Active Packaging Influence on the Shelf Life of Milk Pomade Sweet – Sherbet

Eva Ungure, Sandra Muizniece-Brasava, Lija Dukalska, Vita Levkane

Abstract—The objective of the research was to evaluate the quality of milk pomade sweet – sherbet packed in different packaging materials (Multibarrier 60, met.BOPET/PE, Aluthen), by several packaging technologies – active and modified atmosphere (MAP) (consisting of 100% CO₂), and control – in air ambiance. Experiments were carried out at the Faculty of Food Technology of Latvia University of Agriculture. Samples were stored at the room temperature +21±1 °C. The physiochemical properties – weight losses, moisture, hardening, colour and changes in headspace atmosphere concentration (CO₂ and O₂) of packs were analysed before packaging and after 2, 4, 6, 8, 10 and 12 storage weeks.

Keywords—packaging, shelf life, sherbet with crunchy peanut chip’s

I. INTRODUCTION

Confectionery products, in comparison with other foods, are generally stable and have relatively long shelf-lives. The high level of sugar present in confectionery products makes them less prone to microbiological spoilage. Consequently, physical and chemical changes, which lead to a deterioration of texture, flavour, colour or odour of the product, are the main reasons of spoilage and thereby limiting the shelf lives of confectionery products. The shelf life stability of confectionery products, as in the case of all food products, is governed by their composition.

The confectionery industry is enormous. It ranges from small shops to branches of the largest companies in the food industry [1]. Mostly sugar confectionery has been developed over the centuries with increasing sophistication and it exists in countless formats with different degrees of sweetness, flavours and aromas, textures and mouthfeel. Sugar confectionery by definition is meant to include products that are pliable to firm and crumbly within a few days or even hours after their manufacturing.

Milk pomade sweets are one of the sugar confectionery products and usually contain sugar, glucose syrup, water, condensed milk; it may also contain nuts depending on product category. The shelf life of milk pomade sweets depend on several parameters including: storage temperature and humidity, availability of oxygen in the immediate environment, directly related to packaging material used, as well as the addition of other ingredients such as fats, nuts etc. [3; 6]. Milk pomade sweets could be characterised by moisture below 5% [3]. Milk sweets are usually a mixture of several ingredients, made according to a fairly complex recipe and in a short time. This may lead down to absorption of water from the atmosphere following prolonged exposure to ambient conditions, making the sweets soft and soggy [7], in that way packaging films with a high moisture barrier properties could be a common practice. In the second place, hardening is the main cause of quality deterioration of cookies and biscuits, included milk pomade sweets, which change from soft and pliable to firm and crumbly within a few days or even hours after their manufacturing.

Sherbet with crunchy peanut chips could be classified as milk pomade sweet. It is one of quite popular delicious sweets in Latvia [8]. Sherbet is recommended to keep cool and dry (+18 ± 3 °C). On the market place peanut sherbet for the time being could be found only in bulk carton transport packaging boxes by 5 to 10 kg in each. Freshly made sherbet is soft and savoury but after several days’ storage at the open air gradually hardens, as it has been observed at the market place and laboratories, product loses eye appeal, taste and become not marketable. This problem limits the shelf life, so sherbet can be marketed only at the local market. As there is not sufficiently knowledge about behaviour of this unique product during the storage time, a preliminary investigation on the evolution of freshly manufactured sherbet texture, packed in various plastic films with several barrier properties was planned to carry out [9; 10]. The most common threats for confectionery products are oxygen and moisture. Oxidation is a critical degradation pathway for confectionery products and can lead to rancidity of nuts and nut oils as well as rancidity of natural vegetable oils, now frequently used to replace trans fats. Oxidation as well as results changes in flavour over time. Furthermore, moisture is a concern, leading to hydrolytic rancidity of saturated fats like cocoa butter and adversely affecting texture and mouthfeel. These threats become more acute when confectionery products need to be packaged for a longer duration of time because of extended distribution [11].

Nowadays lot of scientists explore different ways how to reduce these threats of confectionery products and are looking for innovative solutions how to preserve quality and prolong shelf life [2; 3; 6; 10; 13; 14].
The use of appropriate packaging is most important in maintaining the quality of the products and achieving the required shelf life. Several strategies have been devised to exert a positive action over the packaged foodstuff, including retention of desirable molecules (i.e., aldehydes, oxygen) and release of substances (i.e., carbon dioxide, aromas). These new developments have been generally termed active packaging technologies [12]. Principal active packaging systems involve oxygen scavenging, moisture absorption, carbondioxide or ethanol generation, and finally antimicrobial systems [15; 16].

Some manufacturers and researchers propose for confectionery use sorbent technology: oxygen-absorption and moisture regulation technology. Oxygen-absorbing technology can lower oxygen levels to protect products from rancidity and flavour loss while moisture regulation technology reduces moisture content within a package to levels that inhibit hydrolysis of fats and oils that degrades texture and eating qualities. Using sorbent technology enables confectionery products to preserve flavour and colour, maintain an appropriate texture and extend the shelf life.

Rapid removal of oxygen from the packaging immediately after manufacturing greatly retards the loss of colour, thus enhancing the visual appeal of the product. In addition, fat-based confections, particularly enrobed products, are vulnerable to moisture and temperature variations. This can lead to migration of sugar and occasionally other compounds to the surface resulting in “sugar bloom” frequently observed on chocolate after extended storage. Moisture regulation within the package can hold moisture at a low level to effectively prevent this from happening [11].

Mouthfeel, texture and eating qualities are adversely affected by loss of moisture. As all packaging materials are permeable to moisture to some extent, active packaging can balance moisture and compensate for moisture loss. Furthermore, moisture regulation can be combined with oxygen removal so that it is now possible to rapidly remove oxygen from a package while maintaining an optimal relative humidity within the package. This approach allows the confectioner to optimize or minimize the use of emulsifiers, surfactants and other such additives.

Molds are sometimes associated with spoilage of confectionery products. As a class, molds are obligate aerobes; that is, they absolutely require oxygen to emerge from the spore form to the vegetative form and to grow. Fortunately, with rapid removal of oxygen, it is possible to completely prevent the growth of mold and fungi. Also, as most confectionery is too low in moisture for mold to grow, permeability of the packaging and temperature variations that may be experienced during distribution become important concerns. Moisture regulation can serve to protect against condensation and subsequent mold growth within the package where storage and distribution are less than ideal [11].

Application of active packaging for confectionery products is still limited, because there is a lack of scientifically based data related to sugar confectionery quality changes. The objective of this study was to determine quality and respective shelf-life of a delicious sweet – sherbet with crunchy peanut chips by using different packaging materials with diverse barrier properties in modified atmosphere (100% CO₂) packaging both by itself as well as with incorporated iron based oxygen scavenging sachets, and to compare the results with control packaging in Multibarrier film and air ambiance.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

A. Experimental design

Experiments were carried out in the laboratories of Department of Food Technology, Latvia University of Agriculture. The object of the research was milk pomade sweet – sherbet with crunchy peanut chips, produced by stockholder Laima, Latvia. Ingredients of sherbet: sugar, peanuts (24%), condensed milk with sugar, water, glucose syrup, wafers (wheat flour, egg mass, baking agent (E500), emulsifier (soya lecithin), salt. Dimensions of one piece of sherbet in average was 40 x 40 x 8 mm, mass 30 ± 1 g.

B. Packaging and storage of samples

The study involved preliminary preparation of different laminate pouches from Multibarrier 60, met.BOPET/PE and Aluthen. For shelf life determination both usual MAP conditions as well as oxygen scavenger commitment in the pouch was investigated. For reduced oxygen packaging (ROP) creation (O₂ – 0%) in pouches an iron based oxygen scavenger sachets of 100 cc obtained from Mitsubishi Gas Chemical Europe Ageless® were used. The samples were hermetically sealed by MULTIVAC C300 vacuum chamber machine and stored at the room temperature of +21.0±1 °C, (controlled by MINILog Gresinger electronic) and about 40% RH for 12 weeks under day and night conditions. A characteristic of materials used in experiments is shown in the Table I and structure of performed experiments – in Fig.1. The materials for experiments were selected with different water vapour transmutation rate and various thicknesses. Two pieces of sherbets were placed in each package. Size of each pouch was 80 x 120 mm, the total product mass in each package – 60±1 g. The results were reported as an average value of all determinations. Samples were analyzed before packaging (day 0) and after 2, 4, 6, 8, 10 and 12 storage weeks.

TABLE I

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample Nr.</th>
<th>Packaging material</th>
<th>Composition</th>
<th>Thickness, μm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Multibarrier 60 HFP</td>
<td>Laminate, APA/TIE/PA/EVOH/PA/T IE/PE/PE, transparent</td>
<td>60±2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>met.BOPET/PE</td>
<td>Laminate</td>
<td>65±2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Aluthen</td>
<td>Laminate</td>
<td>80±2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Two pieces of sherbets were placed in each package. Size of each pouch was 80 x 120 mm, the total product mass in each package – 60 ± 1.0 g. The results were reported as averages of all determinations. Samples were analyzed before packaging (day 0) and after 2, 4, 6, 8, 10 and 12 storage weeks.

C. Physical analysis

The following mechanical and physical characteristics were analyzed:
- The dynamics of gas composition in a hermetically sealed package headspace during the storage time was measured as a percentage of oxygen and carbon dioxide by a gas analyser OXYBABY® V O2/CO2.
- Moisture content and accordant at the storage time was determined by using verified balance KERN (Germany) with precision ±0.001g; mass loss calculation (%) – were determined by weighing on the electronic scales.
- Hardness for freshly manufactured sherbet samples was determined as cutting force (in N) by using TA-XTplus Texture Analyser. Cutting force was determined for six small sherbet samples from each it piece. For the sample cutting force determination a special probe with knife edge for a cut test HDP/BSKBLADE SET WITH KNIFE was applied. The maximum cutting force (in N) was detected at the deformation rate 10 mm/s and distance 10 mm. The samples were cut right through, in order to check whether any different structural characteristics (peanut pieces) were present under the knife edge on the product or on the surface. Samples for cutting were placed centrally under the knife edge. Plotting force (in N) versus storage time (in weeks), the hardness change of sherbet stored in each gas composition in the package as well as for each packaging material was calculated. The maximum cutting force (N) was used as an index for the cut test.

At each time of measurement, two identical packages for any treatment were randomly selected on sampling days (day 0) and after 2, 4, 6, 8, 10 and 12 storage weeks; six measurement repetitions of each sample were performed.
- The colour of sherbet samples was measured in CIE L*a*b* colour system using Tristimulus Colorimeter measured Hunter colour parameter changes: by Colour Tec PCM/PSM. Samples for colour measurement were placed in PP bag. Colour values were recorded as L* (lightness, 0 = black, 100 = white), a* (-a, greenness, +a, redness) and b* (-b, blueness, +b, yellowness) are two chromatic components which range from -120 to +120 [17]. The measurements were repeated on five randomly selected locations on each sample. Total colour difference (ΔE*) of sherbets between initial value and after storage was calculated using the following equation 1:

$$\Delta E^* = \left[ (L - L_{day0})^2 + (a - a_{day0})^2 + (b - b_{day0})^2 \right]^{1/2}$$

Where ΔE* – total colour difference; L*, a* and b* are the lightness (L), greenness and (a) and blueeness (b) values for the stored sherbet samples; and L_{day0}, a_{day0} and b_{day0} are the corresponding color values for sherbet samples at the beginning of experiment. The difference L* – L_{day0} is difference of lightness, a* – a_{day0} – difference of green and red colour and b* – b_{day0} – difference of blue and yellow colour.

E. Statistical analysis

The results were processed by mathematical and statistical methods. Statistics on completely randomized design were determined using the General Linear Model (GLM) procedure SPSS, version 16.00. Two-way analyses of variance (p≤0.05) were used to determine significance of differences between means of hardness, moisture and mass lose by different packaging materials.

II. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The aim of this work was to assess the effect of modified atmosphere (MAP: 100% CO2 both by itself as well as with incorporated iron based oxygen scavenging sachets) during the storage time on the hardening of sherbet with crunchy peanut chips samples affected by moisture losses in two different type foils and Multibarrier 60 film packaging and to compare the results with control packaging in Multibarrier 60 film and air ambience.

The changes of carbon dioxide content during the all storage time in investigated samples without oxygen scavenger (sample 1; 2; 4; 6) and with incorporated O2 scavenger, 100 cc (sample 3; 5; 7) are presented in Fig. 2. Significant differences in carbon dioxide (CO2) content during the 12 weeks storage among all sherbet samples packed in different kinds of materials and oxygen scavenger were found (p<0.05). (Fig. 2). Experimentally we have observed that carbon dioxide content in samples without and with incorporated oxygen scavenger considerably differed (p<0.05). An interesting phenomenon we have observed analysing experimental data of head space composition in modified atmosphere (MAP 100% CO2) with incorporated oxygen scavengers. In all investigated samples with incorporated oxygen scavengers the CO2 contenttend after 2 weeks the pouches collapsed and a perfect vacuum established (Fig.2). This phenomenon can be explained with carbon dioxide dissolving in the sherbet.
The monitoring of the change of O₂ composition is shown in Fig. 3. In the sample 1 (Multibrier 60 bags, air ambiance) the content of O₂ during all experiment period was disparate from packages in all other pouches (p<0.05), – it was similar like in the surrounding environment. In the packages made of Multibarrier 60 as well as of met.BOPET/PE without and with incorporated oxygen scavenger all storage time O₂ content stay close to zero. In return in the Aluthen pouches O₂ content increased from 0±0.0% till 14.2±0.5% to 13.3±0.8% during 12 weeks storage.

The mass losses formed during the storage time are presented in Fig. 4. Experimentally we have observed that mass losses from the sherbet samples packed in Multibarier 60 pouches without and with incorporated oxygen scavenger considerably differed (p<0.05) from those packed in all another investigated film pouches both without and with oxygen scavenger.

Following these results, we can come to a conclusion that met.BOPET/PE and Aluthen film packaging without as well as with incorporated oxygen scavenger could be the best from investigated packaging materials for sherbet packaging and long-term storage.
The hardening of sherbet has been observed irrespective of used packaging technology as well as by material type. The major reason can be water vapour migration through the packaging material and subsequent sucrose crystallisation, which promotes hardening. The initial cutting force of all samples at the beginning of experiment was determined 56.4±5.0 N. Mouth feel, texture and eating qualities are adversely affected by loss of moisture [11]. The mouthfeel of all tested samples during investigated storage time was observed as acceptable.

Colour is an important attribute because it is usually the first property the consumer observes. The Hunter (L, a, b) values were measured in order to describe the colour changes of fresh and sherbet during storage up to 12 weeks (Fig. 7 – 9).

The initial Hunter L, a, b values of sherbet samples were determined to be 64.43, 2.59 and 16.48, respectively. The total color difference (Δ E*) has been calculated using equation (1).

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\Delta E^* = \sqrt{(\Delta L^*)^2 + (\Delta a^*)^2 + (\Delta b^*)^2}
\]

Non-enzymatic browning (NEB) might have influence the variations in the colour (L, a, b). As it has been observed, several factors like temperature, moisture, carbonyl compounds, fatty acids, O₂ presence and sugars have been reported to be a responsible for causing non-enzymatic browning in stored foods. Non-enzymatic, or oxidative, browning is a chemical process that produces a brown color in foods without the activity of enzymes.

One of two main forms of non-enzymatic browning is caramelization of sugars, which is a function of water activity.
As a conclusion, the obtained results can be summarized that all investigated packaging materials are applicable for sherbet packaging, among them met.BOPET/PE and Aluthen considered as the best.

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REFERENCES


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