pH, the rate of mineral CO₂ carbonation under ambient environmental conditions is usually very slow (Salek et al., 2013). Therefore, exposing alkaline silicate minerals to acid conditions to accelerate cations release, followed by carbonation in an alkaline environment can enhance mineral CO₂ sequestration. AD is essentially a two-stage system consisting of VFAs fermentation from complex organic compounds, and subsequent methanogenesis from the VFAs. Proton generated during VFAs fermentation can accelerated cations release from silicate minerals like wollastonite according to Eq. (1):

\[
\text{CaSiO}_3 + 2\text{H}^+ \rightarrow \text{Ca}^{2+} + \text{SiO}_2 + \text{H}_2\text{O}
\]  

(1)

While methanogenesis can generate adequate alkalinity for carbonate precipitates formation (Salek et al., 2013). Therefore, developing in-situ CO₂ sequestration based on mineral carbonation in sludge AD systems should be a theoretically feasible way, which can conduct biogas upgrading during its production, and enhance the economic and environmental benefits of WAS AD.

Olivine has been demonstrated as an additive during sludge AD, and improve CH₄ content from 71.2%–75.9% to 74.9%–76.4% with in-situ CO₂ sequestration (Linville et al., 2016b). Trace element like Ni/Co did not impact on CO₂ sequestration by olivine (Linville et al., 2016a). The CH₄ production of sludge AD was also improved with olivine addition, probably owing to its pH buffering (Linville et al., 2016b). Wollastonite is another kind of silicate rock has broader distribution and cheaper price compared to olivine, which makes wollastonite more potential than olivine in practical engineering application of mineral CO₂ sequestration. In addition, cations release from silicate minerals is the key step limiting the performance of mineral CO₂ sequestration. The faster release of cations from wollastonite than from olivine was confirmed by its higher pH buffering ability during acidification (Lindeboom et al., 2013), indicated the higher CO₂ sequestration potential of wollastonite than olivine. Meanwhile, CaCO₃ (kₚ = 3.36 × 10⁻⁹ at 25 °C) has lower solubility and higher stability than MgCO₃ (kₚ = 6.82 × 10⁻⁶ at 25 °C). Therefore, wollastonite may perform, theoretically, better than olivine on CO₂ sequestration in sludge AD, as well as on CH₄ production improvement owing to its higher pH buffering ability.

The main objective of this study is to investigate the feasibility and performance of simultaneous in-situ CO₂ sequestration and CH₄ production promotion by wollastonite addition in sludge AD. Dynamic processes of intermediate VFAs production and conversion, methane production and content, Ca²⁺ release and consumption during sludge AD with wollastonite addition were revealed. Strategy for further application of CO₂ sequestration with wollastonite supplementation in sludge AD was also discussed.

2. Materials and methods

2.1. Sludge substrate, inoculum, and wollastonite

The WAS for digestion was the excess sludge of a local wastewater treatment plant (WWTP). The sludge was taken immediately after de-watering by a belt press filter in the WWTP, and stored under 4 °C until use. The inoculum was anaerobic granular sludge taken from an up-flow anaerobic sludge bed (UASB) reactor, with sludge retention time of 120 days, in another local WWTP in Wuxi city, China. The WAS had pH of 7.3, total solids (TS) concentration of 136 g/L, volatile solids (VS) concentration of 73 g/L, and was diluted to TS concentration of 60 g/L before use. Thermal pretreatment, 100 °C for 12 h, was adopted for half of the sludge after dilution. The seed anaerobic sludge, i.e. inoculum, had pH of 7.2, TS concentration of 61 g/L, VS concentration of 36 g/L. Wollastonite in 120 mesh was purchased from a mining company in China and used for CO₂ sequestration. The average particle size of the wollastonite was 21.0 μm. The main element composition of the wollastonite detected by energy dispersive spectrometer (EDS) was Ca 29.92% (wt%), O 43.82%, C 9.06%, P 0.01%, Si 16.29%, Mg 0.28%, Fe 0.21%, and Al 0.30%. The X-ray diffraction (XRD) pattern of the wollastonite fit well with standard peaks in the database (PDF#27-1064).

2.2. Anaerobic digestion operation

The AD experiments were conducted in 1.6 L glass digesters with working volume of 1.2 L under temperature of 35 °C. Two types of sludge substrate, i.e. the un-pretreated WAS and thermal pretreated WAS, were used. 1 L of the un-pretreated WAS and thermal pretreated WAS were fed into different digesters, and named as S and THS, respectively. Subsequently, 200 mL seed anaerobic sludge was inoculated into each digester. The pH of the mixture was adjusted to neutral with HCl. A parallel group of digesters fed with above substrates were added with 19.5 g wollastonite per digester, and named as S+W, and THS+W, respectively. The digesters were degassed with nitrogen gas for 20 min to eliminate dissolved oxygen in the mixture and the oxygen gas in the headspaces before digestion. The mixture in each digester was stirred with an agitator under speed of 120 rpm continuously. A gas bag was installed on the top of each digester for biogas collection. The AD experiments were conducted under batch mode and terminated according to the tenuous increase of biogas production after 12 days operation. The gas and liquid samples were collected from each digester periodically for analysis.

2.3. Analysis methods

Total solids (TS) and volatile solids (VS) were measured with gravimetric method. For liquid sample analysis, the samples were pretreated by filtering with 0.45 μm filter. After filtration, soluble chemical oxygen demand (SCOD), pH, total alkalinity (TA), NH₄⁻N, and PO₄³⁻ were analyzed according to the standard methods issued by the State Environmental Protection Administration of China (2002). Free ammonia nitrogen (FAN) was calculated according to Angelidaki and Ahring (1993).

Volatile fatty acids (VFAs) in the filtrated liquid samples were measured by gas chromatograph method according to Ma et al. (2017). A GC-2010 (Shimadzu, Japan) equipped with a flame ionization detector and an auto injector (AOC-20i, Shimadzu, Japan) was used. The
column adopted in the detection was a fused silica capillary (PEG-20M, 30 m × 0.32 mm × 0.50 μm). The samples were acidized by 3 M phosphoric acid and added with 4-methyl-valeric acid as an internal standard before injection. The temperature program of the GC column was 80 °C for 3 min, then increased by 15 °C/min, and held for 3 min at final temperature of 210 °C. The temperature of both injection port and detector was set at 250 °C. The total VFAs (TVFA) concentration was calculated by summing up all of detected individual VFA. The Ca\(^{2+}\) concentration was measured by an inductively coupled plasma emission spectrometer (ICP, Optima 8300, PerkinElmer, USA). The volume of produced biogas was measured by displacement of saturated aqueous NaCl in a graduated measuring cylinder (Abouelenien et al., 2009). The percent of CH\(_4\) and CO\(_2\) content was measured by a gas chromatograph (GC9790II, Fuli, China). The percent of CH\(_4\) and CO\(_2\) was normalized to assume 100% biogas (methane and carbon dioxide only) was produced. The microscopic photos were taken by a scanning electron microscope (SEM, SU1510, Hitachi, Japan). Particle size was measured by a laser particle size distribution instrument (BT-2003, Bettersize, China). The element composition was analyzed by an EDS (SU1510, Hitachi, Japan). The XRD analysis was conducted on a D2 PHASER (Bruker AXS, Germany). Capillary suction time (CST) value was measured by a capillary suction timer (Type 304M, Triton Electronics, UK).

2.4. Modelling of methane production

The methane production curves were fitted to modified Gompertz equation in order to obtain the kinetic parameters. The modified Gompertz equation (Nopharatana et al., 2007) was shown in Eq. (2).

\[
B = P \times \exp \left\{-\exp \left[ \frac{R_m}{P} \times e^{\left(\lambda - t\right) + 1}\right]\right\} 
\]

(2)

In the model, \(B\) is the cumulative methane production (ml), \(P\) is the maximum methane production potential (ml), \(R_m\) is the maximum methane production rate (ml/h), \(\lambda\) is the duration of lag phase (h), and \(t\) is the duration of the digestion at which cumulative methane production, \(B\), is calculated (h). The fitting was conducted by software Origin 8.0, and adjusted \(R^2\) (adj. \(R^2\)) was calculated to evaluate the accuracy of the model.

3. Results & discussion

3.1. Methane production enhancement and carbon dioxide reduction

The cumulative CH\(_4\) production and CO\(_2\) production during sludge AD are shown in Fig. 1. The amount of produced methane from the thermal pretreated sludge was significantly more than that from the un-pretreated sludge, which confirmed the methane production improvement owing to enhanced hydrolysis by sludge pretreatment (Ariunbaatar et al., 2014; Neumann et al., 2016). The methane production of wollastonite added sludge AD systems were 2575.8 mL for THS + W and 1234.3 mL for S + W, higher than that of control sludge AD systems (1969.3 mL for THS and 1164.7 mL for S). Wollastonite supplementation increased methane production by 30.8% for the AD of thermal pretreated sludge and 5.9% for the AD of un-pretreated sludge. The effect of wollastonite supplementation on CH\(_4\) production rate was also evaluated based on modelling. By fitting CH\(_4\) production data to modified Gompertz model, the estimated lag phase (\(\lambda\)) and maximum CH\(_4\) production rate (\(R_m\)) were obtained (shown in Table 1). The \(\lambda\) was not shortened by wollastonite supplementation, as it was already very short in the controls. However, with wollastonite addition, the \(R_m\) was increased by 10.2% and 64.9% for un-pretreated sludge and thermal pretreated sludge AD, respectively. It indicated that both CH\(_4\) yield and CH\(_4\) production rate could be improved by wollastonite supplementation.

As shown in Fig. 1b, the cumulative CO\(_2\) production of S + W was lower than that of S. The cumulative CO\(_2\) production of THS + W was higher than that of THS by 19.4%. The increased CO\(_2\) production (19.4%) was lower than the increased CH\(_4\) production (30.8%), with wollastonite addition in the AD of thermal pretreated sludge. It indicated that when equal amount of methane produced in THS + W and THS, less CO\(_2\) was generated in THS + W compared to THS. Correspondingly, the CO\(_2\) content in produced biogas of THS + W (18.3%) was lower than that of THS (19.7%), consistent with the lower CO\(_2\) content of S + W (17.6%) than that of S (23.7%, as shown in Table 2). According to the decreased CO\(_2\) content, it could be deduced that mineral CO\(_2\) sequestration based on wollastonite addition was achieved in both S + W and THS + W. The mineral CO\(_2\) carbonation was confirmed by precipitates analysis (data shown later). More CO\(_2\) produced in THS + W was owing to the improvement of biogas production by wollastonite addition, though mineral CO\(_2\) carbonation was also achieved. If assuming the gas content before CO\(_2\) carbonation in wollastonite added AD systems were consistent to the corresponding controls without wollastonite addition, the sequestered CO\(_2\) in S + W and THS + W were estimated as 119.8 mL and 54.8 mL, and account for 31.2% and 8.7% of the generated CO\(_2\), respectively.

\[
\begin{array}{cccc|c}
 P (ml) & R_m (ml/h) & \lambda (h) & \text{adj. } R^2 \\
 S & 1125.37 ± 33.91 & 8.52 ± 0.74 & 12.50 ± 5.48 & 0.9874 \\
 S + W & 1195.16 ± 31.59 & 9.39 ± 0.74 & 14.66 ± 4.87 & 0.9898 \\
 THS & 2052.81 ± 223.03 & 9.83 ± 1.55 & 0 ± 14.16 & 0.9376 \\
 THS + W & 2601.79 ± 110.74 & 16.21 ± 1.59 & 0 ± 7.27 & 0.9799 \\
\end{array}
\]

Table 1 Model fitting results of methane production data using the modified Gompertz Equation.

Fig. 1. (a) Cumulative CH\(_4\) and (b) cumulative CO\(_2\) production of sludge AD.
As low concentration of VFAs were accumulated in un-pretreated sludge AD systems, the effect of wollastonite on VFAs composition seems irregular. In thermal pretreated sludge AD, THS, acetate was the dominant acid with concentration of 0.79 g/L when the TVFA accumulated most at hour 15. After 60 h digestion, acetate was significant reduced to 0.26 g/L, while propionate increased to 0.58 g/L, became the dominant acid, and kept relative stable afterward. Wollastonite supplementation significant decreased propionate concentration in THS + W, and resulting lower TVFA compare to THS. The production and transformation of propionate and acetic acid were mainly based on different microorganisms and different metabolic pathways (Ma et al., 2017; Song et al., 2018). The degradation of propionic acid was enhanced by addition of sulfate as an external electron acceptor (Qiao et al., 2016). If the enhanced degradation of propionic acid with wollastonite addition caused by microbial community change or electron transfer improvement need further investigation.

3.3. Change of digestion environment with wollastonite addition

The pH profiles of the digesters are shown in Fig. 3a. The initial pH of the digesters was similar, ranged in 6.82–6.88. In un-pretreated sludge AD, S, the pH increased gradually throughout the digestion. In thermal pretreated sludge AD, THS, the pH was decreased to 6.67 with first 15 h, then increased substantially to 7.08 at hour 36 and kept gradual increase afterward. The decreased pH at hour 15 was consistent with the increased TVFA, and could attribute to dissociation of VFAs. Wollastonite increased the pH of the digesters immediately after its addition, and kept higher in S + W and THS + W compared to the corresponding control. The pH buffering abilily of wollastonite was revealed by THS + W, in which the pH was not decreased with VFAs accumulation at hour 15. Both acidic and alkaline condition could inhibit methanogenic activity during sludge digestion (Montanes et al., 2014; Yang et al., 2015; Zhang et al., 2018), though alkaline condition was considered to benefit VFAs production (Liu et al., 2012). The buffering of wollastonite avoided acidic condition of the digester, the increased pH in THS + W was lower than 7.5 at the end of digestion, which well facilitate methane production. The TA concentration in S + W and THS + W was improved with the increased pH and enhanced methanogenic activity (Fig. 3b). The highest TA concentration in THS + W was 3822.8 mg/L as CaCO3, which was much lower than the inhibition concentration (10,000 mg/L as CaCO3) for methanogenesis (Lin et al., 2013). The addition of wollastonite did not significantly influence the concentration of NH4+-N (Fig. 4a). The FAN was increased in S + W and THS + W owing to the improved pH with wollastonite addition (Fig. 4b). However, the highest FAN in THS + W was 23.9 mg/L, still much lower than the considered threshold for methanogenesis inhibition (Chen et al., 2008; Duan et al., 2012).

As Ca²⁺ release from wollastonite could remarkably influence CO2 sequestration in sludge AD, the variation of Ca²⁺ concentration in the digesters was investigated (shown in Fig. 5a). Substantial release of Ca²⁺ was achieved in each digesters in the first 15 h, as the Ca²⁺ concentration significant increased and reached 153.6 mg/L, 122.8 mg/L, 111.5 mg/L, and 108.3 mg/L in THS + W, THS, S + W, and S, respectively. The increased Ca²⁺ concentration in the digesters without wollastonite addition indicated the existence of calcium in the sludge. The highest Ca²⁺ concentration detected in THS + W and S + W was 31.2 mg/L and 19.2 mg/L higher than that in THS and S, respectively. The released Ca²⁺ with wollastonite addition might be much higher than the detected value, as CO2 carbonation could happen during Ca²⁺ release under pH approximate neutral (Ebrahimi et al., 2018). The source of released Ca²⁺ influences that if it could achieve CO2 sequestration. WAS usually contains some CaCO3, which accumulated during wastewater treatment. If the released Ca²⁺ in S and THS was from CaCO3 in sludge, CO2 sequestration would not achieve as CO2 also released when Ca²⁺ release. Therefore, the cations from external silicate mineral, i.e. Ca²⁺ from wollastonite in this study, was crucial for

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2</th>
<th>CH₄ and CO₂ content in produced biogas.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CH₄ (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>76.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S + W</td>
<td>82.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THS</td>
<td>80.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THS + W</td>
<td>81.7</td>
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</table>

The dosage of wollastonite in this study was 19.5 g per digester, i.e. 16.25 g/L, which was lower than the dosage (25–50 g/L) of fine olivine (< 120 mesh) used in the reported study (Linville et al., 2016b). However, the 30.8% of methane improvement in this study was much higher than that improved by olivine addition (< 7%) in mesophilic AD. Wollastonite performed better CH₄ production improvement than olivine. Compared to other additives reported promoting CH₄ production, wollastonite also showed better competitiveness. Five types of zeolites were tested for its impact on sludge AD, only natural mordenite increased methane production under dosage of 50 g/L (Tada et al., 2005). WAS incineration bottom ash addition could increase biogas production by up to 3.5 times under dosage of 12–120 g/g VS (Lo et al., 2012). The adopted dosage was too high to be scaled up for actual engineering application. In relative low dosage range, a methane production increment of 26.6% was achieved (Yin et al., 2018), which was still slightly lower than that improved by wollastonite in this study. Moreover, the bottom ash dosage of 0.9 g/g TS (Yin et al., 2018) also was nearly 3 times higher than wollastonite dosage of 0.325 g/g TS in this study. The reduced CO₂ content, 6.1% and 1.4% for the two types of sludge, with wollastonite addition in the AD systems in this study were also higher than that achieved by olivine supplementation (1.2%–3.7%) under a higher dosage (Linville et al., 2016b).

The profiles of SCOD, TVFA and VFAs concentrations are shown in Fig. 2. The initial SCOD and TVFA of pretreated sludge AD group, THS and THS + W, were much higher than that of un-pretreated sludge AD group, S and S + W, owing to the excellent hydrolysis performance of thermal pretreatment (Ennouri et al., 2016). For un-pretreated sludge AD, the SCOD in S increased slightly during digestion, while the SCOD in S + W increased more than that in the S. As more CH₄ was produced in S + W than in S (Fig. 1a), which means more organic matters in the liquid phase were converted to CH₄, the higher SCOD in S + W indicated more organic matters was hydrolyzed from sludge, and means that the hydrolysis of the sludge was enhanced with wollastonite supplementation. For thermal pretreated sludge AD, the SCOD in THS and THS + W decreased gradually during digestion. The thermal pretreatment released high concentration of organic matters in the liquid phase, and enhanced methane production, resulting the decrease of SCOD during digestion. The TVFA peaked at hour 15 in THS and THS + W with concentration of 2.25 g/L and 2.08 g/L, respectively. It indicated that a higher rate of acidification than the rate of methane production from VFAs in the first 15 h digestion, while the rate of methane production overcome that of acidification afterward. The TVFA in wollastonite supplemented AD, THS + W, was lower than that in AD without wollastonite addition, THS. The difference of TVFA concentration between THS and THS + W became bigger along with digestion progress, indicating a higher VFA conversion rate was achieved with wollastonite addition. It revealed that wollastonite addition could enhance hydrolysis and methanogenic activity in sludge AD, and resulting higher methane production (as shown in Fig. 1).

The components of the VFAs produced in the digesters included acetate, propionate, isobutyrate, n-butyrate, isovalerate, and n-valerate.

The highest Ca²⁺ concentration detected in THS + W and S + W was 31.2 mg/L and 19.2 mg/L higher than that in THS and S, respectively. The released Ca²⁺ with wollastonite addition might be much higher than the detected value, as CO₂ carbonation could happen during Ca²⁺ release under pH approximate neutral (Ebrahimi et al., 2018). The source of released Ca²⁺ influences that if it could achieve CO₂ sequestration. WAS usually contains some CaCO₃, which accumulated during wastewater treatment. If the released Ca²⁺ in S and THS was from CaCO₃ in sludge, CO₂ sequestration would not achieve as CO₂ also released when Ca²⁺ release. Therefore, the cations from external silicate mineral, i.e. Ca²⁺ from wollastonite in this study, was crucial for.
CO₂ sequestration.

It was reported that 2.5 g/L CaCl₂ (900.9 mg/L Ca²⁺) increased the biogas production from anaerobic digestion of municipal solid waste by 31.3% (Kumar et al., 2016), and 500 mg/L Ca²⁺ significantly enhanced the methane production from anaerobic digestion of municipal solid waste leachate (Dang et al., 2014). However, higher concentration of 5.0 g/L CaCl₂ (1801.8 mg/L Ca²⁺) and 2000 mg/L Ca²⁺ decreased the biogas production from anaerobic digestion of municipal solid waste and municipal solid waste leachate, respectively (Dang et al., 2014; Kumar et al., 2016). A moderate Ca²⁺ concentration improvement is proved to enhance anaerobic digestion, while high concentration of Ca²⁺ deteriorates AD performance owing to suppression of acetoclastic methanogenesis (Dang et al., 2014; Yin et al., 2018). The improved Ca²⁺ concentration (111.5–154.0 mg/L) was far below the suppression concentration, and could be another factor for methane production enhancement of anaerobic digestion by wollastonite addition besides pH buffering.

The variation of PO₄³⁻ in the digesters are shown in Fig. 5b. The concentration of PO₄³⁻ in the digesters fed with thermal pretreated sludge were much higher than that in the digesters fed with un-pretreated sludge. Comparing the two digesters fed with un-pretreated sludge, the PO₄³⁻ concentration was slightly higher in S + W than in S. The improved PO₄³⁻ concentration in S + W could be attributed to the enhanced hydrolysis by wollastonite addition, as more organic matters was hydrolyzed and dissolved (Fig. 2) and could increase PO₄³⁻ concentration in the liquid. However, the PO₄³⁻ concentration in THS + W was lower than that in THS. The decreased PO₄³⁻ concentration in THS + W was owing to the formation of Ca-phosphate precipitates with the reaction between Ca²⁺ and PO₄³⁻, as Ca-phosphate is very easy to generate in liquid environment (Lee et al., 2013; Tervahauta et al., 2013).

Fig. 2. Profiles of (a) SCOD, (b) TVFA during sludge AD, and the variation of VFAs concentration in (c) S, (d) S + W, (e) THS, and (f) THS + W.
2014). It should be emphasized that Ca-phosphate should also generated in S + W, though PO$_4^{3-}$ concentration in S + W was higher than that in S.

3.4. Carbon dioxide sequestration with calcium carbonate formation

Precipitates formed in wollastonite supplemented digesters, both S + W and THS + W. During digestion, the initial formed fine precipitates firstly attached to the surface of the sludge. With growth of the crystals, precipitate shells formed on sludge particles. Finally, the shells detached from sludge particles after “maturity” of the shells under stirring. The diameter of used anaerobic granular sludge mainly ranged in 2–4 mm. The size of shell particles was approximate 3 times of the granular sludge, with the thickness of the shell approximate 2–3 mm. Owing to the hydraulic shear under stirring, the convex sides of the formed precipitate shells were relatively smooth. While the concave sides of the shells were much rougher. The element composition of the formed precipitates and residual wollastonite were measured by EDS (Table 3). Ca, O, C, and P were the four main elements in the precipitates, which was well consistent with the element composition of predicted products, i.e. CaCO$_3$ and Ca$_3$(PO$_4$)$_2$. The higher released Ca$^{2+}$ amount may further enhance the performance of CO$_2$ sequestration by carbonation. Considering the pH variation during sludge AD, a higher Ca$^{2+}$ release rate during VFAs fermentation at initial stage of AD might increase the released Ca$^{2+}$ amount. As reactive surface area and temperature are two main factors besides hydronium ion activity affect the release rate of Ca$^{2+}$ from wollastonite (Arinicheva et al., 2018), increasing total reactive surface area with increased wollastonite dosage and operating sludge AD under a higher temperature could be potential ways to further enhance CO$_2$ sequestration. Using finer wollastonite can also increase reactive surface area, however, the separation of residual wollastonite from AD might be difficult.

The CST of the digested sludge in S, S + W, THS, and THS + W were 406.4 s, 424.1 s, 1046.1 s, and 1071.8 s, respectively, indicated that the dewaterability of the sludge was very slightly affected by wollastonite addition. Prior to sludge dewatering and subsequent disposal, the residual wollastonite and the formed precipitates could be substantially

Fig. 3. Profiles of (a) pH and (b) total alkalinity during sludge AD.

Fig. 4. Profiles of (a) NH$_4^+$-N and (b) FAN concentration during sludge AD.
removed by sedimentation based on the different density of sludge and minerals. The sludge dewatering and disposal processes will not be substantially impacted by wollastonite addition. The separated wollastonite and precipitates might be reused as building materials after suitable processing, which could greatly compensate the cost of wollastonite purchase.

4. Conclusions

CO2 sequestration and CH4 production enhancement by wollastonite in sludge AD was demonstrated in this study. Supplementation of wollastonite achieved a better energy recovery and contributed to mitigation of greenhouse effect, showing good economic and environmental benefits.

Acknowledgements

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Conflicts of interest

None.

Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary data to this article can be found online at https://doi.org/10.1016/j.biortech.2018.10.004.

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements (wt%)</th>
<th>Precipitates in S+W</th>
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<td>4.53</td>
<td>1.94</td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 5. Profiles of (a) Ca^{2+} and (b) PO_{4}^{3-} concentration during sludge AD.

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