
6 Quality assessment of aquatic foods by machine vision, electronic nose, and electronic tongue

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6.1 Introduction

The increase in demand for seafood products has catalyzed the desire for higher standards regarding safety and quality issues. Since seafoods are perishable, freshness is a major quality parameter to be considered [1,2]. There is no unique freshness or spoilage indicator for seafood, therefore combinations of selected indicators need to be used to evaluate freshness [3,4]. An important and widely used method to determine freshness is sensory evaluation [5]. The Quality Index Method (QIM) uses a demerit point scoring system [6] based on the evaluation of the important sensory attributes (odour, texture, and appearance) of fish and other aquatic foods. The sensory quality is expressed by the sum of the demerit points, and a linear correlation between these points and the storage time is used to predict the freshness of the target seafood [5,7,8]. The QIM has been developed for various seafood species and products, such as Atlantic mackerel (*Scomber scombrus*), horse mackerel (*Trachurus trachurus*), European sardine (*Sardina pilchardus*) [9], gilthead seabream (*Sparus aurata*) [10], farmed Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*) [11,12], and cod (*Gadus morhua*) [13], etc. Even though QIM is fast and reliable in determining the freshness of seafood, it still requires experts to evaluate the quality attributes. Alternatively, appearance, odour, and taste can be measured by machine vision system (MVS), electronic nose (e-nose), and electronic tongue (e-tongue), respectively.

In this chapter, the measurement of visual, odour, and taste quality of seafood using MVS, e-nose, and e-tongue is discussed. A few literature examples are given for all techniques, some of which are given from research conducted in our own laboratories.

6.2 Visual quality

Visual quality of seafood includes appearance (size, shape, and colour) attributes. These have a direct influence on the seafood's value and acceptance. One of the methods of measuring them is by using a MVS, which consists of a digital camera to acquire images, an illumination system (e.g. a light box with fluorescent bulbs as lighting source), and computer software to analyze the image [14,15]. This is a rapid, objective, repeatable, and non-destructive method,

and has been recognized as the most promising approach to objective evaluation of visual quality of seafood, with many successful applications. For the industry, the implementation of an on-line inspection system can increase speed, efficiency, and accuracy along with cost reduction.

6.2.1 Visual quality determination based on size and shape

Fish is sorted according to species, size, and quality after harvesting. This is performed manually, and is a labour-intensive and expensive process. Sorting can be accomplished continuously, automatically, and reliably using MVS or computer vision system (CVS). Common carp (*Cyprinus carpio*), St. Peter's fish (*Oreochromis* spp.), and grey mullet (*Mugil cephalus*) have been successfully separated using images of fish swimming in an aquarium [16]. Besides sorting of fish, CVS has been used to describe the rigor contractions of unstressed and stressed Atlantic salmon (*S. salar*) and Atlantic cod (*G. morhua*) fillets by monitoring the transient two- and three-dimensional changes in the geometry [17]. This method has been found suitable for industrial purposes. A method for quality grading of whole Atlantic salmon (*S. salar*) has also been developed using CVS [18], based on the external geometrical information from fish images.

Shrimp quality inspection relies on subjective sensory evaluation and routine sorting, counting, and weighing performed by trained inspectors. The uniformity ratio (UR) is calculated by taking the weight ratio of the largest 10% of shrimp to the smallest 10%. The inspectors determine visible defects (melanosis-black spots formed by the polyphenol oxidase enzyme), foreign materials, shell parts, and missing pieces (tails or segments). A MVS has been developed to determine the count and UR of whole, headless, peeled-tail-on, and peeled-tail-off white shrimp (*Penaeus setiferus*) and headless, peeled-tail-on, and peeled-tail-off tiger shrimp (*Penaeus monodon*) [19]. A similar experimental set-up has been used for whole, headless, peeled-tail-on, and peeled-tail-off white shrimp (*P. setiferus*) [20]. The authors concluded that this system could be used industrially if there were no shrimps touching or partially blocking each other.

Oysters are mostly sold by volume and grading is important for pricing. This is performed by humans and is labour-intensive and time-consuming. Predicting the volume or weight of oysters by MVS could be beneficial. Several studies have been performed to sort and grade oyster meat with MVS [21] to predict the volume by using a laser-line based method, and to obtain the thickness information by the shape of the laser line on the meat [22]. The volumes (overall, shell, and meat) of oysters from Florida, Texas (*Crassostrea virginica*) and Alaska (*Crassostrea gigas*) have also been measured using the Archimedes principle. The top- and side-view images of whole oysters were captured by MVS and the actual view areas have been calculated by calibrating their pixel area with that of a known reference square. The view area information was used to predict whole oyster volume and weight, and meat volume and weight. The r^2 values for the predicted oyster volumes were 0.85, 0.92, and 0.64 for oysters from Florida, Texas, and Alaska, respectively [23].

6.2.2 Visual quality determination based on colour

Colour is determined by colorimeters, spectrophotometers, and MVS. During the last two decades, the popularity of MVS increased due to its advantages. It can measure the colour of a sample whether it is small or very large in size, and irregular in shape. For example, a shrimp may be too small to cover the viewing aperture of a colorimeter, or a salmon may be too

	Treatment dose (kGy)	Minolta	Machine vision	Picture
(a)	0			
(b)	1			
(c)	1.5			
(d)	2			
(e)	3			
(f)	Standard red plate			

Fig. 6.1 Irradiated salmon colours measured by Minolta and machine vision system and their actual pictures. Adapted with permission from Yagiz *et al.* [26]. For a colour version of this figure, please see the colour plate section.

large to be measured all at once, requiring an average of several measurements to represent the actual salmon colour. These average L^* (lightness/darkness), a^* (redness/greenness), and b^* (yellowness/blueness) values may not give the actual colour of the sample [15]. MVS can determine L^* , a^* , and b^* values for each pixel of an image and analyze the entire surface of homogeneous and nonhomogeneous shapes and colours of samples. MVS also provides the colour spectrum and other visual attributes of the sample [24,25]. The performance of a hand-held Minolta colorimeter and a MVS in measuring the colour of Atlantic salmon (*S. salar*) fillets treated with different electron beam doses (0, 1, 1.5, 2, and 3 kGy) was compared [26]. The average L^* , a^* , and b^* values measured by MVS resulted in orange colours very close to that of the original sample (Fig. 6.1). On the other hand, average L^* , a^* , and b^* values measured by Minolta resulted in purplish colours. The standard red plate readings were similar for both systems. The reason for this difference is not known and needs to be investigated. The authors suggest visually comparing the average colours reported by any system against the actual sample colour.

Muscle colour is an important factor in consumer perception of meat quality [27]. Consumers mostly associate colour with freshness, better flavour, and high product quality [28]. Processing techniques and packaging conditions affect seafood colour. High pressure processing could extend the shelf-life of seafood; however, this process causes a change in the colour of rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) and mahi mahi (*Coryphaena hippurus*) [29]. The high pressure processing in combination with cooking treatment was also found to affect the colour of Atlantic salmon (*S. salar*) [30]. Changes in the colour of salmon fillets have also been investigated during thermal sterilization processes [31]. A CVS was used to determine accurate colour and to measure shrinkage. Colour of salmon fillets change during thermal processing, since heating denatures the myoglobin and oxidizes carotenoid pigments [32] in the muscle of salmon, and colour changes from red to pale pink, as reflected in CIE L^* , a^* , and b^* values. The colour of fresh tuna treated with gas (4% CO, 20% CO₂, and 10% O₂), irradiation (1 or 2 kGy), or combination of gas and irradiation has been evaluated with MVS [14]. The R (Red), a^* , and hue parameters of the tuna samples have been measured. CO exposure increased the redness and preserved it during 12 days of storage at refrigerated temperatures. This is explained by the strong binding ability of CO to the haem in myoglobin and haemoglobin to make it highly resistant to autoxidation and discolouration [33].

The diets used for fish feeding have an effect on the muscle colour. The impact of commercial diets on the muscle colour of cultured Gulf of Mexico sturgeon (*Ancipenser oxyrinchus desotoi*) has been investigated [34]. The L^* , a^* , and b^* values of uncooked fillets stored for up to 15 days on ice have been measured using MVS. A colour difference in the fillets of sturgeon, which were fed with catfish, hybrid bass, and trout diets, was found. A comparison of colour measurements of these fillets using a hand-held Minolta colorimeter versus MVS has also been reported [35]. Overall colour change is defined as ΔE (Eqn. 6.1):

$$\Delta E = \sqrt{(L^* - L_{ref}^*)^2 + (a^* - a_{ref}^*)^2 + (b^* - b_{ref}^*)^2} \quad (6.1)$$

Colour change during storage is calculated by taking time zero colour values as reference (subscript $_{ref}$ in Eqn. 6.1). ΔE values were calculated using L^* , a^* , and b^* values obtained from both devices. The respective ΔE values were significantly different between hand-held Minolta colorimeter and MVS at days 5, 10, and 15. Little colour change was observed over storage time using MVS and this was also observed visually in the images of the centre slices of the sturgeon fillets. The MVS could easily determine the variability in colour within a fillet surface. It was concluded that MVS provided valuable information regarding colour uniformity of a food product without increasing the number of readings required for each sample. MVS images could be kept in picture format and could be useful in automation and in-line quality control of food products' colour [35].

MVS could be used for automated quality control and grading of salmon fillets based on colour. The changes in skin and fillet colour of anesthetized and exhausted Atlantic salmon after killing, during rigor mortis, and after seven days of ice storage have been investigated [36]. Atlantic salmon (*S. salar*) fillets have been sorted based on their colour obtained by CVS [37]. Human inspectors also evaluated the colours of fillets visually according to the Roche *SalmoFan*TM lineal standard. No significant differences were observed between the CVS and inspections made by humans ($P < 0.05$). It was concluded that CVS could replace manual labour in fish processing companies.

Blood residues have a negative effect on the shelf-life, meat quality, and sensory attributes of fish. Their impact on the quality of exsanguinated and unbled farmed trout (*Scophthalmus maximus*) was investigated [38]. Exsanguination improved the visual quality and CVS was able to quantify blood residues in the farmed trout. Other applications of the MVS to seafood quality evaluation have already been discussed [39].

6.3 Smell-related quality

Volatile compounds contributing to the characteristic odour of aquatic foods can be measured to determine their freshness [40]. Qualitative and quantitative analyses of volatiles of seafood products can be performed by using gas chromatography (GC) or gas chromatography/mass spectrometry (GC/MS). Individual components could also be correlated to sensorial perception using GC-olfactometry (GC-O) [41].

Fresh fish has no fishy odour, but smell develops with time after the fish is dead. Fish degradation after harvest is generally attributed to microbial spoilage, enzymatic degradation, and lipid oxidation. The composition of fish headspace, which is a result of microbiological and chemical degradation, gives information about its freshness [42,43]. Long-chain alcohols and carbonyl compounds, bromophenols, and *N*-cyclic compounds could be considered

as the major chemicals involved in the fresh fish odour. Short-chain carbonyl compounds, amines, sulphur compounds, aromatics, *N*-cyclic products, and acid compounds are produced upon microbial spoilage [40]. Defining fish freshness is a major problem, since the methods are time consuming, destructive, and labour-intensive [44]. Recent developments in sensor technologies and data analysis techniques have resulted in the development of rapid methods to detect post-mortem quality changes in foods [1,2,45]. Sensors for specific gases have also been developed to detect trimethylamine (TMA) and dimethylamine (DMA), which are assumed to be the fish degradation products [46–50]. In fact, no single index can cover all the complex changes occurring during fish spoilage [51], thus multiple sensors could be used to perform simultaneous analysis of various sensory related attributes [2]. In this respect, e-noses based on selective detection of the important volatile compounds, which are contributing to the spoilage odour (i.e. amines, sulphur compounds, alcohols, aldehydes, and esters) could be used to rapidly determine quality changes in fish [52].

The concept of the artificial nose system was proposed in 1982 [53] and was called an “electronic nose” at the beginning of 1990s, defined as “an instrument, which comprises an array of electronic chemical sensors with partial specificity, and an appropriate pattern-recognition system capable of recognizing simple or complex odours” [54]. The e-nose is composed of a sampling system, an array of gas sensors with different selectivities, a signal processing and conditioning system, and an appropriate pattern recognition algorithm to recognize simple or complex odours [54]. The most important part of an e-nose is the sensors. There are various types of sensors, and they need to be selected carefully to meet a particular application’s requirements for precision, reproducibility, sensitivity, and stability, and to improve the discrimination characteristics of the aroma profiles. In general, sensor types used in e-noses are metal oxide semiconductor (MOS), conducting polymer, surface acoustic wave (SAW), bulk acoustic wave (BAW) devices, metal oxide field effect transistors (MOSFET), electrochemical, smell-seeing, and GC/MS-based sensors [55,56].

The signals collected from the e-nose sensors are evaluated with appropriate pattern recognition techniques. Two basic approaches, multivariate data analysis and artificial neural networks, are commonly used. Principal component analysis (PCA), discriminant function analysis (DFA), cluster analysis (CA), partial least squares regression (PLSR), canonical correlation analysis (CCA), and fuzzy logic or artificial neural networks (ANN) are most frequently used as pattern recognition techniques [57–60].

Various gas sensors were used to detect fish freshness in the 1990s [2,46,61–63] and by the end of that decade, e-noses started to be used in assessing seafood quality [64,65]. Most of the studies on the use of e-noses to assess seafood quality during the last decade [44,66–96] are listed in Table 6.1.

6.4 Taste-related quality

One of the factors positively related to the consumption of seafood products is a liking for the taste of the product [97,98]. The sense of taste in mammals is perceived by non-specific taste buds, present on the papillae of the tongue. Overall, taste is correlated with a combination of basic tastes and taste sensations (bitterness, saltiness, sourness, sweetness, umami, metallic, astringency, spicy, and cooling effects). Interaction between different tastes may cause a desensitizing effect or threshold increase when two substances eliciting different tastes are present simultaneously. In addition to this, the decrease in sensitivity threshold

Table 6.1 Electronic nose applications to aquatic foods, with species, sensor types, and data analyses in the last decade

Product	Electronic nose used	Sensors	Data analysis techniques	Reference
European sea bass (<i>Dicentrarchus labrax</i>)	PEN2 model-Win Muster Airsense Analytic Inc. (Germany)	MOS	PCA and CA	[44]
Octopus (<i>Octopus vulgaris</i>)	Custom-made portable electronic nose (China)	TGS	PCA and DFA	[66]
Moroccan sardines (<i>Sardina pilchardus</i>)	Custom-made portable electronic nose (Morocco)	TGS	PCA	[67]
Blue crab (<i>Callinectes sapidus</i>)	Cyranose 320™, Cyrano Sciences Inc. (USA)	CP	PCA, CDA, and SDA	[68]
Smoked salmon (<i>Salmo salar</i>)	FishNose (Iceland)	MOS	PCA and PLSR	[69]
Sardines (<i>Sardina pilchardus</i>)	Custom-made portable electronic nose (Morocco)	MOS (TGS)	PCA, DFA, and FANIN	[70]
Pink shrimp (<i>Pandalus jordani</i>)	e-NOSE 4000, EEV Inc. (UK)	CP sensors	DFA	[71]
Cod (<i>Gadus morhua</i>)	FreshSense, Maritech (Iceland)	ECS (CO, H ₂ S, SO ₂ , and NH ₃)	PCA and PLSR	[52]
Smoked Atlantic salmon (<i>Salmo salar</i>)	FishNose, Optotek Engineering (Slovenia) (adapted from GEMINI e nose-Alpha MOS, France)	MOS	PCA and PLSR	[72]
Alaska pink salmon (<i>Oncorhynchus gorbuscha</i>)	Cyranose 320™, Cyrano Sciences Inc. (USA)	CP sensors	PCA and FSGDA	[73]
Haddock (<i>Melanogrammus aeglefinus</i>)	FreshSense, Icelandic Fisheries Laboratories and Maritech (Iceland)	ECS (CO, H ₂ S, SO ₂ , and NH ₃)	PLSR	[74]
Sardines (<i>Sardina pilchardus</i>)	EnQbe, Tor Vergata (University of Rome and CNR (Italy)	TSM resonators	PLSR	[75]
Alaska pink salmon (<i>Oncorhynchus gorbuscha</i>)	Cyranose 320™, Cyrano Sciences Inc. (USA)	CP sensors	PCA and FSGDA	[76]
Smoked Atlantic salmon (<i>Salmo salar</i>)	Gemini, Alpha MOS (France) FishNose, Optotek (Slovenia)	MOS	PCA and PLSR	[77]
Shrimp (<i>Pandalus borealis</i>)	FreshSense, Maritech (Iceland)	ECS (CO, H ₂ S, SO ₂ , and NH ₃)	PCA	[78]
Cod (<i>Gadus morhua</i>)	FreshSense, Bodvaki-Maritech (Iceland)	ECS (CO, H ₂ S, SO ₂ , and NH ₃)	ANOVA	[79]
Baltic cod (<i>Gadus morhua</i>)	NST 3320, Applied Sensor (Sweden)	FE, MOS	PCA and regression	[80]

(Continued)

Table 6.1 (Continued)

Product	Electronic nose used	Sensors	Data analysis techniques	Reference
Anchovy (<i>Engraulis japonica</i>) sauce Capelin (<i>Mallotus villosus</i>)	e-NOSE 4000, Neotronics (UK) FreshSense, iFL, Element Sensor Systems (Iceland)	CP sensors ECS (CO, H ₂ S, SO ₂ , and NH ₃)	PCA ANOVA	[81] [82]
Cod (<i>Gadus morhua</i>) roe	FreshSense, iFL, Bodvaki-Maritech (Iceland)	ECS (CO, H ₂ S, SO ₂ , and NH ₃)	PCA	[83]
Herring (<i>Clupea harengus</i>) Anchovy (<i>Engraulis encrasicolus</i> L.) Atlantic salmon (<i>Salmo salar</i>) Atlantic salmon (<i>Salmo salar</i>) Haddock (<i>Melanogrammus aeglefinus</i>) Atlantic cod (<i>Gadus morhua</i>) Redfish (<i>Sebastes marinus</i>)	Custom-made system (Norway) AromaScan, AromaScan Inc. (UK) AromaScanTM, AromaScan Inc. (USA) Custom-made system (USA)	MOSFET, TGS CP sensors CP sensors MOS	PLSR PCA and ANN DFA NN	[84] [85] [86] [50]
Tilapia (<i>Oreochromis niloticus</i>) Catfish (<i>Ictalurus punctatus</i>) Argentinean hake (<i>Merluccius hubbsi</i>)	FreshSense, Bodvaki Company (Iceland) e-NOSE 4000, EEV Inc. (UK) e-NOSE 4000, EEV Inc. (UK) Custom-made system (Argentina)	ECS (CO, H ₂ S, SO ₂ , and NH ₃) CP sensors CP sensors Polycrystalline tin dioxide sensors	PCA	[87]
Atlantic cod (<i>Gadus morhua</i>)	FreshSense, Element Bodvaki Company (Iceland)	ECS (CO, H ₂ S, NO, SO ₂ , and NH ₃) TSM resonators	PLS-DA	[91]
Mahi-mahi (<i>Coryphaena hippurus</i>) Capelin (<i>Mallotus japonica</i>)	LibraNose, Tor Vergata University of Rome with Technobiochip Company (Italy) AromaScan, AromaScan Inc. (USA) FreshSense, iFL, Element Sensor System (Iceland)	CP sensors ECS (CO, H ₂ S, NO, SO ₂ , NH ₃ /AM, and NH ₃)	DFA PCA and PLSR	[92] [93]
Shrimp (<i>Penaeus aztecus</i> , <i>Litopenaeus vannamei</i> , and <i>Penaeus monodon</i>) Atlantic salmon (<i>Salmo salar</i>) Yellowfin Tuna (<i>Thunnus albacares</i>)	e-NOSE 4000, EEV Inc. (UK) e-NOSE 4000, EEV Inc. (UK) e-NOSE 4000, EEV Inc. (UK)	CP sensors CP sensors CP sensors	DFA DFA DFA	[94] [95] [96]

Abbreviations: ANN, Artificial neural network; CA, Cluster analysis; CDA, Canonical discriminant analysis; CP, Conducting polymer; DFA, Discriminant function analysis; ECS Electrochemical sensors; FANN, Fuzzy ARTMAP neural networks; FE, Field effect sensor; FSGDA, forward stepwise general discriminant analysis; iFL, Icelandic Fisheries Laboratories. MOS, Metal oxide semiconductor sensor; NN, Neural network; PCA, Principle component analysis; PLS-DA, partial least significant discriminant analysis; PLSR, Partial least squares regression; SDA, Stepwise discriminant analysis; TGS, Taguchi gas sensor.

may occur when substances are present at non-perceptible concentrations. In fact, perception thresholds of the human tongue to most tastes are much higher compared to those for olfaction [99].

In the last decade, a novel instrument, the e-tongue, has been developed to detect the tastes of food samples, especially liquid samples. This instrument is composed of a sensor array in combination with pattern recognition tools [100,101]. Most of the e-tongues reported so far consist of a combination of electrochemical methods based on potentiometric [102] or amperometric sensors [103]. These instruments have been widely used in quantitative analyses of liquids such as milk [104], alcoholic drinks (beer and wines) [102,105–107], vegetable and olive oils [108–109], natural and mineral waters [104,110,111], and various fruit juices [112,113], etc. The e-tongue has been applied to determine fish freshness [114, 115]. Simple Au and Ag wires have been used for the analysis of minced gilthead sea bream (*S. aurata*) and it has been found that this method could be used for the evaluation of fish freshness [114]. However, the e-tongue has limited application in the seafood area since the sample needs to be minced for e-tongue application. The e-tongues are more for use in determining the taste properties of liquid food products.

6.5 Combination of machine vision system and electronic nose

The MVS and e-nose combinations offer possibilities for the development of accurate and rapid measurement of quality of seafood in “orthogonal” dimensions. Therefore, their combination offers increased resolution of the discrimination capacity compared to the methods considered individually. The ability of e-nose and MVS to classify tilapia fillets based on their odours and colour has been investigated [88]. When e-nose data together with machine vision data were used to analyze the quality of tilapia fillets, the classification rates were higher than analyses using either data alone. Similar results were found when e-nose data alone were used for analyzing the quality of raw and cooked catfish fillets. The correct classification rates were lower than the ones obtained by using MVS together with e-nose [89]. These results point towards the advantages of the discriminating ability based on two independent quality parameters (colour and odour) considered together.

6.6 Conclusions

Rapid, objective, and non-destructive determination of smell and visual attributes of foods is possible with MVS and e-noses. Their combination increases the resolution of the discrimination capability of the analyses. MVS can be calibrated to assure comparability of images and results from different laboratories. E-noses have slightly different sensors between instruments, and their calibration is more challenging for seamless exchange of data between laboratories. For their widespread application certified data bases need to be developed, possibly with information regarding the important odour-active components of the sample atmospheres. Battery-operated portable e-noses can make field and on-line plant applications possible. The digital and discrete nature of the data from MVS and e-noses allow new possibilities for traceability and documentation of the quality of aquatic products.

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