

## 1 Introduction to Fed-Batch Cultures

A living cell of a microbial, plant, or animal source is essentially an expanding and dividing biochemical reactor in which a large number of enzyme-catalyzed biochemical reactions take place. Microbial cultures involve live microbial cells, while tissue cultures involve live plant or animal cells. These cultures can be run, as in the case of chemical and biochemical reactions, in three classical operational modes: batch, continuous, or semi-batch (semi-continuous). For the past three decades, there has been tremendous growth in the use of semi-batch reactors in the fermentation, biotechnology, chemical, and waste-treatment industries owing to increasing demands for specialty chemicals and products and to certain advantages semi-batch reactors provide. Batch and semi-batch processes are used to handle usually low-volume, high-value products such as fermentation products, including amino acids and antibiotics, recombinant DNA products, and specialty chemicals. Owing to high values of these products, profitability can be improved greatly even with marginal improvements in yield and productivity. Therefore, there are incentives to optimize batch or semi-batch reactor operations.

For a batch or semi-batch process, the objective is to maximize the profit that can be realized at the end of the run, at which time the reactor content is harvested for further processing such as separation and purification. Thus, the problem is called *end point optimization* as only the end, not the intermediate, results are relevant to the overall profit.

### 1.1 Batch Cultures

In a batch operation, all necessary medium components and the inoculum are added at the beginning and not during period of fermentation. Therefore, their concentrations are not controlled but are allowed to vary as the living cells take them up. The products, be they intra- or extracellular, are harvested only at the end of the run. Basic controls for pH, temperature, dissolved oxygen, and foam are applied during the course of batch culture. The pH, dissolved oxygen, and temperature are normally held constant during the course of batch reactor operation. The only optimization parameters are the initial medium composition. However, profile optimizations of

temperature and pH may lead to improved performance over the operations carried out at constant temperature and constant pH.

### 1.2 Continuous Cultures

In a continuous operation, one or more feed streams containing the necessary nutrients are fed continuously, while the effluent stream containing the cells, products, and residuals is continuously removed. A steady state is established by maintaining an equal volumetric flow rate for the feed and effluent streams. In so doing, the culture volume is kept constant, and all nutrient concentrations remain at constant steady state values. Continuous reactor operations are common in chemical industries. With the exception of single-cell protein production, certain beer production, and municipal waste treatment processes, continuous cultures have not been adopted widely by industry. It is not a dominant mode of industrial operation primarily because of the difficulty in maintaining sterility (contamination by other organisms) and protecting against phage attacks or mutations and because often, steady state operations are found to yield poorer results than dynamic operations, for reasons not yet fully understood.

### 1.3 Fed-Batch Cultures

A fed-batch culture is a semi-batch operation in which the nutrients necessary for cell growth and product formation are fed either intermittently or continuously via one or more feed streams during the course of an otherwise batch operation. The culture broth is harvested usually only at the end of the operational period, either fully or partially (the remainder serving as the inoculum for the next repeated run). This process may be repeated (repeated fed-batch) a number of times if the cells are fully viable and productive. Thus, there are one or more feed streams but no effluent during the course of operation. Sources of carbon, nitrogen, phosphates, nutrients, precursors, or inducers are fed either intermittently or continuously into the culture by manipulating the feed rates during the run. The products are harvested only at the end of the run. Therefore, the culture volume increases during the course of operation until the volume is full. Thereafter, a batch mode of operation is used to attain the final results. Thus, the fed-batch culture is a dynamic operation. By manipulating the feed rates, the concentrations of limiting nutrients in the culture can be manipulated either to remain at a constant level or to follow a predetermined optimal profile until the culture volume reaches the maximum, and then a batch mode is used to provide a final touch. In so doing, the concentration of the desired product or the yield of product at the end of the run is maximized. This type of operation was first called a *fed-batch culture* or *fed-batch fermentation*.<sup>1,2</sup> It is also known as *Zulaufverfahren* in German or *ryukaho*<sup>2</sup> (a flow addition method) in Japanese. Obviously, this type of operation is a semi-batch reactor operation that is used for chemical and biochemical reactions. In environmental engineering dealing with toxic waste, this type of operation is known as a *fill and draw operation* or as a *sequencing batch reactor*. In biomedical engineering, the breathing process in and out of the lung is known as *stick and balloon*, as the volume of the lung increases as we inhale and decreases as we exhale, which is a form of fed-batch process.

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#### 1.3.1 Reasons for Fed-Batch Cultures

The fed-batch culture has been practiced since the early 1900s, when it was recognized in yeast production from malt wort that the malt concentration in the medium had to be kept low enough to suppress alcohol formation and maximize the yield<sup>3</sup> of yeast cells. High malt concentration would accelerate the cell growth, which in turn would cause anaerobic conditions that favored ethanol formation and lowered the yield of yeast cells. Additional wort was added at a rate that was always less than the rate at which the yeast cells could use it. Intermittent or incremental feeding of nutrients to an initially dilute medium was introduced thereafter in large-scale yeast production to improve the yeast yields while obviating the production of ethanol.<sup>4</sup> However, there is some speculation that a small amount of ethanol may be necessary to ensure the quality of the baker's yeasts.

Through the manipulation of one or more feed rates, the fed-batch operation can provide unique means of regulating the concentration of compounds that control the key reaction rates and, therefore, can provide a definite advantage over the batch or continuous operation. If it is advantageous to control independently the concentration of more than one species, more than one feed stream may be used.

The fed-batch operation described previously can be also shown to yield a superior performance (a higher yield or higher productivity) for certain chemical and biochemical reactions that exhibit a maximum in the overall reaction rate or to maximize the selectivity of a specific product in systems of multiple reactions such as biological reactions and polymerization reactions. Examples include inhibited enzyme reactions and autocatalytic reactions, reactions in which one of the products acts as a catalyst, certain adiabatic reactions, and series parallel reactions. Fermentation and cell cultures are autocatalytic reactions in the sense that the cells produced are in turn producing additional cells, and it is not surprising to find that most of the industrially important fermentations are carried out in fed-batch mode. Extensive reviews of fed-batch techniques<sup>5–7,145,146</sup> are available elsewhere.

#### 1.3.2 Applications of Fed-Batch Cultures

The oldest and first well-known industrial application of a fed-batch operation was introduced after the end of World War I. It was the yeast cell production in which sugar (glucose) was added incrementally during the course of fermentation to maintain a low sugar concentration to suppress alcohol formation.<sup>3</sup> The manufacture of yeast by fed-batch culture has gone through a series of improvements and is an industrially important fed-batch process. This process was historically followed by penicillin fermentation, in which the energy source (e.g., glucose) and precursors (e.g., phenyl acetic acid) were added incrementally during the course of fermentation<sup>8</sup> to improve penicillin production. Prior to this practice, a slowly metabolized but more expensive substrate, lactose, was used in place of glucose in a batch culture. Oversupply of a carbon source resulted in more mycelial growth and low penicillin formation, while undersupply resulted in slower mycelial growth and, eventually, slower penicillin formation.

The most important questions to ask in fed-batch culture operations are what compounds(s) should be fed and how they should be added. The answers depend

on the characteristics of the organisms used. The primary candidates in the list of compounds that may be fed during the course of the operation include the limiting substrate, inducers, precursors, a carbon source, a nitrogen source, a phosphate source, inducers, and other nutrient sources. The feeding patterns are open loop or feedback controlled to maintain some key variables at constant optimum values such as the specific growth rate, respiratory quotient, pH, partial pressure of carbon dioxide, dissolved oxygen, substrate concentration, and some metabolite concentrations. The optimum feed rates sometimes require keeping these parameters to follow certain optimum profiles rather than keeping them at constant values.

To maximize the cell formation rate for the case of constant cell mass yield, it is obvious that the substrate concentration should be maintained at the value that maximizes the specific growth rate,  $S_m$ , until the reactor is full. Therefore, it is also obvious that the initial substrate concentration should be  $S_m$ , that is,  $S(0) = S_m$ , and that the substrate concentration should be maintained at  $S_m$  throughout the course of fermentation. This will lead to the maximum cell concentration at the end of the run. To achieve this, the feed rate must be regulated properly to hold the substrate concentration constant at  $S_m$ . If it is not possible to set the initial substrate concentration to  $S_m$  for one reason or another, the substrate concentration should be brought to this value as soon as possible by applying at the beginning the maximum substrate feed rate ( $S(0) < S_m$ ) or a batch period ( $S(0) > S_m$ ) and then regulating thereafter to maintain the substrate concentration to remain at  $S_m$  until the fermentor is full. Once the fermentor is full, it is run in a batch mode to reduce the substrate concentration to a desired level, and the cells containing the product are harvested. This is the basis for the simplest case of a fed-batch culture.

Fed-batch cultures with the addition of nutrients, precursors, inducers, or other additives have been tested in laboratories, pilot plants, and industrial plants for production of various products<sup>2,5,6,7,9</sup> such as yeasts; antibiotics; amino acids; fine organic acids; enzymes; alcoholic solvents; recombinant DNA products; proteins; tissue cultures, including hybridoma and Chinese hamster ovaries (CHO) cells; insect cell cultures; and others. These are listed in Table 1.1.

### 1.3.3 A Simple Example of a Fed-Batch Culture

Let us consider a simple example to illustrate the advantage of controlling the concentration of the limiting nutrient. Consider the simplest case of growing cells, or a fermentation process in which the intracellular metabolite concentration is proportional to the cell concentration so that the metabolite production is maximized by maximizing the cell mass production. Assume that the specific growth rate of cells is substrate inhibited. In other words, the rate increases first with the substrate concentration reaching a maximum value of  $\mu_m$  at the substrate concentration of  $S_m$  and then decreases with further increase in the substrate concentration. In other words, the rate is a nonmonotonic function of the substrate concentration, as shown in Figure 1.1.

If the specific growth rate increases asymptotically with the substrate concentration to a maximum, as in the case of Monod-type monotonic kinetics, as shown in Figure 1.2, then it is obvious to keep the substrate concentration as high as possible to maximize the specific growth rate. Because the total growth rate is the product of

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Table 1.1. Various products produced or attempted to be produced by fed-batch techniques

Product	References	Product	References
<b>Amino Acids</b>		<b>Solvents</b>	
DOPA	10, 148	Acetone and butanol	125, 164–166
Glutamic Acid	11–23, 149	Glycerol	126, 167–168
Lysine	24, 25, 150, 151	1,3-Propanediol	123, 124
Tyrosine	25	<b>Vitamins</b>	
Tryptophan	26–28, 152	Riboflavin	127–129, 169
Alanine	225	Vitamin B <sub>12</sub>	130–133, 170
<b>Antibiotics</b>		<b>Others</b>	
Candidin and candihexin	29	Acetic acid	134, 195–196
Cephalosporin C	30–32, 153–155	Citric acid	135, 197–198
Chlorotetracycline	33	Gibberellic acid	136, 199–201
Griseofulvin	34–36	Gibberellins	137–140
Novobiocin	37	Neutral lipids	141
Oxytetracycline	38–39, 156	Sorbose from sorbitol	142
Penicillin	40–75, 157–158	<b>Others</b>	
Rifamycin	76, 159–160	5-Aminolevulinic acid (ALA)	216
Streptomycin	77–79, 161–162	Monoclonal antibody	217
Tetracycline	80–81, 163	Sophorolipid	218
Thuringiensin	222	Polyhydroxyalkanoate (PHA)	220
Baker's yeasts	4, 82–91	Dihydroxyacetone (DHA)	221
<b>Enzymes</b>		Human interferon- $\gamma$	223
Cellulase	92–96, 171–172	Glutathione	224
Galactosidase	97, 173–174	Clavulanic acid	226
Isoamylase	98–99, 175–176	Poly- $\beta$ -hydroxybutyrate (PHB)	227
Penicillin amidase	100, 177	<b>Animal Cell Culture</b>	
Polygalacturonic acid	101	Non-GS NS0 cell line	230
Trans-eliminase		Hybridoma	228, 229, 231
Protease	102–104, 178–180	CHO	232
$\beta$ -amylase	105, 181		
$\alpha$ -amylase	182–187		
$\beta$ -Galactosidase	106–107, 188–191		
$\beta$ -Glucanase	108, 192–194		
$\beta$ -Glucosidase	219		
<b>Microbial Cell Mass</b>			
<b>Bacteria</b>			
A bacterium	109		
<i>Cellulomonas</i> sp.	110, 202		
<i>Protaminobact ruber</i>	111, 112, 203		
<i>Pseudomonas</i>	113, 204, 205		
<i>Pseudomonas</i> AM-1	114, 206–208		
<b>Yeasts</b>			
<i>Candida boidinii</i>	115		
<i>Candida brassicae</i>	116–118, 209		
<i>Candida utilis</i>	119–120, 210–211		
<i>Methylomonas</i> L3	212		
<i>Pichia farinosa</i>	121		
<i>Pichia methanothermo</i>	122, 213		
<i>Saccharomyces cerevisiae</i>	147, 214–215		

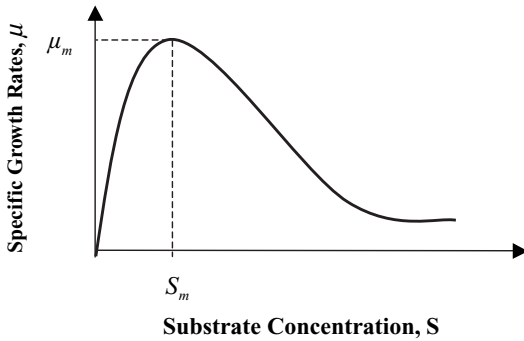


Figure 1.1. Nonmonotonic specific growth rate.

the growth rate and fermentor volume,  $\mu XV$ , it is advantageous to have the largest working volume as possible from the start. In other words, a batch culture with a full working volume is the best for this situation.

#### 1.4 Alternatives to Fed-Batch Cultures

There are potential alternative operations. Why not run as a continuous culture with a proper dilution rate to maintain the substrate concentration at  $S_m$ , corresponding to the maximum specific growth rate? First, associated with a continuous culture is the problem of contamination by other microorganisms, attack by phages, and potential mutations over a long period of operation. In addition, the residual substrate concentration  $S_m$  may be substantial and may need to be further reduced for easier separation or a better yield. Therefore, an additional reactor is required to reduce the substrate concentration such as a batch or a large volume continuous fermentor. Also, there is evidence that the maximum production rate for some products can be achieved under a dynamic environment in which cells must continue to grow, however small it may be. For example, an attempt to replace the fed-batch fermentation by a continuous culture has not been successful for penicillin<sup>144</sup> and bacterial antigens.<sup>145</sup> Fed-batch cultures provide transient growth conditions for cells (often-times exponential growth of cells). Along this line of thought, it is well known that experimental kinetic data from one type of bioreactor may not be used to design another type of bioreactor, in particular, batch or fed-batch data may not be valid for continuous bioreactors, and vice versa. It is best to use experimental data obtained from the type of bioreactor that is to be used eventually to avoid this difficulty. This is presumed to be due to simplifying assumptions we make for a complex bioreactor.

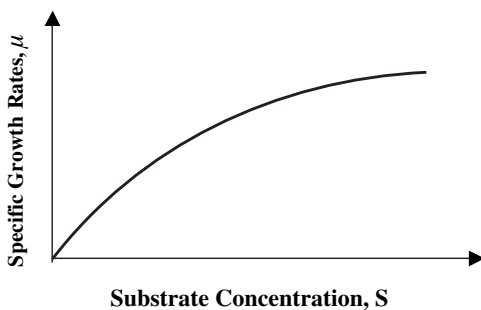


Figure 1.2. Monotonic specific growth rate, Monod type.

## References

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Conversely, chemical reactions are relatively simple in terms of our understanding, and therefore, the kinetic data obtained from one type of chemical reactor usually hold for any other type of reactor.

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