Measurement of I-129 in environmental samples by ICP-CRI-QMS: possibilities and limitations

By K. Li, E. Vogel and U. Krähenbühl*

Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry, University of Bern, Freiestrasse 3, 3012 Bern, Switzerland

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Summary. ¹²⁹I is preconcentrated from environmental samples and its accessibility is addressed for inductively coupled plasma quadrupole mass spectrometer with collision/reaction interface (ICP-CRI-QMS). By applying oxygen as CRI gas through skimmer cone, the signal of the interfering ¹²⁹Xe from the impurity of plasma gas can be eliminated while the formation of ¹²⁷I¹H¹H⁺ can be partially removed. The improved ICP-QMS can be employed for investigation of ¹²⁹I in environmental samples with a $^{129}\text{I}/^{127}\text{I}$ ratio down to 10^{-7} . The detection capability was demonstrated by measuring ¹²⁹I in seaweed samples collected around the nuclear fuel reprocessing plant at La Hague. The abundant ¹²⁷I in the sample matrix causes a serious problem and degrades the detection capability of the instrument when the concentration of ¹²⁷I is larger than 10⁵ ng/g. Even combined with a sufficient pre-concentration procedure, ICP-QMS is not considered as a suitable technique for the analysis of ¹²⁹I in uncontaminated environmental samples with ${}^{129}I/{}^{127}I$ ratio of less than 10^{-7} .

Results are presented for seaweed samples collected around La Hague. In addition, time dependant I concentrations and ratios are given for colloids and water sampled from Lake Thun.

1. Introduction

In recent years, the long-lived radionuclide ¹²⁹I ($T_{1/2} = 1.57 \times 10^7$ a) in the environment has received considerable attention as a by-product from the nuclear industry. The concerns either in radiation protection [1–6] or in scientific research [4, 7–10] highlight the necessity of a suitable technique for ¹²⁹I analysis. The big challenge in the investigation of ¹²⁹I in the environment comes from the low concentration of ¹²⁹I in the environmental samples and its long half-life, which make it difficult to be determined either by mass spectrometry or by a radioactivity decay measurement. Radiochemical neutron activation analysis (RNAA) has been used for measuring ¹²⁹I in the environmental samples for many years [11]. However, this method requires the accessibility to a nuclear reactor. Different methods were developed for eliminating the need of such a facility and also for im-

proving the detection capability in broader context [11–16]. Up to date, accelerator mass spectrometry (AMS) is the most sensitive technique, which is capable to measure ¹²⁹I as low as 10^7 atoms in 1 mg of samples [14]. The pre-nuclear samples and samples with ¹²⁹I/¹²⁷I ratios lower than 10^{-10} , which can be found in the uncontaminated area, are best measured by AMS.

The inductively coupled plasma-mass spectrometry (ICP-MS) becomes attractive in this field since a large number of such instruments are in use and offer lower costs comparing with RNAA and AMS. ICP-MS has been applied in some studies to measure ¹²⁹I in biological materials, soil or water samples [17-24]. The detection thresholds of ¹²⁹I in these studies were in the range of 10^{-1} to 10^{-4} ng/g. It is well understood that the measurement of ¹²⁹I by ICP-MS suffers from the isobaric interference of ¹²⁹Xe⁺ due to xenon impurity in the plasma gas (*i.e.* Ar), and the polyatomic interference of ¹²⁷I¹H¹H⁺ due to the high abundant ¹²⁷I present in the samples. The virtual background at atomic mass unit (AMU) 129 due to ¹²⁹Xe impurity is normally accounted for few ng/g of ¹²⁹I, which are 10 to 100 times higher than the concentration of ¹²⁹I that can be expected from a real environmental sample. Thus the background subtraction reveals great problem of precision. There is about the same Xe impurity measured in Ar gas with different qualities from 99.996% to 99.999%. Several tests for removing Xe out of Ar gas by preferential adsorption failed [25]. For a complete separation of 129 Xe⁺ and 129 I⁺, a resolving power of 600 000 is required for the mass analyzer. This is also a challenge for a double focusing magnetic sector-field based high resolution MS system since most commercial high resolution systems offer a resolving power as high as 10000 [26]. On the other hand, the interference of ¹²⁷I¹H¹H⁺ is more like the inherited problem from the sample matrix and ionization process within the plasma source. Although there is no suggestion that ICP-MS can, or ever likely will rival the sensitivity achieved by RNAA or AMS, the speed and simplicity are the advantages of this method comparing with the other two techniques. A significant improvement could be expected by optimizing the methodology used for extraction of pure and sufficient iodine during samples preparation, or by development of the instrumentation.

In the context of risk mitigation strategy related to the radionuclides in the environment, numerous materials, including activated carbon, anion-exchange resin, natural or-

^{*}Author for correspondence

⁽E-mail: urs.kraehenbuehl@iac.unibe.ch).

ganic matter and silver impregnated material (e.g. activated carbon, zeolite, silica gel or alumina), etc., have been evaluated for removing radioactive iodine from the effluent or off-gas of the nuclear fuel reprocessing plant. Despite the problems related to the cost and the possible leaching of silver under acidic condition, silver impregnated materials show generally more efficient sequestration of iodine comparing with other materials [27-32]. Taking into account the efficiencies reported in the literature and the stability of AgI, which is the dominant product from the sequestration of iodine when excess amount of silver exist [29], silver impregnated materials may be a solution for the tasks in which preconcentration of iodine from large amount of natural water is critical for analysis of ¹²⁹I. Iodine fixed as AgI can be released into solution through reaction Eq. (1) given the solubility difference between AgI ($K_{sp} = 10^{-17}$) and Ag₂S $(K_{\rm sp} = 10^{-51})$. In this way, a measurement can be performed after isolating iodine from the bulk ions, which can be done with traditional solvent extraction.

$$2\operatorname{AgI}(s) + \operatorname{S}^{2-}(aq) \Leftrightarrow \operatorname{Ag}_2 S(s) + 2\operatorname{I}^{-}(aq) \tag{1}$$

On the other hand, applying the gas phase ion-molecule interaction to alter the ion population prior to the quadrupole mass analyzer has shown the possibility to improve the performance of the ICP-QMS for measuring trace elements or isotopes in presence of abundant stable isotopes or isobaric/polyatomic interference [23, 33, 34]. Utilizing the collision/reaction cell (CRC) technique, Izmer et al. [23] presented examples of iodine isotope ratio measurement of the contaminated sediments with $^{129}I/^{127}I$ at 10^{-7} level using mixture of oxygen and helium as reaction gases in hexapole CRC of an ICP-QMS system. Collision/reaction interface (CRI) is another way to utilizing the gas phase ion-molecule interaction for the purpose of elimination of interference in ICP-QMS measurement. The ion-molecule collision/reaction occurs in CRI system within the interface and the collision/reaction gas is injected directly into the plasma through the tips of the interface cones. The CRI system is currently only employed in Varian MS-820 system [35]. The capability of this technique on improving the performance of the ICP-QMS for ¹²⁹I measurement hasn't been reported.

The study presented here focus on the development of a procedure to make the ¹²⁹I accessible by ICP-MS measurement after being preconcentrated from natural water on silver impregnated material. The instrumentation was optimized to eliminate the interfering ¹²⁹Xe⁺ and ¹²⁷I¹H¹H⁺ on ¹²⁹I measurement by applying CRI technique in ICP-QMS system. This technique allows measuring isotopic ratios in seaweed samples from around La Hague, where as water and colloids from Lake Thun were analyzed using AMS technique.

2. Experiment

2.1 Chemicals

All the chemicals used, unless specially indicated, are analytical grade, bought from Merck or Sigma-Aldrich. The distilled water used (MQ water) was obtained by passing through MILLIPORE Quantum IX Ultrapure Ion-EM[™] Cartridge and 0.22 μ m filter. The ¹²⁷I standard solution was prepared by dissolving Woodward iodine (received from ETH, Zürich) in hot 0.1 M NaOH solution. The ¹²⁹I standard was received from Spiez Laboratory, with a concentration of 24.4 Bq/g in alkaline solution. The concentration of ¹²⁷I in the standard was measured by ICP-QMS after dilution. The gases were bought from Carbagas with quality of 99.998% for oxygen, 99.996% for argon and helium, 99.995% for ethane and 99.5% for hydrogen.

2.2 Instruments

Varian 820-MS was used to test the capability of CRI on improving the performance of the ICP-QMS for ¹²⁹I measurement. This instrument was also used without CRI to measure iodine, silver, zinc, mercury and iron during the experiment of preconcentration. γ -spectrometer (EG&G ORTEC Model CFC-SJ, HPGe Well Detector) was used to measure the activity of the spiked ¹²⁵I for testing the efficiency of the preconcentration. 0.5 MV AMS [36] was used to measure the ratio of ¹²⁹I/¹²⁷I in seaweed samples to compare with the results from ICP-CRI-QMS, as well as in lake water samples to check the limits of the application of ICP-CRI-QMS.

2.3 Preconcentration of iodine from natural water for ICP-CRI-QMS measurement

250 L of tap water were collected in a plastic tank. After being spiked with ¹²⁵I and acidified with HCl to pH =1, the water was pumped through a column of $Zn(Hg)_{1\%}$ $(\emptyset = 48 \text{ mm}, h = 370 \text{ mm}, M_{Zn} = 2.7 \text{ kg})$ and a column of Ag/AgCl coated glass beads ($\emptyset = 48 \text{ mm}, h = 9 \text{ mm},$ $M_{\rm Ag} = 8.6$ g) sequentially at a flow rate of ~ 14 mL/s. The effluent from the columns was collected for treatment (coprecipitation with $1000 \,\mu g/g$ Fe at pH = 7–8) before discharge. Five times 200 mL Na₂S (0.1 M) solution was used to wash I⁻ down from the glass beads with thorough mixing after adsorption. The total 1-liter of the washing solution was filtered (1 μ m, PTFE) to get rid of the suspended Ag₂S particles. After the filtration, 54 mL of H₂O₂ (30%) followed by 8.57 mL of HNO₃ (65%) were added to form I_2 . The extraction procedure using 100 mL of toluene followed by 10 mL of ascorbic acid (5%) was conducted twice to extract iodine into 20 mL ascorbic acid solution. After adding 2.3 mL of H_2O_2 (30%) followed by 0.14 mL of HNO₃ (65%), the extraction procedure using 2 mL of toluene followed by 1 mL of ascorbic acid (5%) was conducted twice again to concentrate the iodine finally into 2 mL of ascorbic acid (5%) solution.

2.4 Elimination of $^{129}Xe^+$ and $^{127}I^1H^1H^+$ by CRI

Different gases, including helium, hydrogen, oxygen and ethane, were tested. The injection of mixture of gases was realized through a T-valve. Helium and hydrogen were controlled respectively by the internal mass flow controller (MFC) in the Varian 820-MS. Oxygen or ethane, as alternative gas, was controlled by an external MFC (BROOKS 5850s 500 mL/min, N₂) combined with a regulator (BROOKS 5878) or a rotameter (150 mL/min air 15 °C, 760 mm Hg). Whenever introducing gas from the external line, 200 mL/min of helium was always applied to the sampler cone through internal MFC for maintaining the CRI working situation in the system-controlling program. The iodine solutions (10 ng/g of iodine as iodate in MQ water) were used during the tests regarding the efficiencies of different gases in removing interference of 129 Xe⁺ on 129 I⁺. The 127 I standard solutions diluted in 1% ascorbic acid were used for the tests regarding elimination of the interference of 127 I¹H¹H⁺ on 129 I⁺. The 129 I standard solutions diluted in 1% ascorbic acid with different amount of 127 I addition were used for the final tests on the detection limit.

2.5 Analysis of ¹²⁹I in the seaweed samples

The seaweed samples, which were collected at different distances from the nuclear fuel reprocessing plant at La Hague, were digested with HNO_3/H_2O_2 after lyophilization and grinding. ¹²⁹I was extracted from the digestate into toluene and back extracted into 1% ascorbic acid solution for ICP-CRI-QMS measurement. A small fraction of the digestate was used to prepare AgI for AMS measurement [25]. The results from two measurements were compared.

2.6 Analysis of ¹²⁹I in the Lake Thun

To address the possibility of applying ICP-CRI-QMS to the measurement of ¹²⁹I in the uncontaminated environmental samples, the distribution of ¹²⁹I in Lake Thun (+46°40'30.27" N, +7°44'32.73" E), which is in the middle of Europe and without direct influence from the two well noticed nuclear fuel reprocessing plants at Sellafield and La Hague, were investigated by AMS on a monthly time scale for 6 months. About 40 L of water samples form the lake were filtered through 0.45 μ m membrane filters to collect more than 10 mg particulate matter and 2 L of aqueous samples, respectively. The particles with filter were digested by microwave oven in TMAH (tetramethylammonium hydroxide) matrix, and then prepared for AMS measurement. The 2 L of aqueous samples were processed according to the procedure described by Szidat *et al.* [37].

3. Results and discussion

3.1 The feasibility of the preconcentration procedure

The final recovery of iodine in this pilot-scale experiment was 31% with 105-fold reduction of sample volume. The recovery agreed well with the estimated value, i.e. 31-40% according to the results from the lab tests for individual steps. This implies the whole procedure is reliable and practicable for handling large amount of water sample. The efficiency can be improved if a closed container with on-line pH adjustment is employed at the beginning of the setup instead of the open tank collector. During the whole experiment, the solution passed was equal to 400 bed volume (BV) of the reduction column, *i.e.* column of $Zn(Hg)_{1\%}$ and 1500 BV of the adsorption column, *i.e.* column of Ag/AgCl coated glass beads. The iodine content in the effluent was kept lower than the detection limit of 0.01 ng/g, while the original concentration of iodine in the water sample was 1.01 ng/g. Leaching of Zn ($\leq 1000 \,\mu$ g/g), Hg ($\leq 0.6 \,$ ng/g after 30 min) and Ag (< 1 μ g/g) were kept constant for long

time operation (5 h), indicating the stable performance of the columns. After co-precipitation with iron ions, the concentrations of Hg (0.0002 μ g/g), Zn (0.009 μ g/g) and Ag (0.0003 μ g/g) in the finally discarded liquid waste, all met the regulations for drinking water [38]. The concentration of iron (0.02 μ g/g) itself also met the regulation after the precipitation of the added 1 g/L of effluent.

3.2 Performance of CRI in elimination of interfering ¹²⁹Xe⁺ and IHH⁺

Charge transfer effectively eliminates the interference of 129 Xe⁺ in the measurement of 129 I⁺ by ICP-QMS. From the tested collision/reaction gases, i.e. H2, He, C2H6 and O2, the best results are obtained by ethane and oxygen. This is understood considering the respective ionization potentials; the charge transfer reaction vs. the noble gas is exothermic and fast for ethane and oxygen. The polyatomic interference IHH⁺ is most effectively reduced using He or O₂ in the collision reaction interface. Combining these two data sets the optimal flow rate of O_2 for the CRI was established. With a flow of 22 mL/min of O_2 the signal of 129 Xe⁺ was reduced to the level of electronic background where as the intensity of 129I+ reached about 1% of the original value. This result is valid as long as the saturation concentration of ¹²⁷I $(5 \times 10^6 \text{ ng/g})$ is not exceeded. This limit must be observed when a pre-concentration is applied for the measurement of ¹²⁹I in natural samples by ICP-MS. Similar results are obtained using a Perkin Elmer ELAN 6100 system with a DRC II.

3.3 Possibilities of ICP-CRI-QMS in application to the contaminated environmental samples

The concentrations of ¹²⁹I in the seaweed samples measured by ICP-CRI-QMS are listed in Table 1, together with the results from AMS for comparison. The concentrations of $^{129}\mathrm{I}$ in samples varied from $\sim 5\,\mathrm{ng/g}$ (dry) to less than 0.1 ng/g (dry), corresponding to ~ 10 Bq/kg (fresh) to less than 0.12 Bq/kg (fresh) given the measured water content of 69-80% in fresh seaweed. The decrease in concentration of ¹²⁹I from sample 1 to sample 3 indicates the decreased influence of releasing ¹²⁹I from the nuclear fuel reprocessing plant as a function of the increased distance from La Hague (Fig. 1). The calculated ratios of ${}^{129}I/{}^{127}I$ for sample 1 and 2 based on the concentrations of ¹²⁹I measured by ICP-CRI-QMS were in good agreement with the results from AMS measurement. The concentrations of ¹²⁷I were in the range of $5 \times 10^4 - 2 \times 10^5$ ng/g in the measuring solutions. Good correlation coefficient ($R^2 > 0.999$) was obtained for the samples with 3-point regression of standard addition, except for sample 3 ($R^2 > 0.99$), where the unspiked sample had almost the same intensity as 1% ascorbic acid blank solution. The background signal in 1% ascorbic acid solution is ~ 20 counts/s, which corresponds to a BEC of 0.08 ng/g of ¹²⁹I (Table 1). For the reliable quantification using standard addition method, a concentration of ¹²⁹I in the unspiked sample as high as double amount of the background is necessary. Thus, the value of 0.16 ng/g is chosen as the method quantification limit (two times BEC) using standard addition. Given the volume of the measuring

Fig. 1. Sampling sites for seaweed

(google map).

Table 1. Concentrations of ¹²⁷I and ¹²⁹I in the seaweed samples measured by ICP-CRI-QMS.

127I

 $\mu g/g$ (dry)

 908 ± 33

2	Agon Coutainville	75 km	234 ± 29	0.23 ± 0.02			
3	Granville	95 km	498 ± 9	< 0.09			
solutio	on, <i>i.e.</i> 2 mL, the yield	d of the to	tal procedure	, <i>i.e</i> .	land [
35%,	the amount of sample	used, <i>i.e.</i>	10 g, the lim	it of	of 2.8		
0.16 ng/g of ¹²⁹ I in the measuring solution corresponds to							
0.09 n	g/g of ¹²⁹ I in dry mate	rial, or app	roximate 18 n	g/kg	Alt		

Distance

to La Hague

15 km

3.4 Measurement of samples from Lake Thun

¹²⁹I in fresh material (80% water content).

Place of

Sampling

Siouville Hague

The water samples from Lake Thun (Fig. 2) measured by AMS shows the ratio of ${}^{129}I/{}^{127}I$ in the range of 10^{-8} either in aqueous phase or in solid phase. Suppose a preconcentration is conducted to get the reasonable amount of 129 I (0.1 ng/g) for a ICP-QMS measurement, the associated amount of ¹²⁷I would be on the range of 10^7 ng/g . Due to the problem of IHH⁺, ICP-CRI-QMS is incapable of measuring ¹²⁹I in such samples. The obtained ratios of ¹²⁹I/¹²⁷I in Lake Thun are listed in Table 2. The concentrations of ¹²⁹I in the water of Lake Thun are in the range of $1.9 \times 10^{-14} - 3.5 \times 10^{-14}$ g/L. These values are 20 to 40 times lower than that reported by Schnabel (2001) for the rain samples collected between 1994-1997 in Zürich, which had concentrations of 129 I in rang of $56 \times 10^{-14} - 71 \times 10^{-14}$ g/L. Comparing with the more recent water samples collected between 1998 and 2004 from some European lakes around Switzerland [39], which had the concentrations of ¹²⁹I in rang of 2.8×10^{-14} – 17×10^{-14} g/L, the results obtained in this study are at the lower end of this range.

 $\underset{^{129}\mathrm{I}/^{127}\mathrm{I}\times10^{-7}}{\text{AMS}}$

 53 ± 2.7

 9.0 ± 0.5

129 **I**

 $^{129}I/^{127}I \times 10^{-7}$

 58 ± 4.4

 9.8 ± 2.6

< 1.8

ICP-CRI-OMS

ng/g (dry)

 5.27 ± 0.19

Although the difference of ${}^{129}I/{}^{127}I$ ratios between the surface water and the 100 m depth water was within the uncertainty range, there was a trend that higher concentration of ¹²⁹I occurred in the 100 m depth samples in Lake Thun, both in water and in particles. Considering the situation of stratification in the lake since the last overturn in Feb 2006, the higher ratio of ${}^{129}I/{}^{127}I$ in deep water can be explained as the former high depositions of ¹²⁹I into the lake and/or by re-suspension of older colloids from the ground. This is supported by the historical data of gaseous ¹²⁹I released from La Hague reprocessing plant from 1990 to 2007, which shows clearly a higher load of ¹²⁹I in the atmosphere before 2000 [39]. The gaseous releases from the reprocessing plant at Sellafield are higher than that from La Hague in recent years [40]. However a meteorological transport model studied by Schnabel et al. [41] showed the trajectories connecting Sellafield and Switzerland were the minor events satisfying the precipitation criteria, comparing with that of La Hague. The particles, which are mostly brought by the tributary rivers, are expected to be the sink of the ¹²⁹I within the water column. They exhibit an accumulation effect on io-



Sample

1



Fig. 2. Map of Lake Thun showing the sampling location and distance to emission sites (map Schweizer Weltatlas).

Table 2. Time dependant distribution of ¹²⁷I and ¹²⁹I in Lake Thun during 2007.

	Phase	Depth	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Nov	Dec
¹²⁷ I	Particulate $(\times 10^{-6} \text{ g/g})$ Aqueous $(\times 10^{-7} \text{ g/L})$	0 m 100 m 0 m 100 m	- 8.77±0.15 11.0±0.26	7.58 ± 2.27 48.4 ± 8.8 3.79 ± 0.84 4.07 ± 0.83	$6.99 \pm 0.59 \\ 38.5 \pm 3.9 \\ 10.7 \pm 0.3 \\ 13.3 \pm 0.21$	8.26 ± 0.82 11.1 ± 0.6 7.39 ± 0.22 9.50 ± 0.20	16.1 ± 1.1 46.3 ± 1.4 8.01 ± 0.32 9.71 ± 0.34	$12.3 \pm 0.8 \\72.9 \pm 5.0 \\9.59 \pm 0.15 \\10.2 \pm 0.1$
¹²⁹ I	Aqueous $(\times 10^{-14} \text{ g/L})$	0 m 100 m	2.50 ± 0.25 3.46 ± 0.20	$\begin{array}{c} 2.18 \pm 0.14 \\ 2.85 \pm 0.17 \end{array}$	2.09 ± 0.13 3.02 ± 0.18	2.07 ± 0.14 3.00 ± 0.20	$\begin{array}{c} 1.98 \pm 0.13 \\ 2.83 \pm 0.18 \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{c} 2.18 \pm 0.15 \\ 2.96 \pm 0.19 \end{array}$
¹²⁹ I/ ¹²⁷ I	Particulate $(\times 10^{-8})$	0 m 100 m	-	-	$< 1.15 \\ 1.15 \pm 0.48$	< 1.53 1.53 ± 0.74	< 1.12 1.12 ± 0.47	-
	Aqueous $(\times 10^{-8})$	0 m 100 m	$\begin{array}{c} 2.81 \pm 0.21 \\ 3.08 \pm 0.25 \end{array}$	5.68 ± 2.07 6.89 ± 2.28	$\begin{array}{c} 1.92 \pm 0.17 \\ 2.24 \pm 0.17 \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{c} 2.75 \pm 0.27 \\ 3.10 \pm 0.27 \end{array}$	$2.43 \pm 0.27 \\ 2.87 \pm 0.30$	$\begin{array}{c} 2.24 \pm 0.19 \\ 2.85 \pm 0.23 \end{array}$

Note: The uncertainties of the values were calculated based on the 1σ measuring uncertainty from ICP-QMS and AMS, as well as the estimated uncertainty from weighing (type B) according to NIST (1994) [42].

dine. The lower ratio of ¹²⁹I/¹²⁷I in the particles comparing with that in the water can be explained by the high concentration of the inherent ¹²⁷I from their sediment origin, *i.e.* calcite sediment. Although numerous interactions take place between different compartments of the lake system towards the equilibrium distribution of ¹²⁹I and ¹²⁷I, the disequilibrium is always prevailing due to the slow rate of the isotopic exchange between iodide and iodate, as well as the mechanisms involved in the interconversions of iodine species.

4. Conclusions

By adaptation of silver impregnated material, it is possible to collect ¹²⁹I from large amount of natural water through an on-line setup and make ¹²⁹I accessible for the measurement by ICP-MS. The concerns regarding the harmful release of silver, zinc and mercury in the effluent from the setup can be solved by co-precipitation with iron hydroxide.

By applying oxygen as CRI gas through skimmer cone, the interfering 129 Xe⁺ can be eliminated, the formation of 127 I¹H¹H⁺ can be partially remedied. The ICP-CRI-QMS is

sufficient for investigation of $^{129}\mathrm{I}$ in the environmental samples with a $^{129}\mathrm{I}/^{127}\mathrm{I}$ ratio down to 10^{-7} as illustrated by seaweed samples.

It is the abundant ¹²⁷I in the sample matrix, instead of Xe from Ar gas, which causes a more serious problem and degrades the detection capability of the instrument when the concentration of ¹²⁷I is larger than 1×10^5 ng/g. Even combined with a sufficient preconcentration procedure, ICP-QMS is not considered as a suitable technique for the analysis of ¹²⁹I in uncontaminated environmental samples, such as the lake water in middle Europe, with ¹²⁹I/¹²⁷I ratio lower than 10^{-7} .

To further extend the measuring capability of ICP-MS one possible way is the combination of CRI technique with sector-field or time of flight mass analyzer taking advantage of the CRI in elimination of ¹²⁹Xe⁺ and the other two types of mass analyzer in better separation of ¹²⁹I from ¹²⁷I¹H¹H. However, the tolerance of the two types of mass analyzer needs to be tested in advance regarding the high population of ¹²⁷I¹H¹H⁺ ions.

The measured concentrations of ¹²⁹I for surface water of Lake Thun give results in the range of $2-3 \times 10^{-14}$ g/L. The

water samples collected in 100 m depth show values about 30% higher for this iodine isotope compared to water from the surface.

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