

Contribution of sulfate to aerobic methane oxidation in upland soils: a mini-review

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Abstract. Methane (CH₄) is a potent greenhouse gas, and its global warming potential is 25 times higher than carbon dioxide (CO₂). Various environmental factors influence aerobic CH₄ oxidation in soil. Sulfate (SO₄²⁻) ion is the main component of atmospheric deposition and has been increasing in recent years. It promotes CH₄ production and anaerobic CH₄ oxidation, however, the impact of SO₄²⁻ on aerobic CH₄ oxidation in soils has not yet been comprehensively summarized. We synthesize current research on the effects of SO₄²⁻ on aerobic CH₄ oxidation, examining both its macroscopic manifestations and microscale pathways. Through a literature review, we found that SO₄²⁻ enhances aerobic CH₄ oxidation by up to 0–42%, moreover, it has been found that various physicochemical properties and processes in the soil are influenced by the addition of SO₄²⁻, which in turn affects aerobic CH₄ oxidation. This review enhances our understanding of the role of SO₄²⁻ in promoting aerobic CH₄ oxidation and lays the foundation for future studies aimed at validating these findings by quantifying CH₄ flux and oxidation rates, as well as elucidating the underlying microbial processes through experimental research, while also providing directions for further investigation of SO₄²⁻'s impact on aerobic CH₄ oxidation.

1 Introduction

35 CH₄ is an important greenhouse gas, and its atmospheric concentration has increased since pre-industrial times (Place, 2024; Praeg et al., 2016). Its global warming potential is 28 times higher than carbon dioxide (CO₂), owing to its superior heat absorption efficiency (IPCC, 2013). Methanotrophs (aerobic methanotrophs) consume CH₄ under certain conditions (Le Mer and Roger, 2001), reducing CH₄ atmospheric concentration
40 (Singh et al., 2010). Consequently, methanotrophs are crucial microbes that play an indispensable role in regulating and mitigating the greenhouse effect on Earth. Soil aerobic CH₄ oxidation is the sole known biological sink for atmospheric CH₄ (Ho et al., 2019; Murguía-Flores et al., 2018), contributing to 5%–7% of the global annual atmospheric CH₄ uptake (Saunio et al., 2020). Upland soils are the primary biological
45 CH₄ sink (Bodelier, 2011; Guo et al., 2023), owing to methanotroph-mediated CH₄ consumption (Song et al., 2024). This represents the second-largest atmospheric CH₄ consumption sink, surpassed only by hydroxyl radical depletion (Deng et al., 2019). Aerobic CH₄ oxidation in soils are influenced by many factors, such as soil water content, soil texture, soil type, temperature, soil pH, soil inorganic nitrogen content,
50 metal availability, etc., many of these factors have been extensively reviewed (Shukla et al., 2013; Mishra et al., 2018). However, the effect of SO₄²⁻, a significant ion component of acid deposition, on aerobic CH₄ oxidation has not yet been reviewed.

Acid rain, characterized by the deposition of SO₄²⁻ and other acidic compounds, has
55 been a significant environmental issue (Chen et al., 2020; Qi et al., 2022). SO₄²⁻ is the major ion in acid rain (Wright and Henriksen, 1978) and has profound impacts on substances and biochemical processes in soils. As a crucial component of terrestrial ecosystems, soils serve as the ultimate receptor of acid deposition. SO₄²⁻ deposition induces soil acidification (Huang et al., 2019), alters soil plant diversity (Li et al., 2022),
60 affects microbial properties (Wang et al., 2018), and limits grass yield potential (Klessa et al., 1989), as well as a reduction in the activities of soil enzymes such as cellulase, invertase, and polyphenol oxidase (Tie et al., 2020). SO₄²⁻ can inhibit CH₄ production (methanogenesis) and promote anaerobic CH₄ oxidation, playing a crucial role in the CH₄ cycle. SO₄²⁻ suppresses methanogenesis primarily due to its thermodynamic and

65 kinetic preference as an electron acceptor (Granberg et al., 2001; Schimel, 2004),
leading to decreased CH₄ emissions (Gauci et al., 2004). SO₄²⁻ has been shown to
facilitate anaerobic CH₄ oxidation by anaerobic methanotrophic archaea in diverse
ecosystems, such as oceans (Boetius et al., 2000), wetlands (La et al., 2022), and paddy
fields (Fan et al., 2021), acting as a crucial electron acceptor. Despite these well-
70 documented effects on anaerobic CH₄ cycling, the influence of SO₄²⁻ on aerobic CH₄
oxidation, particularly in upland soils, remains underexplored. Given the increasing
global deposition of SO₄²⁻ due to industrial activities, understanding its impact on
aerobic CH₄ oxidation is essential for predicting future CH₄ dynamics and developing
effective climate mitigation strategies.

75 In this review, we have analyzed the literature on the effects of SO₄²⁻ on aerobic CH₄
oxidation. Our analysis not only reveals evidence suggesting that SO₄²⁻ promotes
aerobic CH₄ oxidation but also identifies supporting evidence from related studies. In
this review, we reviewed references about the influence of SO₄²⁻ on soil properties,
80 substances, or biochemical processes, aiming to elucidate any microscale pathways on
aerobic CH₄ oxidation through variations in soil substances or processes. Our analysis
reveals that SO₄²⁻ may affect aerobic CH₄ oxidation. Based on the available literature,
we infer that SO₄²⁻ favors aerobic CH₄ oxidation. This review summarizes the
microscale pathways by which SO₄²⁻ influences aerobic CH₄ oxidation and highlights
85 the importance of future research in this area. By providing a comprehensive synthesis
of existing knowledge, this work serves as a valuable reference for future experimental
studies. Furthermore, the findings of this review will contribute to a deeper
understanding of global CH₄ cycling, particularly in the context of increasing SO₄²⁻
deposition. Moving forward, we aim to experimentally validate the impact of aerobic
90 CH₄ oxidation following SO₄²⁻ addition and elucidate the underlying microbial
mechanisms involved.

2 The microbial aerobic CH₄ oxidation processes

2.1 Aerobic CH₄ oxidation processes

95 Aerobic CH₄ oxidation is mediated by methanotrophs, a group of specialized microorganisms (Chistoserdova et al., 2005). In soils, aerobic CH₄ oxidation can be classified into two distinct forms based on the concentration of CH₄ (Walsh et al., 2009). The first form, known as high-affinity oxidation, occurs at CH₄ concentrations close to atmospheric levels (<2ppm) and is carried out by high-affinity methanotrophs
100 (Chowdhury and Dick, 2013). This process is commonly observed in upland soils, particularly in environments with high NH₄⁺ concentrations (Ho et al., 2019; Le Mer and Rob  rt, 2001). The second form, referred to as low-affinity oxidation, occurs at CH₄ concentrations exceeding 40 ppm and is mediated by low-affinity methanotrophs (Chowdhury and Dick, 2013). This form is typically found in wetland environments,
105 where CH₄ concentrations are significantly higher than atmospheric levels (Bechtold et al., 2025). Aerobic CH₄ oxidation processes can be further classified into assimilatory and dissimilatory pathways. In the dissimilatory pathways, CH₄ is sequentially oxidized to CO₂ by multiple enzymes (Fig. 1   ). (Mancinelli, 1995). In the assimilation pathways, methanotrophs convert formaldehyde, an intermediate product of aerobic
110 CH₄ oxidation, into biomass and other organic compounds mainly through the ribulose monophosphate pathway (RuMP pathway) (Fig. 1   ), serine pathway (Fig. 1   ), and xylulose monophosphate pathway (XyMP pathway) (Fig. 1   )(Yang et al., 2023).

2.2 Methanotrophs

115 Methanotrophs constitute a distinct subset of methylotrophs, primarily dependent on the one-carbon compound CH₄ as their sole source of carbon and energy (Hanson and Hanson, 1996). In the traditional classification system, Proteobacterial methanotrophs were categorized into type I (*Methylococcaceae* and *Crenotrichaceae*), type II
120 (*Methylocystaceae* and *Beijerinckiaceae*), and type X (*Methylococcaceae*) (Li et al., 2020) based on their cell membrane arrangement, chemotaxonomic properties, physiological characteristics, and phylogenetic location. However, due to the discovery of non-canonical methanotrophs, the traditional classification system has become

outdated. Consequently, methanotrophs are now classified into seven categories based
 125 on phylogenetic analysis: Type I-A (*Methylomonadaceae*), I-B (*Methylococcaceae*), I-C
 (*Methylothermaceae*), I-D (*Crenotrichaceae*), II-A (*Methylocystaceae*), II-B
 (*Beijerinckiaceae*), III (*Methylacidiphilaceae*), and NC10 (Fenibo et al., 2023).
Methylomonadaceae, *Methylococcaceae*, *Methylothermaceae*, and *Crenotrichaceae*
 belong to the class *Gammaproteobacteria*, while *Methylocystaceae* and
 130 *Beijerinckiaceae* are classified under *Alphaproteobacteria*. *Methylacidiphilaceae*
 belongs to the phylum *Verrucomicrobia*. The composition of different types of
 methanotrophs is shown in Figure 1 (Fenibo et al., 2023). Notably, only four genera—
Methylocella, *Methyacidimicrobium*, *Methylacidiphilum*, and *Methanomirabilis*—are
 capable of carbon fixation via the Calvin-Benson-Bassham (CBB) cycle (Fenibo et al.,
 135 2023; Op den Camp et al., 2009). Among Actinobacterial methanotrophs, *Candidatus*
Mycobacterium methanotrophicum is classified with the *Mycobacterium* genus (van
 Spanning et al., 2022). Methanotrophs utilize two forms of methane monooxygenase
 (MMOs): soluble cytoplasmic monooxygenase (sMMO) and particulate membrane-
 bound monooxygenase (pMMO). The expression of these enzymes is regulated by
 140 copper (Cu) concentration (Hakemian and Rosenzweig, 2007).

3 Soil CH₄ oxidation in response to SO₄²⁻ addition

Sulfates, including SO₄²⁻ and sulfuric acid (H₂SO₄), enhance aerobic CH₄ oxidation
 within a range of 0–42% (Table 1), thus, we hypothesize that SO₄²⁻ may stimulate
 145 aerobic CH₄ oxidation. For example, in a temperate mixed deciduous woodland, the
 cumulative uptake of aerobic CH₄ oxidation was 25% higher in the experimental group
 with H₂SO₄ addition compared to the control group during the final quarter of the study
 period (Bradford et al., 2001b). Similar results were reported by Sitaula et al. (1995).
 In another study, King and Schell (1998) found that adding SO₄²⁻ (Na₂SO₄) increased
 150 aerobic CH₄ oxidation by 3% at a CH₄ concentration of 250 ppm compared to the
 control group, although this result was not statistically significant. The lack of
 significance may be attributed to the insufficient concentration gradient of Na₂SO₄ in

the experimental setup, which limited the ability to fully assess the effects of SO_4^{2-} on aerobic CH_4 oxidation. Therefore, we propose that the observed enhancement of aerobic CH_4 oxidation following H_2SO_4 addition is primarily due to the increase in SO_4^{2-} concentration.

The promotional effect of SO_4^{2-} on aerobic CH_4 oxidation is further supported by comparisons with other anions under similar cationic conditions. Benstead and King (2001) observed that HNO_3 exerted a stronger inhibitory effect on aerobic CH_4 oxidation under equivalent soil acidic conditions than H_2SO_4 . This finding is consistent with the results of Bradford et al. (2001a), who experimentally confirmed the inhibitory effect of nitrate (NO_3^-) on aerobic CH_4 oxidation (Dunfield and Knowles, 1995; Wang and Ineson, 2003). When H_2SO_4 and HNO_3 were added to the soil to achieve H^+ concentrations of 10 and 1 $\mu\text{mol H}^+$ per gram of fresh weight (gfw), respectively, both acids inhibited aerobic CH_4 oxidation to a similar extent. However, H_2SO_4 exhibited a lesser inhibitory effect than HNO_3 . We hypothesize that SO_4^{2-} may promote aerobic CH_4 oxidation, as evidenced by the findings of Benstead and King (2001) and Bradford et al. (2001a). Consequently, when H_2SO_4 and HNO_3 are added to the soil, resulting in equivalent acidic conditions, the inhibitory effect of H_2SO_4 is less pronounced than that of HNO_3 .

However, not all studies support the hypothesis that SO_4^{2-} promotes aerobic CH_4 oxidation. For instance, Bradford et al. (2001a) observed no significant difference in aerobic CH_4 oxidation between low (564 μM) and high (1408 μM) concentrations of H_2SO_4 compared to the control group. This discrepancy may be due to differences in H_2SO_4 concentration across studies. Similarly, Hu et al. (2018) reported no significant effect of SO_4^{2-} on aerobic CH_4 oxidation. Based on the available evidence, SO_4^{2-} promotes aerobic CH_4 oxidation within a range of 0–42%. Although the mechanisms by which SO_4^{2-} influences aerobic CH_4 oxidation are not yet fully understood, we have identified potential microscopic pathways through which SO_4^{2-} may affect this aerobic process by reviewing relevant literature.

4 Microscale pathways by which SO_4^{2-} addition influences aerobic CH_4

185 oxidation

At present, the impact of SO_4^{2-} on aerobic CH_4 oxidation is not fully understood, and its role in this process remains unclear, particularly regarding its potential enhancing effects. To address this knowledge gap, we conducted a literature review focusing on
190 studies involving the addition of SO_4^{2-} . Through this review, we have identified several potential microscopic pathways through which SO_4^{2-} may promote aerobic CH_4 oxidation. One possible pathway involves changes in methanotroph activity and community structure in response to SO_4^{2-} (Fig. 2 path d) (Bradford et al., 2001b; Sitaula et al., 1995). Alternatively, SO_4^{2-} may affect aerobic CH_4 oxidation by altering soil
195 physical properties (Fan et al., 2017), microbial substrates availability (Bjorneras et al., 2019; Palmer et al., 2013; Xu et al., 2017), and soil nutrition content (Islam, 2012) (Fig. 2).

First, the addition of SO_4^{2-} alters soil physical properties (Fig. 2 path a), i.e., particularly
200 by reducing soil pH (Fig. 2 ①). Soil acidification increases due to enhanced base cation leaching associated with SO_4^{2-} addition (Hu et al., 2013), leading to a decrease in the pH of forest soils (Fasth et al., 1991; Tie et al., 2020). The addition of H_2SO_4 has been shown to promote aerobic CH_4 oxidation by altering the activity or community structure of methanotrophs (Bradford et al., 2001b; Sitaula et al., 1995). However, in experiments
205 involving H_2SO_4 addition, it remains unclear whether the observed enhancement in aerobic CH_4 oxidation is primarily due to the decreased pH (Fig. 2 path e) or the increase in SO_4^{2-} concentration (Fig. 2 path d). Generally, CH_4 consumption is greater at higher pH conditions in forest soils (Brumme and Borken, 1999; Silver et al., 1999). Therefore, the reduction in soil pH caused by SO_4^{2-} addition may lead to a decrease in
210 aerobic CH_4 oxidation. However, in acidic soils, a decrease in pH has been shown to

increase aerobic CH₄ oxidation (Sitaula et al., 1995). Consequently, when evaluating the impact of SO₄²⁻ addition on aerobic CH₄ oxidation, it is essential to consider the initial soil pH (Fig. 2 path e), as methanotrophs exhibit different pH preferences in acidic and alkaline environments (Shukla et al., 2013).

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Second, SO₄²⁻ addition can alter the soil microbial substrate (Fig. 2 path b), particularly by decreasing soil di-O-alkyl C content (Fig. 2 ②) (Xu et al., 2017). In a subtropical forest, SO₄²⁻ addition has been shown to increase the activity of gram-negative bacteria in soil by reducing the litter di-O-alkyl carbon (di-O-alkyl C) (Fig. 2 ② and path g) (Xu et al., 2017). Di-O-alkyl C is a component of soil organic carbon (SOC). SOC degradation is accelerated when the percentage of di-O-alkyl C is high (Huang et al., 2021). Conversely, when the content of di-O-alkyl C is low, SOC degradation slows down, leading to a greater availability of substrates for microorganisms, including methanotrophs. Methanotrophs, which are gram-negative bacteria (Schimel and Gullledge, 1998), may exhibit increased activity in response to SO₄²⁻ addition. This enhancement of methanotrophs activity (Fig. 2 path h) can ultimately promote aerobic CH₄ oxidation (Fig. 2 path o).

Third, SO₄²⁻ can alter soil nutrition content (Fig. 2 path c), specifically increasing soil Cu availability (Fig. 2 ③) (Islam, 2012), phosphorus (P) content (Fig. 2 ④) by enhancing acid phosphatase activity (Lv et al., 2014; Veraart et al., 2015), (aluminum ion) Al³⁺ toxicity (Fig. 2 ⑤) (Hu et al., 2013; Sogn and Abrahamsen, 1998), and NH₄⁺ absorption (Bradford et al., 2001b; Gullledge and Schimel, 1998; King and Schnell, 1998) (Fig. 2 ⑥). Cu is a crucial component in aerobic CH₄ oxidation processes, as it is utilized by methanotrophs in their molecular machinery, synthesized from metabolized CH₄ through the secretion of methanobactin into the environment. This process facilitates the oxidation of CH₄ to methanol (Dassama et al., 2016). It was anticipated that methanobactin secreted by methanotrophs during aerobic CH₄ oxidation would facilitate Cu uptake (Knapp et al., 2007); however, the specific

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240 mechanism by which methanobactin affects Cu uptake remains unclear (Fig. 2 path j). For methanotrophs capable of expressing both sMMO and pMMO, the expression of these enzymes is regulated by the availability of Cu, a phenomenon known as the classic "copper switch" (Stanley et al., 1983). Under Cu-deficient conditions, these methanotrophs express sMMO. However, as the ratio of Cu to biomass increases, the
245 expression of sMMO significantly decreases, while the expression of pMMO increases (Semrau et al., 2018). Notably, nearly all methanotrophs possess pMMO (Koo and Rosenzweig, 2021); therefore, increased Cu availability can enhance the expression of pMMO. Research indicates that Cu can serve as a promoter of aerobic CH₄ oxidation (Ho et al., 2013). Therefore, SO₄²⁻ addition may promote aerobic CH₄ oxidation by
250 increasing the availability of soil Cu, thereby enhancing the expression of pMMO (Fig. 2 path i and k).

A positive correlation has been found between P and aerobic CH₄ oxidation in soils (Veraart et al., 2015; Zhang et al., 2020). P can potentially enhance the activity of soil
255 methanotrophs (Fig. 2 path n) (Zhang et al., 2011), with an increase in soil P content achieved through the hydrolysis of organic compounds, including nucleic acids, phospholipids, and phosphate esters, by acid and alkaline phosphatases (Veraart et al., 2015). The addition of SO₄²⁻ accelerated acid phosphatase activity, thereby increasing soil P content (Lv et al., 2014). Therefore, we hypothesize that SO₄²⁻ may indirectly
260 enhance aerobic CH₄ oxidation through the augmentation of soil P content, subsequently promoting the activity of methanotrophs in the soil (Fig. 2 path n and o). It is well-established that Al³⁺ inhibits aerobic CH₄ oxidation (Tamai et al., 2007; Tamai et al., 2003). Additionally, soil acidification resulting from SO₄²⁻ addition has been shown to intensify the toxicity of Al³⁺ in forest soils (Fig. 2 ⑤) (Hu et al., 2013; Sogn
265 and Abrahamsen, 1998). The increase in Al³⁺ can inhibit the activity of methanotrophs (Nanba and King, 2000; Shukla et al., 2013) (Fig. 2 path l), thereby inhibiting aerobic CH₄ oxidation (Fig. 2 path m). Therefore, SO₄²⁻ addition may directly affect methanotrophs by enhancing the toxicity of Al³⁺ in the soil, thereby inhibiting aerobic CH₄ oxidation (Fig. 2 path o). When NH₄Cl and (NH₄)₂SO₄ were added to the soil at

the same molar concentration of NH_4^+ , the inhibitory effect of $(\text{NH}_4)_2\text{SO}_4$ on aerobic CH_4 oxidation was weaker than that of NH_4Cl (Adamsen and King, 1993; Bradford et al., 2001a; King and Schnell, 1998). NH_4^+ has been found to inhibit aerobic CH_4 oxidation (Bronson and Mosier, 1994; Dunfield and Knowles, 1995), and the key mechanism is the competition between CH_4 and NH_4^+ for the same MMO enzyme (Gulledge et al., 2004). Due to the similar molecular structures of CH_4 and NH_4^+ , MMO can oxidize both CH_4 (to CH_3OH) and NH_4^+ (to NO_2^-). The inhibitory effect of NH_4Cl is greater than that of $(\text{NH}_4)_2\text{SO}_4$, as SO_4^{2-} may enhance the adsorption of NH_4^+ onto cation exchange sites in the soil (Bradford et al., 2001b; Gulledge and Schimel, 1998; King and Schnell, 1998) (Fig. 2 ⑥). This reduced availability of NH_4^+ limits its ability to compete with methanotrophs for MMO enzymes, thereby increasing the availability of MMO (Fig. 2 path p), promoting aerobic CH_4 oxidation (Fig. 2 path k), and further intensifying the inhibitory effect of NH_4Cl compared to $(\text{NH}_4)_2\text{SO}_4$. In conclusion, SO_4^{2-} served as a facilitator of aerobic CH_4 oxidation, mitigating the inhibitory effects of NH_4^+ on this process.

5 Conclusions

SO_4^{2-} plays a pivotal role in global acid deposition, with annual deposition rates ranging from $141.64 \pm 120.04 \text{ TgS a}^{-1} \text{ year}^{-1}$ (Gao et al., 2022). By synthesizing the available literature and exploring both its macroscopic effects and microscopic mechanisms, we investigated how SO_4^{2-} affects aerobic CH_4 oxidation. We observed that SO_4^{2-} enhances aerobic CH_4 oxidation by up to 0–42% on a macro scale. At the microscopic mechanism level, SO_4^{2-} can influence methanotrophs or MMO by modulating pH, di-O-alkyl C content, Cu availability, P content, Al^{3+} toxicity, and NH_4^+ absorption, thereby promoting or inhibiting aerobic CH_4 oxidation. Based on these findings, we hypothesize that SO_4^{2-} would promote aerobic CH_4 oxidation. If this hypothesis is validated in the future, it could provide significant benefits for CH_4 mitigation, particularly in the context of increasing global sulfur deposition. Therefore, future research in this field

should focus on investigating the response of aerobic CH₄ oxidation and its influencing factors under increasing SO₄²⁻ conditions, as well as clarifying the underlying microbial mechanisms.

Data availability

All raw data can be provided by the corresponding authors upon request.

Author contribution

Rui Su finished writing; Kexin Li, Nannan Wang, Fenghui Yuan, Yunjiang Zuo, Ying Sun, and Liyuan He gave constructive comments and revised the structure and content of the article; Xiaofeng Xu and Lihua Zhang reviewed and edited the manuscript.

Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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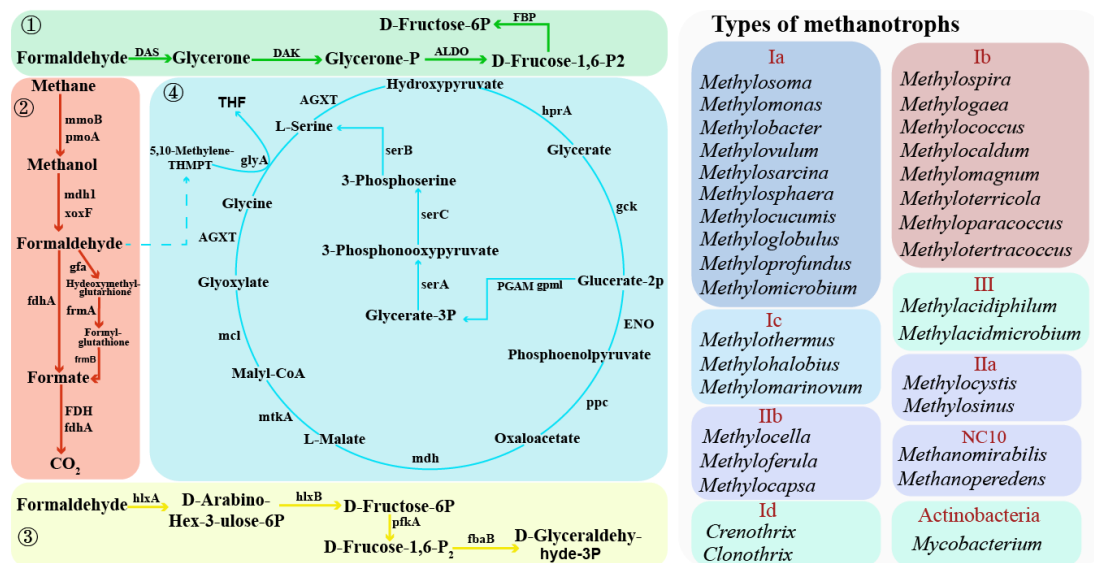


Figure 1: Diagram of the complete aerobic methane oxidation process, including methane assimilation and dissimilation, and classification of methanotrophs.

① Xylulose monophosphate pathway (XyMP pathway) of formaldehyde assimilation;
 ② CH₄ is oxidized to CO₂ under the sequential action of multiple enzymes; ③ Ribulose monophosphate pathway (RuMP pathway) of formaldehyde assimilation; ④ Serine pathway of formaldehyde assimilation.

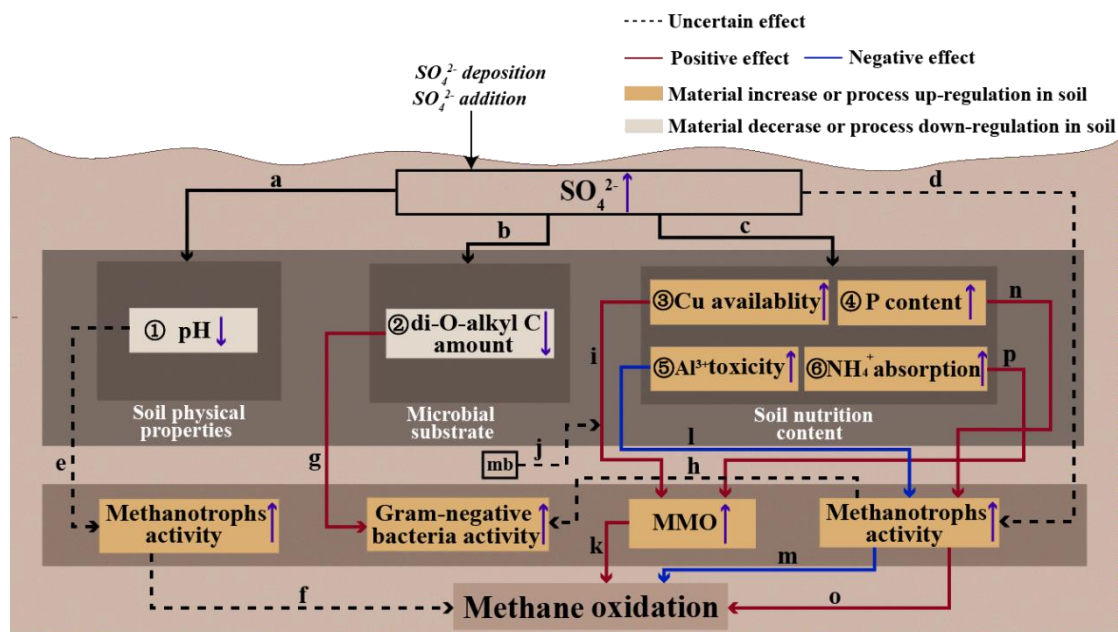


Figure 2. Conceptual diagram of the potential microscopic mechanisms by which sulfate influences aerobic methane oxidation in upland soil.

① SO_4^{2-} decreases soil pH (Fasth et al., 1991; Tie et al., 2020); ② SO_4^{2-} decreases soil di-O-alkyl C amount (Xu et al., 2017); ③ SO_4^{2-} increases soil Cu availability (Islam, 2012); ④ SO_4^{2-} increases soil P content by increasing soil acid phosphatase activity (Lv et al., 2014; Veraart et al., 2015); ⑤ SO_4^{2-} increases soil Al^{3+} toxicity (Hu et al., 2013; Sogn and Abrahamsen, 1998); ⑥ SO_4^{2-} increases NH_4^+ absorption (Bradford et al., 2001b; Gullledge and Schimel, 1998; King and Schnell, 1998); a. Changes in soil physical properties due to increased soil SO_4^{2-} content; b. Changes in soil microbial substrate due to increased soil SO_4^{2-} content; c. SO_4^{2-} may promote CH_4 oxidation; d. SO_4^{2-} affects the activity or community size of methanotrophs in soils (Bradford et al., 2001b; Sitaula et al., 1995); e. Decreased pH may inhibit or stimulate soil CH_4 oxidation (Sitaula et al., 1995); f. Decreased pH may inhibit or stimulate soil CH_4 oxidation (Sitaula et al., 1995); g. Decreased di-O-alkyl C amount increases soil gram-negative bacteria activity (Xu et al., 2017); h. The increased activity of gram-negative bacteria may stem from the enhanced activity of methanotrophs.; i. Elevated Cu availability stimulates soil aerobic CH_4 oxidation (Ho et al., 2013); j. mb (methanobactin) is expected to accelerate Cu uptake (Knapp et al., 2007); k. Enhanced MMO activity facilitates aerobic CH_4 oxidation. l. Elevated Al^{3+} toxicity inhibits soil methanotrophs activity (Nanba and King, 2000; Shukla et al., 2013); m. Decreased methanotrophs activity inhibits soil CH_4 oxidation. n. Elevated P content increases soil methanotrophs

activity (Zhang et al., 2011); o. Elevated methanotrophs activity stimulates soil CH₄ oxidation (Bradford et al., 2001b; Sitaula et al., 1995); p. The increased adsorption of NH₄⁺ enhances the availability of MMO to soil methanotrophs.

Study site	Sulfate concentration	CH ₄ concentration	Effect	Reference
Perridge Forest	H ₂ SO ₄ (50 Kg S ha ⁻¹)	Ambient air	25 % increased	Bradford et al., 2001b
Perridge Forest	H ₂ SO ₄ (5mM)	Ambient air	no effect	Bradford et al., 2001a
	(NH ₄) ₂ SO ₄ (5mM)	Ambient air	no effect	
Maine forest	Na ₂ SO ₄ 0.5µg S g ⁻¹ soil	250ppm	3% increased	King and Schell, 1998
Norway Scots Pine forest	H ₂ SO ₄ pH3	Ambient air	42% increased	Sitaula et al., 1995
Birch taiga	Na ₂ SO ₄ 2.8 µmol S g ⁻¹ soil	4ppm	no effect	Gulledge and Schimel, 1998
	K ₂ SO ₄ 2.8 µmol S g ⁻¹ soil	4ppm	no effect	

Table 1. Promotion effect of sulfates on methane oxidation in diverse upland soils.

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