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| D:\Rinat\Rinat\доки\журнал\статьи\logo.jpg | efficient in-magnet 15N hyperpolarization induced by reversible exchange of parahydrogen with AN ir-based catalyst | | |
| Cite this: *INEOS OPEN*,  **2025**, *8 (1–3)*, XX–XX  DOI: 10.32931/ioXXXXx  *Received XX Month 20XX,*  *Accepted 20 January 2025*  http://ineosopen.org | | D. A. Markelov,\**a,b* A. S. Kiryutin,*a* I. D. Kosenko,*c* Zh. V. Matsulevich,*d* I. A. Godovikov,*c* and A. V. Yurkovskaya*a* | |
| a International Tomography Center, Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences, ul. Institutskaya 3A, Novosibirsk, 630090 Russia  b Novosibirsk State University, ul. Pirogova 1, Novosibirsk, 630090 Russia  c Nesmeyanov Institute of Organoelement Compounds, Russian Academy of Sciences, ul. Vavilova 28, str. 1, Moscow, 119334 Russia  d Nizhny Novgorod State Technical University, ul. Minina 24, Nizhny Novgorod, 603155 Russia | |
| Abstract  Nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) suffers from its low sensitivity which can be dramatically increased by the nuclear spin hyperpolarization. Signal amplification by reversible exchange (SABRE) is a hyperpolarization technique based on the rational usage of parahydrogen as a source of hyperpolarization. This work reports in-magnet 15N polarization (0.47%) of 3-methyl-[1,2,4]-selenadiazolo-[4,5-a]-pyridin-4-ium bromide (SDAP) and its 77Se satellites obtained by the SABRE with RF excitation of 1H and 15N nuclear spins. | | |  |
| **Key words:** heteronuclear NMR, spin hyperpolarization, parahydrogen, SABRE. | | | |

**Introduction**

In the majority of cases, NMR operates with the thermal ensemble of nuclear spins, which results in weak NMR signals. This occurs since thermal nuclear magnetization typically has a low value, as it is proportional to the population imbalance between the nuclear spin energy levels at equilibrium. Nuclear spin hyperpolarization is based on the preparation of the nuclear spin order which is far from equilibrium at a given temperature and therefore provides an efficient solution to the problem of improving the NMR sensitivity.

Parahydrogen-induced polarization (PHIP) [1] is a hyperpolarization technique which employs parahydrogen (pH2) as a non-equilibrium source of nuclear polarization. Parahydrogen itself does not contribute to the NMR signal, as it is a spin isomer of molecular hydrogen with the total nuclear spin of zero. However, if the symmetry between pH2 protons is broken, its spin order can be transferred into polarization of a target molecule. In the classical (hydrogenative) version of PHIP, a substrate with unsaturated bonds is hydrogenated by parahydrogen in the presence of a catalyst. This, in turn, results in a strong enhancement of the 1H NMR signals of the pH2-nascent protons in the target molecule. This polarization of protons can be transferred to other nuclei of the molecule [2].

In recent years, a non-hydrogenative version of PHIP has been actively developed, which is termed the signal amplification by reversible exchange (SABRE) [3]. In SABRE, parahydrogen is not permanently incorporated into a target molecule. Instead, parahydrogen and a substrate molecule form a transient polarization transfer complex at an Ir-based catalyst, as demonstrated in Fig. 1a.



**Figure 1.** Scheme of the SABRE polarization transfer in a high magnetic field. (**a**) Reversible exchange of parahydrogen and substrate molecules,15N-Sub, with Ir-Imes complex (left) and the structure of the substrate to-be-polarized, 3-methyl-[1,2,4]-selenadiazolo-[4,5-a]-pyridin-4-ium bromide (15N-SDAP) (right). (**b**) Upper line: an experimental protocol for the polarization transfer; lower line: (left) SABRE-INEPT pulse sequence with non-selective high-power RF-pulses, (right) DRF-SABRE pulse sequence with selective low-power CW pulses applied simultaneously in double resonance with respect to the interacting 1H and 15N nuclei in the complex.

The polarization transfer from parahydrogen to the substrate then occurs during their transient bonding to the complex. More precisely, it is coherently driven by a scalar J-coupling interaction of the nuclear spins in the polarization transfer complex. As the substrate participates in the reversible exchange, it acquires polarization in a continuous manner without a chemical modification. This makes SABRE a highly promising candidate for the hyperpolarization of nuclear spins in biomolecules. SABRE reveals its potential when applied to the biologically relevant heteronuclei with a spin of , *e.g*., 13C, 15N, *etc*. This is because these nuclei have long relaxation times and therefore are considered as reservoirs for the long-term storage of polarization [4]. Hyperpolarized heteronuclear spins provide unique possibilities for studying metabolic processes *in vivo* [5].

However, the heteronuclear SABRE polarization transfer occurs only if spin dynamics in the polarization transfer complex is correctly optimized. This, in turn, requires the usage of external polarizers: sophisticated devices providing optimal conditions for the polarization transfer. Typically, a polarizer contains multilayer magnetic shields compensating the magnetic field of the Earth and providing a zone with an ultralow magnetic field (<1 μT). Demand for the external polarizers to hyperpolarize heteronuclear spins remains a challenge for the common experimental implementation of SABRE. Radiofrequency (RF) excitation of nuclear spins allows for avoiding this limitation and enabling the performance of SABRE inside a high magnetic field of the NMR spectrometer [6]. The in-magnet SABRE hyperpolarization is complicated, because it requires a design of the RF excitation scheme and precise experimental optimization of the RF fields. For the in-magnet hyperpolarization, we used two different pulse sequences, as shown in Fig. 1b. The first pulse sequence is termed SABRE-INEPT (INEPT, insensitive nuclei enhanced by polarization transfer) [7], which is considered as a standard approach for the SABRE hyperpolarization. As an alternative approach for the in-magnet hyperpolarization, we used DRF-SABRE pulse sequence (DRF, double radiofrequency), which has been recently proposed by us [8]. In this work, we demonstrate the in-magnet SABRE hyperpolarization of 15N nuclei in 15N-labelled 3-methyl-[1,2,4]-selenadiazolo-[4,5-a]-pyridin-4-ium bromide (15N-SDAP), a compound belonging to the class of selenadiazoles which exhibit potential antimicrobial and antitumor activity [9]. To reveal the full potential of the in-magnet SABRE for biologically relevant molecules, we compare the efficiency of the hyperpolarization of 15N-SDAP obtained by the standard (SABRE-INEPT) and novel (DRF-SABRE) approaches.

Experimental section

We used [IrCl(COD)(IMes)] as a precatalyst for the polarization transfer complex (IMes = 1,3-bis(2,4,6-trimethylphenyl)imidazol-2-ylidene, COD = cyclooctadiene), 15N-SDAP as a substrate for hyperpolarization, and DMSO (dimethyl sulfoxide) as a stabilizing co-substrate [10]. The investigated sample consisted of 15N-SDAP (18 mM), DMSO (650 mM), and [IrCl(COD)(IMes)] (4 mM) dissolved in 600 μL of CD3OD. [IrCl(COD)(IMes)] was synthesized according to the standard procedure [11], 15N-SDAP was synthesized according to the procedure described elsewhere [12], where, at the final stage, 15N-labeled acetonitrile (98% Atom, Sigma 487864) was used. Methanol-d4 was purchased from Carl Roth, DMSO was purchased from Sigma-Aldrich. All experiments were conducted at a 400 MHz NMR spectrometer with a magnetic field of 9.4 T. For parahydrogen bubbling, we used an automated gas-flow system [13]. Parahydrogen bubbling pressure was equal to 4 atm. To determine the enhancement of the 15N NMR signal quantitively, we used the following formula

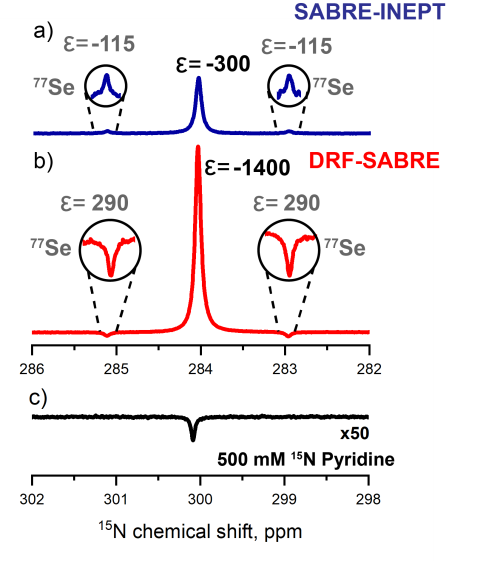
, (1)

where is the 15N signal enhancement, is the integral intensity of the hyperpolarized 15N NMR signal, is a concentration of the 15N substrate to-be-polarized, is the integral intensity of the 15N NMR signal of the thermal reference, is the concentration of the 15N substrate in the thermal reference sample.

Results and discussion

The first step of our experiments was the precatalyst activation [14]. It consisted in bubbling the sample containing the precatalyst with parahydrogen. During this process, an active polarization transfer complex was formed from [IrCl(COD)(IMes)], which was manifested in the appearance of signals in the hydride region of the 1H NMR spectrum. After this, the high-field SABRE pulse sequences can be applied to hyperpolarize the nuclear spins (see Fig. 1b). The protocol of the experiments consisted of the polarization transfer cycles from parahydrogen to the substrate repeated consequently *n* times (in our experiments *n* = 30). Each cycle consists of fast bubbling the sample with parahydrogen (within 0.5 s) followed by a time delay introduced to remove the bubbles from the sample (0.5 s), and RF excitation of the nuclear spins aimed at inducing the longitudinal component of the 15N polarization. This method of bubbling in a burst mode, on the one hand, allows for saturating the solution with fresh parahydrogen. On the other hand, it allows applying RF pulses in conditions of high magnetic field homogeneity. The 15N polarization of the substrate is generated in the SABRE complex and then transferred to the free substrate in bulk *via* the reversible chemical exchange. As the final step, the non-equilibrium longitudinal component of the substrate magnetization was detected by 90-pulse followed by the free induction decay (FID) recording. The optimal choice of the RF excitation scheme is the most important for the hyperpolarization. Thus, SABRE-INEPT pulse sequence generates 15N magnetization of the substrate *via* a certain combination of the 1H and 15N RF pulses separated by the time delays: τ and τ1. For the 15N polarization transfer, τ and τ1 have to be correctly adjusted (we used τ = 8.5 ms and τ1 = 10 ms). In turn, DRF-SABRE is based on the selective RF excitation of the complex-bound nuclei with weak continuous-wave (CW) 1H and 15N fields (we used the CW field amplitudes of 8 Hz). The 1H CW field selectively excites the hydride proton in its trans-position with respect to the complex-bound substrate, where the strongest *J*-coupling is present (see Fig. 1a). For efficient DRF-SABRE performance, the frequencies of the CW fields have to be accurately optimized (we used 1H CW with –23.72 ppm and 15N CW with 241.87 ppm frequencies).

Figure 2 demonstrates the single-scan 15N (1H decoupled) NMR spectra of 15N-SDAP hyperpolarized by the in-magnet SABRE pulse-sequences: (*a*) SABRE-INEPT, (*b*) DRF-SABRE. Figure 2c demonstrates the thermal signal of the reference sample, 500 mM of 15N-labelled pyridine. Enhancements, , of the hyperpolarized 15N NMR signals relative to the thermal reference signal were calculated using equation 1 and are demonstrated in each subplot. It should be noted that hyperpolarized 77Se satellites (7.6% of the natural abundance) with the splitting of 87 Hz are also observed in the 15N spectra. It is noteworthy that that DRF-SABRE () is 4.7 times more efficient than SABRE-INEPT () for the 15N hyperpolarization of 15N-SDAP and 2.5 times more efficient for the 15N hyperpolarization of its 77Se satellites ( and for DRF-SABRE and SABRE-INEPT respectively).



**Figure 2.** Hyperpolarized 15N (1H decoupled) spectra of 15N-SDAP (18 mM) obtained with two pulse sequences: SABRE-INEPT (**a**), DRF-SABRE (**b**). 15N NMR spectrum of 15N-pyridine (500 mM) in methanol-d4 at thermal equilibrium detected at 9.4 T (multiplied by the factor of 50 on the vertical axis) (**c**). This signal was used as a reference for the calculation of the NMR enhancement of the 15N signals, denoted by ε. The hyperpolarized 77Se satellites in (**a**) and (**b**) are shown enlarged in the circles above the corresponding signals. The temperature of the samples was reduced to 15 °C.

Thus, the highest value of the 15N signal enhancement for 15N-SDAP was obtained by the DRF-SABRE pulse sequence (, which corresponds to 0.47% of the 15N polarization). This is in good agreement with our recent work, where DRF-SABRE was demonstrated to be more efficient than other pulse sequences [8]. Such levels of heteronuclear polarization are comparable with the largest ones that can be potentially achieved by the high-field SABRE methods () [7, 8]. Moreover, in our work we demonstrated that DRF-SABRE can be exploited to hyperpolarize the nuclear spins in a complex spin systems containing several types of heteronuclei, in our case, 15N and 77Se, paving the road for the high-field hyperpolarization of a broader range of magnetic nuclear isotopes and molecules.

**Conclusions**

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Corresponding author

\* E-mail: d.markelov@tomo.nsc.ru (D. A. Markelov).

Electronic supplementary information

Electronic supplementary information (ESI) available online: the optimization data of the SABRE pulse sequences and 1H NMR spectra of the catalyst activation. For ESI, see DOI: 10.32931/ioXXXXx.

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