



Biokinetics of arsenate accumulation and release in *Microcystis aeruginosa* regulated by common environmental factors: Practical implications for enhanced bioremediation



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ABSTRACT

Only little information is available on combined effects of abiotic environmental factors on algal arsenate (As^V) metabolic biokinetics. Using the Taguchi statistical method, we investigated four environmental factors including As^V , nitrate (N), orthophosphate (P) and pH for their combined effects on algal growth and arsenic (As) uptake but also extracellular adsorption of *Microcystis aeruginosa*, as well as As release from dead algal cells. Results showed that an increase of N facilitated *M. aeruginosa* growth and thus was the principal factor for the algal maximum specific growth rate (μ_{max}). P was vital to As^V bio-concentration factor (BCF) and As partition coefficients ($LogK_d$) released from deal algal cells. As^V impacted the extracellular As adsorption onto the algal cells, which thereby increased with increasing initial As^V level. The initial pH had an imperative effect on the As^V uptake (k_u) and release rate (K_e) from the dead cells. The optimum conditions on As^V metabolic biokinetics were N at 10.0 mg L^{-1} for μ_{max} , P at 0.02 mg L^{-1} for $LogK_d$ and BCF, As^V at $10.0 \text{ }\mu\text{M}$ for extracellular As adsorption, and pH at 10 for k_u , BCF and extracellular As adsorption, but pH at 6 for K_e . Collectively, the condition of low P, high N and alkaline pH level was favorable to As accumulation rate of living cells and restrictive to As release rate from dead cells of *M. aeruginosa*. The obtained information can pave a road for extensive understanding on efficient utilization of As bioremediation of algae in practical environment.

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1. Introduction

Humans are exposed to the toxic and carcinogenic substance arsenic (As) primarily by their consumption of food and water with an exceedingly varying (wide) concentration (Yan et al., 2015). Arsenic is widely distributed and frequently changes its chemical forms of inorganic As and organoarsenicals by many physical-chemical and biological processes in the environment (Miyashita et al., 2016). Arsenate (As^V) as the dominant inorganic As

chemical species, often occurs its contamination in freshwater at global scale (Hasegawa et al., 2010).

Microalgae are considered as an environmentally-friendly and cost-effective bioremediator for As-polluted waters (Bahar et al., 2013; Mahdavi et al., 2012; Sulaymon et al., 2013; Wang et al., 2015). Being a primary producer and the oldest prokaryotic organism in the aquatic environment, cyanobacteria play a critical role in As biotransformation and biogeochemical processes (Duncan et al., 2015; Maeda et al., 1990, 1993; Wang et al., 2015; Zhang et al., 2014). They can not only uptake As^V vastly, but also convert it into volatile organic species (Thomas et al., 2004). Especially, *Microcystis aeruginosa* provides a high capacity for As accumulation because of its high tolerance towards As^V [5]. Combined with its high tolerance range for changes in pH in the

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surrounding media and its notable potential to accumulate phosphate, *M. aeruginosa* is an optimal microalga for As bioremediation.

In the last decade, the bioremediation of metals including As as well as their accumulation and uptake dynamics in microalgae have been extensively investigated (Gadd, 1992; Guedes Seixas et al., 2014; Maeda et al., 1993; Pembroke et al., 2015). It showed that some abiotic factors such as nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P) (Hasegawa et al., 2001; Lei et al., 2012; Wang et al., 2014a; Wurl et al., 2013) and pH (Hasegawa et al., 2001; Zhang et al., 2013) can impact the As metabolism dynamics within the algal cells. Thereby the factors were investigated either separately (Duncan et al., 2010, 2013) or in combination (Wang et al., 2017) under well controlled conditions in laboratory. P was determined as significant factor influencing the As^V uptake, which contributed largely by P transporters in some organisms (Yan et al., 2017). Arsenate bioaccumulation (kinetics) under different P conditions has been reported for several species (Miao et al., 2012; Panuccio et al., 2012; Wang et al., 2013). Specifically, phosphate limitation and depletion have the potential to induce or improve As^V uptake and corresponding efflux rates of *Chlamydomonas reinhardtii*, *Scenedesmus obliquus* and *M. aeruginosa* (Wang et al., 2013, 2014b). In contrast, an increase of nitrate may decrease the As^V accumulation in *Nostoc sp.* and *Chattonella antiqua* (Maeda et al., 1993; Yamaoka et al., 1996). At the same time, a change in pH can influence the As biosorption, toxicity (Ma et al., 2015; Pawlik-Skowronska et al., 2004; Zhang et al., 2013) and biotransformation (Bears et al., 2006; PL and DG, 2002) of microalgae cells in the aquatic environment.

Unfortunately, information regarding combined effects on algal As^V metabolism biokinetics induced by the aforementioned abiotic environmental factors are quite limited (Brinza et al., 2007; Wang et al., 2015). This eventually warranted to further investigation, improving a practical application of algae for As bioremediation. Furthermore, little is known about indirect implications as for instance induced by a secondary As release into waters after algal death. This may potentially pose different ecological risks (e.g. via settlement and subsequent biomagnification by benthic organisms) for the aquatic environment compared to a primary As contamination. To learn about the combined influence of the environmental factors: N, P, pH and the initial As^V level (being applied at ambient levels) on the As^V uptake and release kinetics of *M. aeruginosa*, we investigated the As bioaccumulation and efflux dynamics involving algal growth and extracellular and intracellular As accumulation as well as As release in dead algae. Herein, experimental design of Taguchi method concerned only with the principal effects of selected factors was used in our experiments (Zolfaghari et al., 2011). The percentage contribution effect of each environmental factor on the investigated metabolic biokinetic (As bioaccumulation and release) was thus statistically calculated using an analysis of variance (ANOVA) based on Taguchi method. Our new findings offer valuable insights in how to efficiently utilize algae as bioremediation tool to reduce As in contaminated water for practical environment.

2. Materials and methods

2.1. Experimental design

The Taguchi method, used to optimize the experimental design, is the same being applied during our previous study (Wang et al., 2017), and can be found described in details in the supportive information (SI Method). Briefly, four common environmental factors including As^V, N, P and pH were considered each at three levels (Table S1) (Yan et al., 2016). The detailed experimental conditions were obtained using a L9 (3⁴) orthogonal array (Table S2).

Furthermore, we used bigger analysis values of signal-to-noise (S/N) ratio to assess optimal conditions for As metabolic biokinetics in *M. aeruginosa*. Additionally, the principal contribution factors for various As metabolic biokinetic parameters were evaluated using ANOVA in *M. aeruginosa*. The software of Minitab 17 was used to perform the statistical analysis of the following data obtained.

2.2. *M. aeruginosa* culture growth

Stock cultures of *M. aeruginosa* (FACHB-905) were maintained in sterilized BG-11 media on shakers at 90 rpm (25 °C) under a 8: 16 h dark-light cycle with a light intensity of 40 μmol photons m⁻² s⁻¹ [21]. We prepared the nine BG-11 media under the Taguchi designed experimental conditions (Table S2). As N, As^V and P source, stock solutions of 1000 mg L⁻¹ NO₃⁻-N from NaNO₃ as well as 1000 mg L⁻¹ As^V from Na₃AsO₄·12H₂O (Fluka, p.a.), and 100 mg L⁻¹ PO₄³⁻-P from KH₂PO₄ were prepared. Additionally, respective pH values were adjusted in the media using 1 M NaOH or 1 M H₂SO₄ at the start of each experiment.

2.3. Arsenic metabolic biokinetics

2.3.1. Uptake experiment and kinetics model

Firstly, *M. aeruginosa* cells were separated into nine equal parts after starving cultures. Then they were aseptically transferred to nine different sterilized BG-11 media with an initial cell density of 10⁶ cells mL⁻¹ applying the Taguchi designed experimental conditions (Table S2). The batch treatments were cultured in an illuminated incubator which was permanently shaking for 96 h. After 3, 24, 48, 72 and 96 h, approximately 20 mL of the algal solutions were sampled from the exposure flasks to determine total As concentrations in the cells. After washing the cells twice with sterile Milli-Q water, the 96 h extracellular adsorbed As was then washed off for 10 min using ice-cold phosphate buffer of 1 mM K₂HPO₄, 0.5 mM Ca(NO₃)₂ and 5 mM MES. The gained washing buffer was then retained at 4 °C after filtering it through a 0.45 μm syringe filter to determine the extracellular As content (Levy et al., 2005). After further 10 min of centrifugation at 4500 × g, the settled algal pellets were freeze-dried for further As analysis.

The optical density of algal cells was measured at 682 nm wavelength after 0.5, 3, 24, 48, 72 and 96 h of exposure. The growth kinetics were investigated with the exponential model (P Dalgaard, 2001) shown in Eq. (1):

$$\ln(X_t) = N + \mu_{\max} \times t \quad (1)$$

Where X_t is the optical density (cell mL⁻¹) at time t (d); t is the cultivation time; N is a constant; μ_{\max} is the maximum specific growth rate (d⁻¹).

A nonlinear one-compartment model considering a simultaneous As uptake and release was used to describe the measured intracellular concentration of As in algal cells for each treatment over time according to the following first-order kinetics:

$$[As_{int}] = k_u/k_e \times [As_{med}] \times (1 - e^{k_e t}) \quad (2)$$

Herein, As_{int} (μg g⁻¹ dry weight) is the intracellular concentration of As in algal cells; As_{med} (μg L⁻¹) is the As concentration in medium assumed to be a constant, and t (h) is the time of As exposure; k_u (L g⁻¹ h⁻¹) and k_e (h⁻¹) are the As uptake and release rate constants for the algae, respectively (Wang et al., 2014b).

Due to the dynamic equilibrium of As uptake and release by the algae, the proposed model was only applied if $k_e > 0$. The modeling was performed with the program Graphpad Prism 7.0 (Graphpad Software). The bioconcentration factor of As was calculated as BCF

($L\ g^{-1}$) = k_u/k_e (Bradac et al., 2009).

2.3.2. Release experiment and kinetics model

To determine the As release rates from dead cells, 50 mL algal solution of each treatment were taken after 96 h incubation and rinsed with ultrapure water and the aforementioned phosphate buffer. To produce dead cells of *M. aeruginosa*, the samples were heated for 10 min at 50 °C using a waterbath (Chen et al., 2003; Miao and Wang, 2006; Wang et al., 2014b). Afterwards the treated algae were resuspended in 20 mL sterilized BG-11 media (same with their initial culture conditions) for 8 h, respectively. At 0.25, 0.5, 0.75, 1, 2, 4, 6, and 8 h, 5-mL aliquots were taken from the solutions to determine the algal total As concentrations.

The release rate constant for each treatment were evaluated using a simple first-order kinetic (Eq. (3)) (Bradac et al., 2009).

$$K_e = -1/t \times \ln C_t / C_0 \quad (3)$$

Herein, C_0 and C_t represent the intracellular As concentration ($ng\ g^{-1}$) at the start and time t (h) of release, respectively; K_e is the release rate constant (h^{-1}).

The arsenic partition coefficient ($L\ g^{-1}$) K_d , between the algae and the aqueous phase were calculated using the formula $K_d = C_t / C_w$ (where C_w is the measured concentration of As in BG-11 medium; $\mu g\ L^{-1}$) after 8 h elimination.

2.4. Total arsenic analysis

Total arsenic analysis (TAs) of algal cells and the media was determined according to our previously reported method (Wang et al., 2014b). Briefly, the freeze dried algae were treated by microwave assisted digestion to measure the total As amount (Yin et al., 2011). We measured the TAs concentrations using ICP-MS (Agilent 7500cx, U.S.A) (Wang et al., 2014b). The signal stability was checked by the simultaneously measured masses of ^{72}Ge , and ^{103}Rh .

3. Results and discussion

3.1. Kinetics of algal growth

The maximum specific growth rate (μ_{max}) obtained from the experiment is shown in Fig. S1 and was on average as high as $0.22 \pm 0.03/d$ ranging from 0.19 to 0.28/d. The maximum values of the S/N ratios of μ_{max} represented the optimum conditions to develop the maximum algal growth (Fig. 1). Accordingly, the optimal conditions for algal growth were NO_3^- -N of $10\ mg\ L^{-1}$, PO_4^{3-} -

P of $0.20\ mg\ L^{-1}$, pH of 6 and As^V of $0.1\ \mu M$.

The accomplished ANOVA for analyzing the percentage contribution (PC) of the environmental factors to the μ_{max} of *M. aeruginosa* (Table 1), is shown in the following: NO_3^- -N concentrations (44.4%), PO_4^{3-} -P concentration (29.6%), pH (11.1%) and As^V concentration (7.4%). Therefore, NO_3^- -N was the most influential factor on algal growth, and PO_4^{3-} -P the second. Also others found P owning a less important role in the growth of *M. aeruginosa* compared to N (Ma et al., 2014). NO_3^- -N was found to facilitate *M. aeruginosa* growth with increasing concentrations (Fig. S1). Likewise, Lee et al. observed that *M. aeruginosa* grew increasingly with increasing nitrate concentrations (Lee et al., 2000). P did not significantly change the growth rate of *M. aeruginosa* for the different P concentrations tested, most likely due to the fact that P can be absorbed and stored in the algal cells which made it adapt successfully to different P conditions (Otten et al., 2012; Paerl and Otten, 2013). Compared to N and P, As^V with the lowest contribution compared to other factors indicated its trivial impacts on the growth of *M. aeruginosa*, which can be explained by the high As^V tolerance of *M. aeruginosa* (Wang et al., 2014b).

3.2. Arsenic uptake kinetics and its percentage contribution

3.2.1. Arsenic uptake kinetics

The intracellular As concentration increased with increasing culture time for all treatments tested (Fig. S2). According to the R^2 (between 0.79 and 0.97), the proposed nonlinear one-compartment model described the experimental data well (Fig. S3). The estimated uptake rate constant (k_u) for As^V in algal cells for the different conditions ranged from $0.03 \sim 0.35\ L\ g^{-1}\ h^{-1}$, and the efflux rate constants of k_e was from 0.01 to $0.06\ h^{-1}$. The BCF calculated from k_u/k_e ranged from 0.22 to $20.88\ L\ g^{-1}$ (Fig. S3). The values of k_u were lower than those observed during our previous study, where *M. aeruginosa* was cultured in $10\ \mu M\ As^V$ solutions exhibiting k_u values from 6.58 to $136.90\ L\ g^{-1}\ h^{-1}$ (Wang et al., 2014b). Further it was also lower than that reported for the green algae *Chlamydomonas reinhardtii* (0.43 – $6.06\ L\ g^{-1}\ h^{-1}$) exposed to identical As concentrations. However, it was similar to the range of k_u being observed for *Scenedesmus obliquus* (0.05 – $30.20\ L\ g^{-1}\ h^{-1}$) (Wang et al., 2013). The estimated BCF suggested that the As which accumulated in *M. aeruginosa* was significantly different among the different treatment conditions. However, this observation is similar, to what was already concluded for the green algae *Chlamydomonas reinhardtii* ($9.6\ L\ g^{-1}$) and *Scenedesmus obliquus* (4.1 – $17.0\ L\ g^{-1}$) at a 6 d exposure to $10\ \mu M\ As^V$ under different P levels (Wang et al., 2013). Together with BCF determinations of other metals such as zinc and cadmium for *M. aeruginosa* ranging from $2.02 \sim$

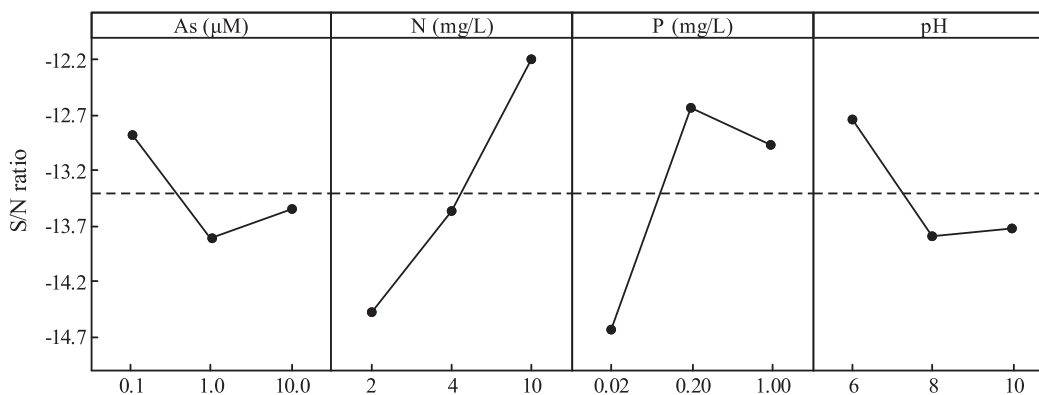


Fig. 1. Mean S/N ratios for the maximum specific growth rates (μ_{max}) as affected by As^V , N, P, and pH.

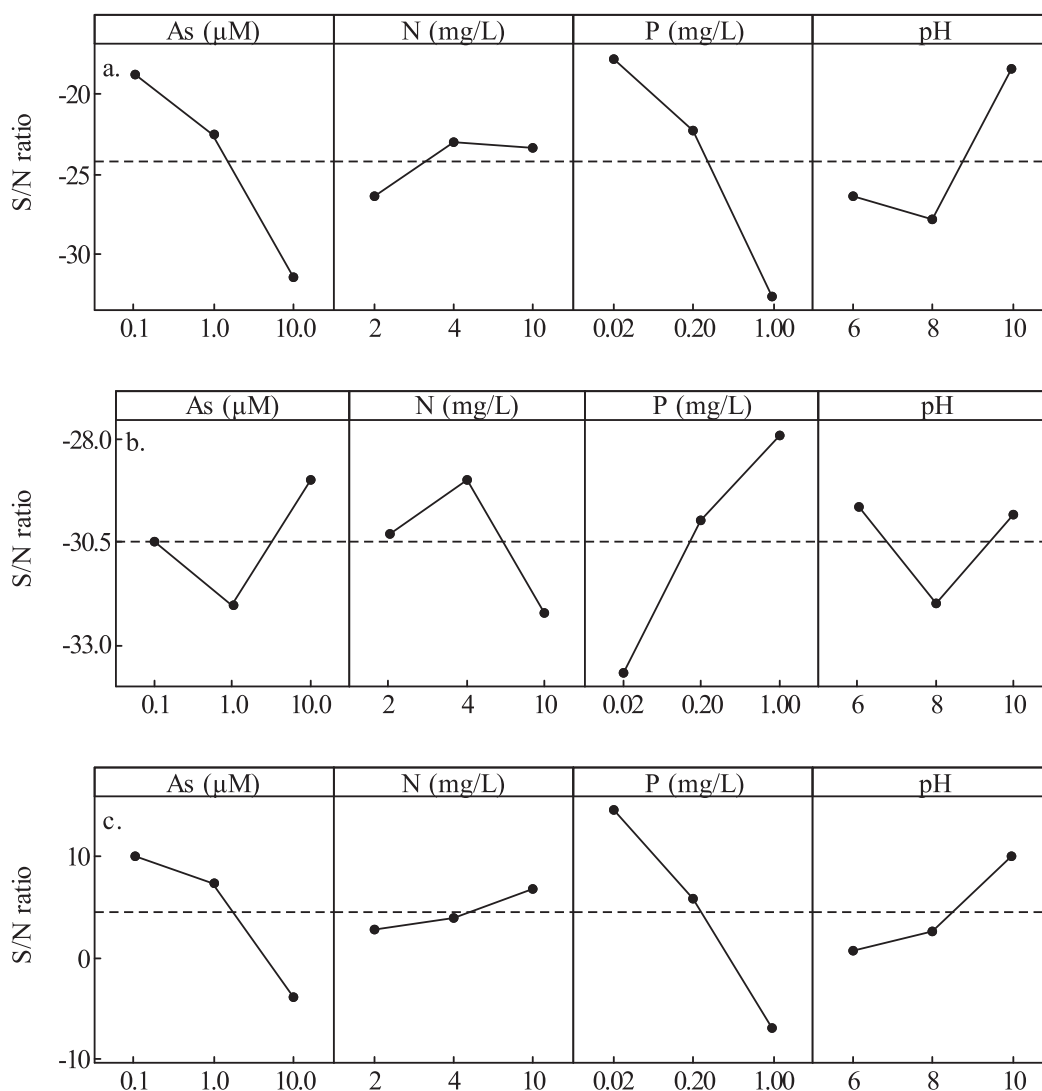
Table 1Significance and percentage contribution (PC) of effects of environmental factors (N, P, pH, As^V) on μ_{\max} (d⁻¹) based on ANOVA results.

| | Variance source | Type III sum of squares | DOF | Mean square | F | P | PC |
|--------------|-----------------|-------------------------|--------|-------------|--------|--------|-------|
| μ_{\max} | N | 0.012 | 2 | 0.006 | 61.762 | <0.001 | 0.444 |
| | P | 0.008 | 2 | 0.004 | 39.997 | <0.001 | 0.296 |
| | pH | 0.003 | 2 | 0.001 | 14.386 | <0.001 | 0.111 |
| | As ^V | 0.002 | 2 | 0.001 | 11.149 | <0.01 | 0.074 |
| | V _{Er} | 0.002 | 18 | 0.000 | | | 0.074 |
| | SS _T | 1.374 | 27.000 | | | | |

101.68 L g⁻¹ (Zeng et al., 2012), *M. aeruginosa* strongly implied to be a promising bioremediator candidate to remove heavy metals from natural water. Additionally, the low k_e value indicates a slow static As efflux from living algal cells, which was observed to be even smaller after 24 h under P limited (0.16 ± 0.03 h⁻¹) but also P-enriched (1.82 ± 0.67 h⁻¹) conditions (Wang et al., 2014b). This difference was probably due to the changes of environment factors including the main nutrients of N and P for *M. aeruginosa*.

The maximum S/N ratios for k_u and BCF represent optimum conditions inducing the rapidest As uptake and the maximum As accumulation in *M. aeruginosa*. In contrast, the minimum S/N ratios

for k_e show optimum conditions inducing the lowest As release from this algae (Fig. 2a, b c). Specifically, the optimum conditions for the rapidest As uptake and maximum As accumulation were found to be under identical conditions with NO₃⁻-N of 4 mg L⁻¹ (level 2), PO₄³⁻-P of 0.02 mg L⁻¹ (level 1), pH of 10 (level 3), and As^V of 0.1 μM (level 1) and NO₃⁻-N of 10 mg L⁻¹ (level 3), PO₄³⁻-P of at 0.02 mg L⁻¹ (level 1), pH of 10 (level 3), and As^V of 0.1 μM (level 1) (Fig. 2 a and c), respectively. This indicates that As^V might be accumulated faster and in higher amounts in *M. aeruginosa* under low As^V conditions at low P, high N and alkaline pH levels. In contrast, optimum conditions inducing the lowest As release were

**Fig. 2.** Mean S/N ratios for As uptake and respective dynamic constants: k_u (a), k_e (b) and BCF (c) as affected by As^V, N, P, and pH.

identified to exhibit NO_3^- -N of 10 mg L^{-1} (level 3), PO_4^{3-} -P of 0.02 mg L^{-1} (level 1), pH of 8 (level 2), and As^V concentration of $1 \mu\text{M}$ (level 2). This implies that *M. aeruginosa* has a lower efflux of As under lower As^V ambient concentration associated with low P but highest N and alkaline conditions, exhibiting a higher As accumulation. Collectively, conditions of lower As^V concentrations together with low P and highest N levels at a high pH are favorable for an As accumulation in *M. aeruginosa*. Also, other studies showed that higher P levels decreased the uptake of As^V by *M. aeruginosa* and also *Chlorella salina* (Guo et al., 2011; Karadjova et al., 2008). In contrast, As accumulation in *M. aeruginosa* increased with increasing levels of N, which is different for *Nostoc sp.* (Maeda et al., 1993) and *C. antique* (Yamaoka et al., 1996) for which the As accumulation lessened with increasing N content.

3.2.2. Percentage contribution

The percentage contribution (PC) rank order for k_u of the tested environmental concentrations in the culture media was found to be: pH (42.5%), PO_4^{3-} -P (24.8%), As^V (22.7%), and NO_3^- -N (5.8%) (Table 2). Therefore, the pH value showed a high impact on the As uptake kinetics in *M. aeruginosa*. Previous research also observed that pH is the most important factor controlling for cadmium and P uptake in plants (M.B.Kirkham, 2006). One reason is that the As biosorption and uptake on and in algal cells is a pH dependent process (Hansen et al., 2006). There the pH value affects the protonation of functional groups carrying polysaccharides and proteins on the algal cell surface as well as the As^V chemistry itself, finally in turn influencing the As biosorption and uptake (Gupta and Rastogi, 2008; Tuzun et al., 2005). Similarly, the As uptake in *Pteris vittata* L. was shown to be influenced by pH (Tu and Ma, 2003). Furthermore, the optimum pH range for growth of *M. aeruginosa* was demonstrated to be between 8 and 11 (A. Zehnder and P.R.G., 1960). Hence changes of pH in the media can ultimately affect algal growth and its metabolism (Fig. 1), which may additionally impact As biosorption and uptake of *M. aeruginosa* [25].

For the BCF, a close PC of PO_4^{3-} -P (28.3%) and pH (27.8%) was observed, indicating the identical effects between P and pH (Table 2). The BCF of As decreased with increasing P levels in the media. This antagonistic effect of As and P might be caused by transport competition at the same carrier system in *M. aeruginosa*. This was already shown for fungi, bacteria and different plants (Tu and Ma, 2003). The similar chemical properties of P and As ascertained that P was the key factor affecting As^V uptake.

Additionally, the higher PC of N (57.3%) for k_e implies that N is

also an important parameter for As accumulation in *M. aeruginosa* even its $P > 0.05$ (Table 2). This was also shown for the As bioaccumulation in *C. reinhardtii* (Wang et al., 2014a). In summary, the PC for As accumulation biokinetics in *M. aeruginosa* was: i) alkaline, ii) low P, lower As^V and highest N concentrations.

3.3. Extracellular As adsorption

Remarkable differences were observed among the nine treatments for the extracellular As concentrations ranging from 2.87 to $291.77 \mu\text{g g}^{-1}$ (Fig. S4). Higher extracellular As concentrations were found for the environmental conditions E3, E4 and E8 under high As levels in the media (Fig. S4), while they had lower As uptake rate constant (Fig. S3) compared with the other treatments. Except for the obviously similar effects of NO_3^- -N (A), the optimum media conditions for a maximum extracellular As concentration were PO_4^{3-} -P of 0.20 mg L^{-1} (level 2), pH of 10 (level 3), and As^V of $10.0 \mu\text{M}$ (level 3) in media (Fig. 3). Suggestively, the adsorbed As on algal cells was inclined to exist in a high As level but lower P level under obvious alkaline environment.

PC results for the extracellular As concentration being adsorbed to the algal cells gained from the ANOVA (Table 3) were as high as: 81.5% for As^V , 10.1% for pH, 2.3% for NO_3^- -N, and PO_4^{3-} -P (1.5%). Further, As^V and pH showed significant impacts ($P < 0.001$) on the extracellular As concentration. Thus, as principal factors for a higher extracellular adsorption of As, a higher As^V concentration and an alkaline pH value in the media were shown to be favorable (Fig. S4). This is in line with findings showing that a higher As adsorption capacity for *Lessonia nigrescens* is pH dependent, however in the case of Hansen et al. the best As sorption was found to be at low pH values (Hansen et al., 2006). This difference is potentially caused by the various As metabolism of algae under different pH, which is warranted to be further investigated.

3.4. Arsenic release kinetics of dead algae and its percentage contribution

3.4.1. Arsenic release kinetics

A gradual decrease of intracellular As concentration was observed for the 8 h release period in dead algal cells (Fig. S5). Additionally, different treatments exhibited significantly different effects on the As efflux showing K_e values ranging from 0.11 to 1.45 h^{-1} (Fig. S6). This observation is similar to those being observed for the As depuration from living *M. aeruginosa* cells (0.18 – 0.22 h^{-1})

Table 2
Significance and percentage contribution of effects of environmental factors on k_u ($\text{L g}^{-1} \text{ h}^{-1}$), k_e (h^{-1}) and BCF (L g^{-1}) based on ANOVA results.

| | Variance source | Type III sum of squares | DOF | Mean square | F | P | PC |
|---------------|-----------------|-------------------------|-------|-------------|--------|--------|-------|
| k_u | N | 0.028 | 2 | 0.014 | 11.979 | <0.001 | 0.058 |
| | P | 0.119 | 2 | 0.060 | 51.516 | <0.001 | 0.248 |
| | pH | 0.204 | 2 | 0.102 | 88.334 | <0.001 | 0.425 |
| | As^V | 0.109 | 2 | 0.055 | 47.184 | <0.001 | 0.227 |
| | V_{Er} | 0.021 | 18 | 0.001 | | | 0.043 |
| | SS_T | 0.856 | 27 | | | | |
| | k_e | N | 0.001 | 2 | 0.000 | 2.403 | >0.05 |
| P | 0.003 | 2 | 0.001 | 9.057 | <0.01 | 0.099 | |
| pH | 0.001 | 2 | 0.000 | 2.990 | <0.05 | 0.096 | |
| As^V | 0.000 | 2 | 0.000 | 1.094 | >0.05 | 0.010 | |
| V_{Er} | 0.003 | 18 | 0.000 | | | 0.222 | |
| SS_T | 0.041 | 27 | | | | | |
| BCF | N | 148.803 | 2 | 74.401 | 5.098 | <0.05 | 0.097 |
| | P | 431.746 | 2 | 215.873 | 14.793 | <0.001 | 0.283 |
| | pH | 424.304 | 2 | 212.152 | 14.538 | <0.001 | 0.278 |
| | As^V | 259.998 | 2 | 129.999 | 8.908 | <0.01 | 0.170 |
| | V_{Er} | 262.680 | 18 | 14.593 | | | 0.172 |
| | SS_T | 2209.372 | 27 | | | | |

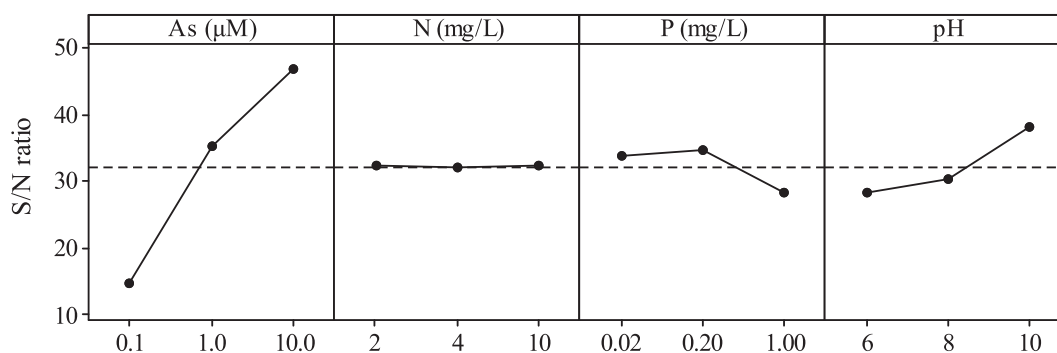


Fig. 3. Mean S/N ratios for extracellular As concentrations as affected by As^V, N, P, and pH.

after 24 h As^V exposure applying 10 µM As (Wang et al., 2014b) and also for the As^V accumulation of *C. reinhardtii* (0.12 h⁻¹). However, it was higher than the As release of *Scenedesmus obliquus* which was as high as 0.06 h⁻¹ (Wang et al., 2013). Particularly, the K_e values in this experiment were less than those observed during our previous experiment showing after 2 h values between 2.94 and 4.80 h⁻¹ for dead *M. aeruginosa* cells previously exposed to 10 µM As^V. This however can be attributed to the different P treatments being applied (Wang et al., 2014b). Regardless of the circumstances, the results underline the risk of a potential As efflux also for dead cells, which has to be kept in mind when using *M. aeruginosa* as As bioremediation tool.

The Logarithmic partitioning coefficients of As (logK_d) varied considerably in our study (3.04–4.17; Fig. S6), being smaller than that of living *M. aeruginosa* for its As depuration under P-depleted conditions considering a 10 µM As^V exposure for 24 h (LogK_d = 4.9). In line with the maximum value findings for k_e (Fig. S3) and the extracellular As concentration (Fig. S4) found in the uptake experiment presented for E3, the calculated K_e for dead algal cells also showed a faster As efflux than living cells (Fig. S6). This indicates that conditions of higher arsenate, P and pH but lower N induced a lower As^V uptake and BCF for *M. aeruginosa* but also was favorable for cells dead to release As in the surrounding environment. This can be explained by an enhanced extracellular As adsorption, which easily desorb from the algal surface after their dead (Fig. S4).

From the S/N ratios for K_e (Fig. 4a), the optimum environmental conditions for K_e were found to be: NO₃⁻-N of 10 mg L⁻¹ (level 3), PO₄³⁻-P of 0.02 mg L⁻¹ (level 1), pH of 6 (level 1), and As^V of 1 µM (level 2). This shows that the release rate of As is lower under conditions of higher N and As but lower P concentrations and pH values. In contrast, for the LogK_d (Fig. 4b) low concentrations of NO₃⁻-N (2 mg L⁻¹), PO₄³⁻-P (0.02 mg L⁻¹) and As^V (1.0 µM) as well as a pH of 8, induced higher As contents to retain in the dead cells.

3.4.2. Percentage contribution

The ANOVA results for the As release kinetics of K_e and LogK_d (Table 4), showed for pH, N and P, a statistically significant effect (P < 0.001) and PCs as high as 41.3%, 25.7% and 11.9%. The pH had a strong effect on K_e for dead algal cells. Although reasons for the pH

to affect As efflux are still unclear, its critical roles for k_i, BCF and extracellular As adsorption, highlight the pH as an important parameter for the *M. aeruginosa* As^V biokinetics. As^V concentration exhibited the lowest PC (5.1%) for K_e indicating that the initial As level in the media had only minor effects on the As release kinetics for dead algae cells. Additionally, lower K_e values for *M. aeruginosa* were observed for conditions of lower P and higher As concentrations. This may be largely due to the good discrimination between P and As with a high P/As ratio (2012). The As efflux rate constant determined in the present study was higher than those of Cd²⁺ and Zn²⁺ (0.029–0.055 h⁻¹) for *M. aeruginosa* (Hajdu et al., 2010). This can be explained by differences in the As efflux channels, i.e. anion transporters vs aquaporin channels (Wang et al., 2013). In addition, the efflux rate constant for As of *M. aeruginosa* was after a As^V pre-exposure even higher when compared to those observed for *S. obliquus* (0.068–0.11 h⁻¹) and *C. reinhardtii* (0.10–0.12 h⁻¹) under different P conditions (Wang et al., 2013). The higher k_i and BCF for As^V of *M. aeruginosa* under high concentrations of N (10 mg L⁻¹) and low concentrations of P (0.02 mg L⁻¹) (Fig. 2a) had a lower K_e from the dead cells compared to other conditions. This implies a persistent As storage capacity and a good As bioremediation potentiality of *M. aeruginosa* under conditions of high N and low P concentrations.

The ANOVA further revealed a PC contribution for LogK_d of PO₄³⁻-P (49.2%) > NO₃⁻-N (20.7%) > pH (11.9%), and As^V (11.2%). Thus, PO₄³⁻-P, preceded NO₃⁻-N, was the crucial factor for As distribution in algae and aqueous phases (LogK_d), which decreased with increasing P concentration. This tendency coincided with the As^V kinetic parameters of k_i and BCF for *M. aeruginosa* and demonstrated that P showed inhibitory effects not only on As^V accumulation but also on As efflux from algal cells. In summary, in order to reduce As release from dead algal cells (including the release rate but also the As amount retained inside), an optimum condition includes higher levels of N but lower concentrations of P and acidic pH values.

3.5. Environmental implications

This systematical investigation of As^V metabolic biokinetics for *M. aeruginosa* using Taguchi method found that P is the most

Table 3

Significance and percentage contribution of effects of environmental factors on extracellular As concentrations (µg g⁻¹) based on ANOVA results.

| | Variance source | Type III sum of squares | DOF | Mean square | F | P | PC |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|-----|-------------|---------|--------|-------|
| Extracellular As concentrations | N | 6646.778 | 2 | 3323.389 | 4.586 | <0.05 | 0.023 |
| | P | 4244.402 | 2 | 2122.201 | 2.928 | >0.05 | 0.015 |
| | pH | 28675.392 | 2 | 14337.696 | 19.785 | <0.001 | 0.101 |
| | As ^V | 232505.464 | 2 | 116252.732 | 160.419 | <0.001 | 0.815 |
| | V _{Er} | 13044.273 | 18 | 724.682 | | | 0.046 |
| | SS _T | 285116.310 | 27 | | | | |

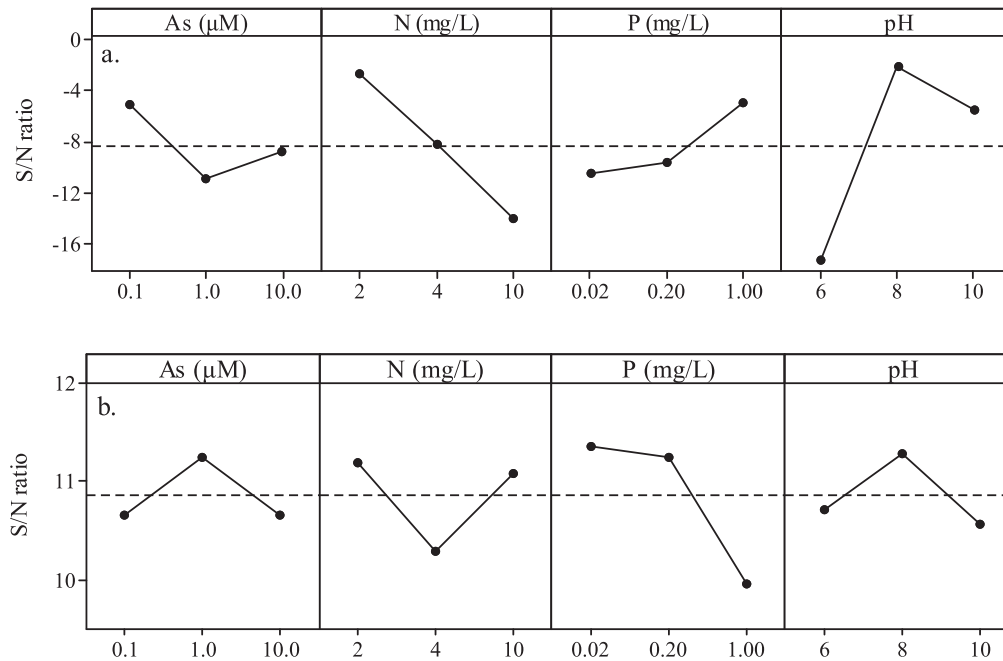


Fig. 4. Mean S/N ratios for As efflux rate constant K_e (a) and partition coefficient $\text{Log}K_d$ (b) of dead *M. aeruginosa* cells under influence of As^V , N, P, and pH.

Table 4

Significance and percentage contribution of effects of environmental factors on As release kinetics of K_e (h^{-1}) and K_d (L g^{-1}) based on ANOVA results.

| | Variance source | Type III sum of squares | DOF | Mean square | F | P | PC |
|-------|-----------------|-------------------------|-----|-------------|--------|--------|-------|
| K_e | N | 1.377 | 2 | 0.688 | 25.815 | <0.001 | 0.257 |
| | P | 1.018 | 2 | 0.509 | 19.085 | <0.001 | 0.190 |
| | pH | 2.216 | 2 | 1.108 | 41.543 | <0.001 | 0.413 |
| | As^V | 0.272 | 2 | 0.136 | 5.102 | <0.05 | 0.051 |
| | V_{Er} | 0.480 | 18 | 0.027 | | | 0.090 |
| | SS_T | 15.723 | 27 | | | | |
| K_d | N | 0.721 | 2 | 0.360 | 26.678 | <0.001 | 0.207 |
| | P | 1.716 | 2 | 0.858 | 63.521 | <0.001 | 0.492 |
| | pH | 0.416 | 2 | 0.208 | 15.396 | <0.001 | 0.119 |
| | As^V | 0.392 | 2 | 0.196 | 14.522 | <0.001 | 0.112 |
| | V_{Er} | 0.243 | 18 | 0.014 | | | 0.070 |
| | SS_T | 336.483 | 27 | | | | |

important factor governing for As^V BCF and $\text{Log}K_d$ from dead cells (decreasing with the increasing initial P level). The concentration of N meaningfully affected the algal growth rate (μ_{max}) and the release rate constant (k_e) during the As^V uptake but also K_e of dead algal cells, which showed the maximum μ_{max} and minimum k_e and K_e at its high level of 10.0 mg L^{-1} . As^V only as the main factor affected the extracellular As adsorption on algal cells, and showed only minor effects on the algal growth and As release kinetics (K_e) and $\text{Log}K_d$ (from deal algae). The pH in the media mainly affected the As^V uptake rate (k_u) and release rate (K_e) from dead cells. It also secondly affected the BCF and extracellular adsorption amount of As. Additionally, the optimal pH value of 6 for As release kinetics K_e , and also had the smaller As uptake ratio (k_u) and the lowest BCF (Fig. 2 a and c). This shows that a pH of 6 is beneficial to reduce As release from dead algae, but unfavorable for As accumulation biokinetics. Further, maximum values for k_u , BCF and extracellular As adsorption appeared at a pH of 10 together with a lower K_e . This further highlights an optimum pH condition for an As^V bioremediation with *M. aeruginosa* at a pH of 10). After all, a high level of N combined with a relative low level of P at alkaline conditions (pH 10) can meaningfully accelerate an As^V uptake, while diminishing an As release. Therefore, these conditions may represent the optimal environmental conditions for an As^V bioremediation with

M. aeruginosa. This study leads to valuable insights into regulating dynamics of As accumulation and release of algae, which favor to practical utilization of algae for As bioremediation. Certainly, there are other environmental factors such as temperature, ionic strength and minerals, which would impacted the efficiency of As bioremediation. While utilizing the selected algae to remediate contaminated water by As in the real environment, it is required to take account to more factors that how they affect dynamics of As bioremediation.

Additionally, some *M. aeruginosa*' strains are able to produce microcystins (Pei et al., 2014; Sun et al., 2012), which pose a potential risk to human health. However, they are generally contained in *M. aeruginosa* cells unless the cell membrane is damaged (Teixeira and Rosa, 2007). More studies on this subject are therefore warranted to develop appropriate methods to utilize *M. aeruginosa* as As bioremediation without causing cell lysis and microcystins release as well, which guarantee its safety of As bioremediation on water environments.

4. Conclusion

- (1) P showed to be the most important factor regulating As accumulation in living algae cells and efflux levels in dead

cells. Also, N revealed to be a crucial factor impacting algal growth, the release rate during the As^V uptake process but also the As efflux rate from dead cells. As^V only as the main factor impacted As extracellular adsorption on algal cells, but had minimum effects on algal growth and the As release kinetics of deal algae. A pH value of 10 seems optimal for an As^V bioremediation process with *M. aeruginosa*, as there a higher accumulation of As in living cell but lower efflux rate from dead cell was observed.

- (2) Accordingly, high levels of N combined with low levels of P under alkaline pH conditions can accelerate the As^V uptake and thereby diminish an As release, representing optimal conditions for an As^V bioremediation with *M. aeruginosa*.

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Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary data related to this article can be found at <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2018.07.131>.

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