

ACTION SPECTRA OF CATION EFFECTS ON THE FLUORESCENCE POLARIZATION AND INTENSITY IN THYLAKOIDS AT ROOM TEMPERATURE

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Abstract—The degree of polarization of chlorophyll-*a*(Chl-*a*) fluorescence is known to monitor the extent of excitation migration and/or the orientation of the photosynthetic pigment molecules. We report here the effects of cations, at room temperature, on the degree of polarization of Chl-*a* fluorescence, and fluorescence intensity in thylakoids as a function of excitation wavelength. Observations of maxima at 650 and 675 nm in the cation-induced changes in the excitation spectrum for fluorescence at 730 and 762 nm, and, in the action spectra for the depolarization of fluorescence lead us to suggest that the regulation of the initial distribution of excitation to photosystem II involves the better coupling of Chl-*b* and -*a* in the light harvesting complex with Chl-*a* in the reaction center II complex.

INTRODUCTION

Mono- and divalent cations concurrently affect several primary photoprocesses in thylakoids with the largest effect on the excitation energy distribution from photosystem (PS)II to PSI (Wong *et al.*, 1978a; Wong, 1979). It is generally accepted that the excitation energy transfer in the photosynthetic system is by Förster's inductive resonance mechanism (Duyens, 1964; Förster, 1965, 1967; Knox, 1975, 1977). The most direct method for measuring changes in the excitation energy migration among the same type of molecules is that of the degree of depolarization of fluorescence (see Michel-Villaz, 1976). This method for the study of cation-induced changes in energy migration was used by Wong and Govindjee (1979) [see also Govindjee and Wong (1979)]. These authors measured cation effects on the polarization of Chl-*a* fluorescence at wavelengths selected to monitor preferentially PSII or PSI emission; it was shown that Na⁺ added to salt-depleted thylakoids increases the degree of polarization of Chl-*a* fluorescence at 685 nm (mainly PSII) and decreases that at 712 nm (PSI); this effect was fully reversed by the subsequent addition of Mg²⁺. This is taken as evidence for the cation-induced regulation of excitation distribution at room temperature. In this paper, we report the effects of cations on the degree of polarization of Chl-*a* fluorescence and fluorescence intensity at 730 or 762 nm (to avoid artifacts due to scattering of excitation light) as a function of the excitation wavelength. The ratio excitation spectrum for fluorescence at 730 and 762 nm, at 296 K, shows relative maxima at ~650

and ~675 nm, when the sample containing Mg²⁺ is compared with that without Mg²⁺. Simultaneously, the relative depolarization of fluorescence between the samples shows maxima at ~650 and ~676 nm. On the basis of results presented here, and, preliminary results included in Wong and Govindjee (1979), we suggest that the regulation of initial distribution of excitation to PSII involves the better coupling of light harvesting complex with Chl-*a*II.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Thylakoid membranes were prepared from pea leaves as described elsewhere (Wong *et al.*, 1978a). These were suspended in 100 mM sucrose and 0.4 mM Tris-HCl (pH 7.2). The Na²⁺ samples contained 10 mM Na⁺, whereas, Mg²⁺ samples contained in addition 10 mM Mg²⁺. Chlorophyll concentration was determined by the method of Mackinney (1943), the action spectra of Chl-*a* fluorescence was measured as described by Gasanov *et al.* (1979), and the degree of polarization of Chl-*a* fluorescence as described by Wong *et al.* (1978b). The degree of polarization of fluorescence *P* is obtained as follows:

$$P = \frac{F_{vv} - G \cdot F_{vh}}{F_{vv} + G \cdot F_{vh}}$$

where, F_{vv} and F_{vh} are the vertically and horizontally polarized components of fluorescence from the sample using vertically polarized excitation, and *G* is the instrumental correction factor, equal to F_{hv}/F_{hh} , where, F_{hv} and F_{hh} are the vertical and horizontal components of fluorescence when a 0.1 μM solution of rhodamine B is excited with horizontally polarized light at 547 ± 1.7 nm, the fluorescence being detected through a Corning CS3-66 glass filter.

Certain methodological questions had to be answered before we could interpret our present results. These included reproducibility, concentration, temperature, and fluorescence level dependences.

Reproducibility. The degree of polarization (*P*) of fluorescence showed excellent reproducibility (*P* uncertainty, ±0.0015), for different aliquots of the same thylakoid preparation. For thylakoids from different chloroplast isolations, however, slight variations (*P* uncertainty, ±0.003) in the degree of polarization of fluorescence were observed.

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Table 1. Concentration dependence of the cation effects on the polarization of fluorescence

[Na ⁺] (mM)	[Mg ²⁺] (mM)	P(F > 694 nm) (%)
0	0	3.0
2	0	3.7
4	0	3.4
6	0	3.5
8	0	3.4
10	0	3.4
10	5	2.7
10	10	2.4
0	0	3.0
0	2	2.2
0	4	2.5
0	6	2.3
0	8	2.3
0	10	2.2
5	10	1.9
10	10	2.0

Excitation was at 600 ± 8.3 nm, and fluorescence was detected through a Schott RG 10 glass filter. Thylakoids from pea chloroplasts were suspended at pH 7.6; [Chl] = 5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^l$; [DCMU] = 5 μM ; temperature = 23°C; medium, 100 mM sucrose + 0.2 mM Tris-HCl.

Concentration dependence. The Na⁺-induced increase and the Mg²⁺-induced decrease in the degree of polarization of the total Chl-*a* fluorescence [Schott RG 665 filter; Fluorescence (F) > 650 nm] saturates when the cation concentrations reach 4–6 mM (Table 1). Note also that when Mg²⁺ is added to thylakoids containing 10 mM Na⁺, the fluorescence polarization assumes the value of the sample with Mg²⁺. The converse, however, does not hold, demonstrating that when equal concentrations of Na⁺ and Mg²⁺ are added the Mg²⁺ effect dominates.

Temperature dependence. The degree of polarization of fluorescence from thylakoids under a particular cationic condition (salt-depleted, Na⁺, or Na⁺ + Mg²⁺) is relatively constant between 0 and 25°C (see also Weber, 1960) showing that the mono- and divalent cation effects are temperature independent over the range 0–25°C (Table 2).

O and P level dependence. The cation effects on the fluorescence polarization occur at both the 0 (initial) and the P (maximum) levels of Chl-*a* fluorescence transient measured at 686 nm (Table 3).

Emission wavelength dependence. Wong and Govindjee (1979) have already shown the effects of Na⁺ and Mg²⁺ on

the polarization of Chl-*a* fluorescence at 686, 712, 730 and 762 nm. For the present study, we have chosen 730 and 762 nm as the emission wavelength of observation to facilitate the measurements of the action spectra over both the Chl-*b* and Chl-*a* absorption bands. The degree of polarization of F762, P(F762), was found to decrease with Mg²⁺ addition to the Na⁺ samples at all excitation wavelength (λ_{ex}) in the range $600 \leq \lambda_{\text{ex}} < 700$ nm.

The rationale for the choice, at room temperature, of using the measuring wavelengths at 685 (F685), 712 (F712), 730 (F730) and 760 nm (F760) are as follows. Based on experiments on fluorescence spectra of physically separated pigment systems PSI and II (Briantais, 1969; Gasanov *et al.*, 1979), of unseparated chloroplast preparations excited preferentially with PSI or PSII light (Govindjee and Yang, 1966) and of algae during fluorescence transient (Lavorel, 1963), the following assignments have been made (see also, Wong, 1979): F685 is the major band of PSII; F712 has the highest value for the ratio of PSI/PSII emissions; and F730 and F760 are both from the vibrational satellite band of the main F685 band of PSII. The observation that the cation effects on P(F762) were similar to that on P(F686) and P(F730) (Wong and Govindjee, 1979) suggested that F762 reflects the fluorescence characteristics of Chl-*a*_{II}.

All experiments reported here were in the pH range 7.0–7.5, and the temperature range 21–26°C. All other details are presented in the legends of the tables and the figures. However, for a complete description of Materials and Methods, and, instrumental tests, see Wong (1979).

RESULTS

A decrease in the degree of polarization of fluorescence (*P*) is suggested to mean an increase in excitation energy migration as was done to explain the 3(3,4 dichlorophenyl 1,1-dimethylurea (DCMU)-induced decreases in *P* of Chl-*a* fluorescence (Mar and Govindjee, 1972; Becker *et al.*, 1976; Van Rensen *et al.*, 1978; Wong, 1979); DCMU, simultaneously, causes an increase in the fluorescence yield. On the other hand, an increase in *P* as a result of the addition of dinitrobenzene (DNB) has been explained to be due to decreased energy migration in thylakoids (Lavorel and Joliot, 1972). Figure 1 shows a relationship between F⁰/F (where F⁰ is fluorescence intensity in the absence of DNB, and F in the presence) and the degree of polarization of Chl-*a* fluorescence in thylakoids. Based on the above, we assume that increases

Table 2. Temperature dependence of the cation effects on the intensity and polarization of fluorescence at 686 nm

Temperature (°C)	Salt-depleted		10 mM NaCl		10 mM NaCl + 10 mM MgCl ₂	
	F686	P	F686	P	F686	P
1.3	57	2.0	39	3.2	100	2.2
4.3	57	2.0	39	3.2	98	2.2
9.5	56	2.0	38	3.2	95	2.2
14.5	53	2.1	37	3.2	91	2.2
19.4	49	2.2	35	3.4	87	2.3
25.0	45	2.2	33	3.5	82	2.3

Fluorescence excited with light at 633 ± 6.6 nm, and detected through interference filter at 686 nm (full width at half maximum, 6.4 nm). Samples were pea thylakoids suspended in the usual medium (see the legend of Table 1), pH 7.6. [Chl] = 5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^l$; [DCMU] = 5 μM . Temperature was regulated to better than $\pm 0.5^\circ\text{C}$. *P* denotes the degree of polarization, and F the intensity of the fluorescence.

Table 3. Cation effects on the degree of polarization at the initial (0) and maximum (P) levels of fluorescence transient at 686 nm

Sample	P(F686) (%)	
	0 Level	P Level
Salt-depleted	3.9	3.7
+ 5 mM NaCl	4.8	4.1
+ 5 mM NaCl	3.6	3.1
+ 5 mM MgCl ₂		

Fluorescence excited at 600 ± 6.6 nm, and detected with 686 nm interference filter (full width at half maximum, 6.4 nm) plus Schott RG 665 filter. Samples consisted of pea thylakoids suspended in the usual medium (see the legend of Table 1) at pH 7.2; temperature = 23°C.

and decreases in P reflect decreases and increases in excitation energy migration; we report here the cation-induced effects on P and on the intensity of Chl- a fluorescence in thylakoids as a function of excitation wavelength.

Excitation wavelength dependence of the cation effects on the degree of polarization of chl- a fluorescence

The degree of polarization of Chl- a fluorescence, measured at 762 nm (F762), as a function of excitation wavelength for the Na⁺ and Na⁺ + Mg²⁺ samples are shown in Fig. 2. It is clear that the two curves are different (the errors are indicated by the size of the points shown). A clear decrease in the degree of polarization of Chl- a fluorescence at ~675 nm, upon the

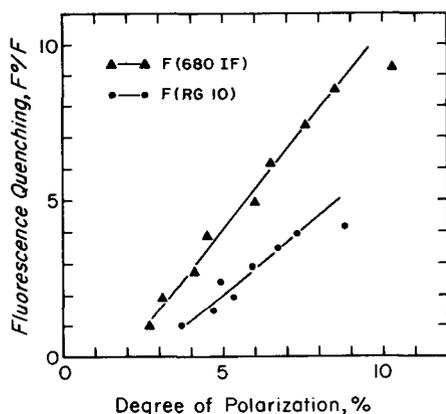


Figure 1. Linear relation between the extent of quenching and the degree of polarization of fluorescence in pea thylakoids. Excitation at 600 nm (full width at half maximum, 8.8 nm); fluorescence detected through Schott RG 10 glass filter or interference filter (IF) at 680 nm (full width at half maximum, 14 nm); Chl concentration, 5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^2$; medium, 100 mM sucrose, 0.4 mM Tris-HCl, pH, 7.0; temperature, 23°C. Different points were obtained by treating thylakoids with different concentrations (0–3.2 mM) of dinitrobenzene (DNB).

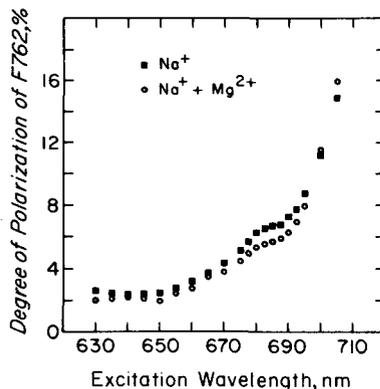


Figure 2. Degree of polarization of fluorescence at 762 nm (full width at half maximum, 11.3 nm) vs excitation wavelength (full width at half maximum, 5 nm). Sample details as given in the legend of Table 1. [Na⁺], 10 mM; [Mg²⁺], 10 mM.

addition of 10 mM Mg²⁺, is observed in this spectrum; a decrease at 650 nm is also noticeable, but, it becomes more obvious when the ratio of $P(\text{Na}^+ + \text{Mg}^{2+})/P(\text{Na}^+)$ is plotted. Figure 3 shows the relative difference in the degree of polarization of F762 between the Na⁺ and Mg²⁺ sample and the Na⁺ sample expressed as $[P(\text{Na}^+ + \text{Mg}^{2+}) - P(\text{Na}^+)]/P(\text{Na}^+)$. Here, negative bands at 650, 675 and 685 nm are obvious suggesting that Mg²⁺ induced an increase in depolarization of fluorescence, i.e. an increase in energy migration to Chl- a species of PSII; possible changes in the orientation of Chl- a species absorbing around 685 nm will be discussed later.

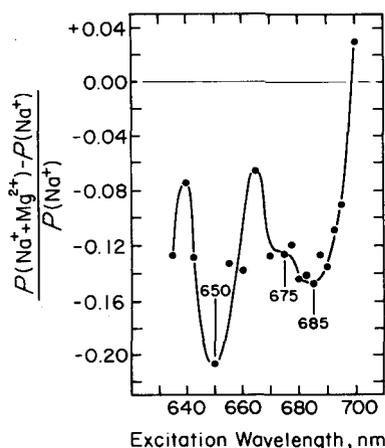


Figure 3. Excitation spectrum of the relative difference in the degree of polarization of F762 between the Na⁺ + Mg²⁺ sample and the Na⁺ sample expressed as $[P(\text{Na}^+ + \text{Mg}^{2+}) - P(\text{Na}^+)]/P(\text{Na}^+)$. The excitation bandpass (full width at half maximum) was 5 nm. The fluorescence was detected through a combination of a Schott RG 10 glass filter and an interference filter at 762 nm (full width at half maximum, 11.3 nm). Sample details are as given in the legend of Tables. (Also see Wong and Govindjee, 1979.)

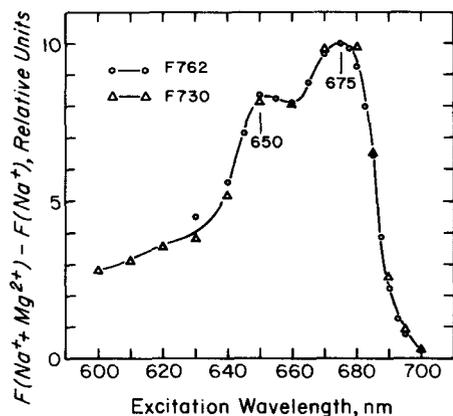


Figure 4. Difference excitation spectrum, between $\text{Na}^+ + \text{Mg}^{2+}$ and Na^+ samples for fluorescence at 730 and 762 nm, normalized at 675 nm. Experimental details as given in the legend of Fig. 3.

Excitation wavelength dependence of the cation effects on the fluorescence intensity

The ratio action spectra for $F(\text{Na}^+ + \text{Mg}^{2+})/F(\text{Na}^+)$ as a function of excitation wavelength measured at 730 nm (F730) and at 762 nm (F762) for the samples used in Fig. 2 show a general increase at all wavelengths, a prominent peak at 650 nm and a shoulder at 675 nm (not shown). The amplitude of Mg^{2+} -induced changes are, however, best observed (see Fig. 4) in difference spectra ($F(\text{Na}^+ + \text{Mg}^{2+}) - F(\text{Na}^+)$) measured as a function of excitation wavelengths at 730 nm (F730) and at 762 nm (F762). These difference spectra, in contrast to the ratio spectra for both F730 and F762, are identical and show the two bands at 650 and 675 nm.

The above results shown in Figs 2-4 are best explained in terms of (a) an increase in excitation energy transfer from the light harvesting Chl-a/Chl-b complex (LHC) to Chl-a II, and (b) a decrease in excitation energy transfer from PSII to PSI (see Discussion).

DISCUSSION

General

The DCMU-induced increase in yield and depolarization of Chl-a fluorescence and the decline of the depolarization effect with increasing wavelengths of excitation (finally disappearing at ~ 680 nm) (Mar and Govindjee, 1972; Whitmarsh and Levine, 1974; Becker *et al.*, 1976; Wong, 1979) strongly support the concept that by keeping the PSII reaction centers closed, DCMU enhances the extent of energy migration among the less mutually aligned Chl molecules absorbing at wavelengths < 680 nm. DNB, on the other hand, is an excellent quencher of Chl fluorescence *in vitro* (Livingston and Ke, 1950) and *in vivo* (Teale, 1960; Amesz and Fork, 1967; Lavorel and Joliot, 1972; Etienne *et al.*, 1974). Its influence in de-

creasing the extent of energy transfer is based on the kinetics of the photochemical O to P phase of the fluorescence transient (Lavorel and Joliot, 1972). The direct relation between fluorescence quenching and depolarization (Fig. 1) and their linear dependence on the concentration of DNB (Teale, 1960; Wong, 1979) demonstrate the inverse relation between the fluorescence yield and degree of polarization in the case of fluorescence quenching. The above known results with DCMU and DNB empirically support the occurrence in thylakoids of the inverse relation between the extent of energy transfer and the degree of polarization of the fluorescence. This concept forms the basis for the interpretation of the results presented here. However, a change in orientation may also cause a change in polarization of fluorescence (see below).

A possible change in orientation of chl-a 685 may cause quanta redistribution

The concept that a change in the orientation of a few key Chl-a molecules can significantly alter the rate of energy transfer from PSII to PSI was suggested by Seely (1973). Biggins and Svejksky (1978) observed Mg^{2+} -induced changes in linear dichroism spectra of magnetically-oriented chloroplast membranes. They suggested that Mg^{2+} causes a species of chromophores (Chl-a 690) to reorient closer into the plane of the thylakoid membrane. Since we have observed (Figs 3 and 4) a decrease in the polarization of fluorescence with 685 nm excitation upon Mg^{2+} addition, this could be due to a decrease in the mutual order in the Chl-a 685 chromophore group(s). We shall not discuss Biggins' work any further because of the possibility of scattering and selective scattering artifacts (Latimer, 1959) in dichroism measurements (see also Schooley and Govindjee, 1976). Becker *et al.* (1976) have suggested that Chl-a molecules absorbing at $> \sim 680$ nm have a high mutual order, so that increased energy transfer between these molecules has little consequence on the fluorescence polarization. Thus, changes in polarization of fluorescence with excitation at 685 nm may be taken as a reduction of mutual orientation of Chl-a 685. Finally, since linear dichroism and fluorescence polarization spectral studies of (*cf.* Garab and Breton, 1976) suggest that the shorter wavelength forms of Chl-a (absorbing $< \sim 670$ nm) are less aligned with respect to the membrane plane, i.e. sustaining a greater angle with the plane, a reorientation of Chl-a 685 closer to the membrane plane would decrease the orientation factor (Förster, 1965) between Chl-a 670 (in PSII) and Chl-a 685 (in PSI) decreasing energy transfer from PSII to PSI.

Possible changes in coupling of Chl-a/b complex (LHC) with Chl-a_{II}

On the other hand, changes in polarization of fluorescence excited at shorter wavelengths (in Chl-a 670, Chl-b 650, etc.) have been suggested to be due to

changes in excitation energy transfer between Chl species with low mutual order (Michel-Villaz, 1976; Becker *et al.*, 1976). Thus, the negative peaks at ~650 nm (due to Chl-*b*) and at 675 nm (due to Chl-*a* 670) in the Mg^{2+} -induced changes in polarization of Chl-*a*_{II} fluorescence (Figs 2 and 3) and positive peaks at 650 nm and 657 nm in the Mg^{2+} -induced increase in relative fluorescence yield (Fig. 4) may be interpreted to be due to an enhancement of energy transfer from these complexes (present in LHC) to fluorescent Chl-*a*_{II}. It is proposed that this is the process which increases the initial distribution of quanta from LHC to PSII. The observation that the relative enhancement of fluorescence of Chl-*b* is small (~6%) for F730 is consistent with previous findings (Butler and Kitajima, 1975a; Moya *et al.*, 1977; Wong *et al.*, 1978a, 1979) that the Mg^{2+} -induced variations in the sensitization of PSII fluorescence is $\leq 20\%$. These changes are, perhaps, manifestations of the proposed Mg^{2+} -induced increase in the coupling of LHC with Chl-*a*_{II} (Arntzen and Ditto, 1976; Butler and Strasser, 1978; Pailiotin, 1978).

The observation of peaks at ~650 and ~675 nm in Figs 3 and 4 leads to the first unambiguous suggestion of a Mg^{2+} -induced increase in LHC to Chl-*a*_{II} transfer in normal thylakoids at physiological temperatures. A brief discussion of the two earlier studies on this subject is given below. Vernotte *et al.* (1973) showed that Mg^{2+} causes no change in the action spectrum of PSII reactions while it inhibits PSI reactions with a spectrum having peaks at ~650 and ~670 nm. These results could have been interpreted equally well by a Mg^{2+} -induced inhibition of initial quanta distribution from LHC to Chl-*a*_I, as by a Mg^{2+} -induced inhibition of redistribution of quanta from PSII (initially transferred there from LHC) to PSI. Loos (1976), on the other hand, showed changes in the action spectra of the variable yield fluorescence

and oxygen evolution (PSII) and O₂ uptake (Mehler reaction, PSI) at 480 nm, but this study could not have unequivocally distinguished between the involvement of Chl-*b* and carotenoids. Interpretations of the results in Figs 3 and 4 are, however, more definitive for two reasons: (1) By limiting the actinic light to wavelengths longer than 600 nm (exciting only the chlorophylls), complications of interpretations from the possible involvement of carotenoids in excitation energy transfer was avoided, and (2) by the simultaneous evaluation of the fluorescence intensity and polarization results, the possibility for ambiguities of interpretation of the type encountered with the data of Vernotte *et al.* (1973) was reduced. The importance of simultaneous evaluation of the fluorescence data, presented here, must not be overlooked. For instance, with only the fluorescence depolarization results, even if it could be independently established that Mg^{2+} induces an increase in the extent of energy transfer, it would not be possible to conclude whether the change results from an increase in the initial partitioning of quanta to PSII, or an inhibition of their subsequent redistribution from PSII to PSI. However, if the inhibition of quanta redistribution were the only cause of the fluorescence polarization changes, the same relative enhancement of fluorescence intensity by Mg^{2+} would be observed whether Chl-*a*_{II} or LHC were excited. The observation in Fig. 4 that the action spectrum for the Mg^{2+} enhancement of Chl-*a*_{II} fluorescence intensity contains relative maxima at ~650 and ~675 nm implies more definitely that variations in the initial partitioning of energy are the result of changes in the energy coupling between LHC and Chl-*a*_{II}.

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