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2 Enhancement of zinc ion removal from water by physically-mixed particles of iron/iron sulfide

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Abstract

Zinc (Zn) removal by physically-mixed particles of zero-valent iron (Fe) and iron sulfide (FeS) was investigated as one technology for Zn removal from waste groundwater. The effects of the Fe/FeS mass ratio, including a single Fe and FeS particles, and pH on changes in the concentrations of Zn, Fe and S were examined by a batch test and column tests, and the mechanism of Zn elimination was discussed. Among all the mixing fractions of Fe and FeS, Zn was eliminated most effectively by 3Fe/7FeS (mass ratio of Fe/FeS =3/7). The Zn removal rate decreased in the order of 3Fe/7FeS, FeS and Fe, whereas the Fe concentration decreased in the order of Fe, FeS and 3Fe/7FeS. The S concentration of FeS was larger than that of 3Fe/7FeS. The Zn removal rate by physically-mixed 3Fe/7FeS particles was enhanced by a local cell reaction between the Fe and FeS particles. The electrons caused by Fe corrosion moved to the FeS surface and reduced the dissolved oxygen in the solution. Zn^{2+} , Fe^{2+} and OH^- ions in the solution were then coprecipitated on the particles as $\text{ZnFe}_2(\text{OH})_6$ and oxidized to ZnFe_2O_4 . Moreover, Zn^{2+} was sulfurized as ZnS by both the Fe/FeS mixture and the simple FeS particles. The Zn removal rate increased with increasing pH in the range from pH 3 to 7. From a kinetic analysis of Zn removal, the rate constant of anode (Fe)/cathode (FeS) reaction was almost the same as that of ZnS formation, and slightly larger than that of Fe alone.

Key words: Zero-valent iron, iron sulfide, zinc ion, zinc removal, groundwater treatment

1. Introduction

Many heavy metals in groundwater have a harmful impact on human health and the ecosystem due to their persistent toxicity. Although industrial plants are obliged to release effluents with heavy metal concentrations below effluent standards, contaminated water is occasionally released into groundwater when elimination and effluent monitoring of heavy metals are inadequate (Arao et al. 2010). Therefore, it is important to remediate groundwater contaminated by heavy metals (Hashim et al. 2011; Adeli et al. 2017; Dan'azumi and Bichi 2010; Inglezakis et al. 2003; Momodu and Anyakora 2010).

Zinc (Zn) metal is used in manufacturing hot-dip and electrogalvanized products, die-cast alloys, copper alloy products and so on, and was increasingly produced from a half century ago. Groundwater and soil have been contaminated by Zn-containing water discharged from industrial plants and mines (Kishimoto et al. 2018; Bhattacharya et al. 2006), which has been recognized as a serious environmental issue. Waste water from the plants of hot-dip and electrogalvanized products is especially contaminated by Zn alone (Ministry of the Environment, Government of Japan 2006). Zn is considered to be relatively nontoxic for human health (Fosmire 1990), but is toxic to fish and aqueous insects and plants (Iwasaki et al. 2009). In 2006, the Zn emission standard in Japan was decreased from 5 mg/L to 2 mg/L (Ministry of the Environment, Government of Japan 2006).

Various technologies for Zn removal from waste groundwater are available, including coagulation-flocculation (Kurniawan et al. 2006), ion exchange (Kurniawan 2006), adsorption (Kwon et al. 2005; Lu et al. 2007), ultrafiltration (Katsou et al. 2011) and electrodialysis (Kirkelund et al. 2010). Among these

treatment technologies, coagulating sedimentation is the most widely-used due to its simple equipment and operation. As a drawback of this technology, because amphoteric Zn has a narrow pH range of 9 to 10.5 for coagulation as zinc hydroxide, there is a danger of discharges exceeding the Zn effluent standard if operational conditions unintentionally deviate from this range (Inamoto 2006).

Zero-valent iron has been also applied to groundwater remediation (Stokes and Moller 1999; Dries et al. 2005; Rangsvik and Jekel 2005; Oh et al. 2007; Cundy et al. 2008; Kishimoto et al. 2011; Fu et al. 2014; Tosco et al. 2014; Lefevre et al. 2016; Kishimoto et al. 2018). Target heavy metals such as aluminum (Al), cadmium (Cd), nickel (Ni) and Zn are precipitated by using the difference in their ionization tendencies from Fe acting as a reductant, or are removed by iron coprecipitation and physical/chemical adsorption on the iron surface (Kishimoto et al. 2018; Nobactep 2010). As the Zn removal mechanism in water, Kishimoto et al. 2011 proposed that zero-valent iron is oxidized into ferric ion by dissolved oxygen, iron hydroxide is then precipitated on the iron surface by the ferric ion, and finally the Zn ion is absorbed on and/or coprecipitated with the ferric ion hydroxide.

Nakamaru et al. (2002; 2006) and Ono et al. (2005) found that a higher sulfur content in iron powder promoted trichloroethylene (TCE) degradation in water and soil because local electrodes were formed between iron (Fe: anode) and iron sulfide (FeS: cathode) partly precipitated on the Fe particle surface, and reduction of TCE was enhanced on the FeS cathode. Instead of the high-S content iron described above, FeS or iron disulfide (FeS₂) particles were physically mixed with Fe particles to materialize a local cell

reaction between the Fe and FeS particles, which are in mutual contact, and an increase in TCE degradation in water was confirmed by a batch test (Shiba et al. 2014) and column tests (Demiya et al. 2018). TCE degradation with originally synthesized Fe/FeS nanoparticles was also investigated by Kim et al. (2011; 2013; 2014). In research on removal of heavy metals from contaminated water, removal of arsenic (Min et al. 2017), cadmium (Su et al. 2015) and chromium (Gong et al. 2017) was accelerated by the high reactivity of S with the metal and the chemical stability of the formed metallic sulfide. However, little research has been done on Zn removal by Fe/FeS mixed particles. Therefore, in the present study, the effects of the Fe/FeS mass ratio and pH on the change in the Zn^{2+} concentration in water were investigated to obtain an optimal Fe/FeS composition, and a Zn elimination mechanism was proposed based on batch and column tests. Contribution of Fe-FeS, Fe and FeS to a Zn removal rate was calculated by a kinetic model.

2. Experimental

2.1 Sample preparation

100 mg/L Zn solution was prepared by using $Zn(NO_3)_2 \cdot 6H_2O$. Putting together 0.1 M HNO_3 or 0.1 M NaOH, the pH values in the solution were varied to 3, 5.6 and 7. Fe (255MC, JFE steel) and FeS (FUJIFILM Wako Pure Chemical) were used for the experiments. The mean diameter of Fe particles was 185 μm , whereas FeS was pulverized between 140 and 200 μm by a grinding mill (Wonder Blender,

OSAKA CHEMICAL). The density, ρ_i , and specific surface area, γ_i , of i ($=\text{Fe}$, FeS) are shown in Table 1. γ_{FeS} ($= 0.30 \text{ m}^2/\text{g}$) value was larger than γ_{Fe} ($= 0.17 \text{ m}^2/\text{g}$). The samples used for the experiments were composed of Fe , FeS , Fe/FeS (mixture of Fe and FeS) particles. The Fe/FeS particles sample was premixed for 10 h by a rotator (VMRG-5, AS ONE) to obtain a homogeneous mixture. The experimental temperature was about 298 K.

2.2 Experimental procedure

2.2.1 Batch test

A 2.3 g sample and 100 mg/L Zn solution were added to a 30 mL vial bottle without headspace and mixed with a rotator (VMRG-5, AS ONE) at a rotation speed of 100 rpm for 3 h. The Fe , FeS and Fe/FeS (mass ratio: 7/3, 5/5, 3/7, 1/9) samples were tested at a constant temperature of 298 K. The supernatant solution after filtration was diluted with a 0.1 M HNO_3 solution, and the Zn, Fe and S ion concentrations were measured by inductively coupled plasma atomic emission spectrometry (ICP-AES) (Visa-PRO, Seiko Instruments).

2.2.2 Column tests

Figure 1 shows a schematic diagram of the column-type experimental apparatus. A 10 g sample was packed in a glass column (inner diameter: 13.5 mm, height: 360 mm). The Fe , FeS and Fe/FeS (mass ratio: 3/7) samples were used in the experiments. A 100 mg/L Zn solution was supplied inside the column

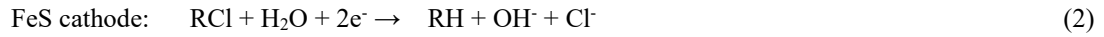
upward at a flow rate of 2.0 mL/min. The solution temperature was kept at 298 K by flowing tap water throughout the outer cylinder of the column. The starting time, t , of the experiment was defined as 0 when the solution began to reach the sampling site. The 0.2 mL treated solution was withdrawn at 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, 60, 90, 120 and 180 min and diluted with 0.1 M HNO₃, and the Zn, Fe and S ion concentrations were measured by the ICP-AES, as in the batch test. The dried sample after treatment was analyzed with an X-Ray diffractometer (XRD) (RINT-2100, Rigaku).

3. Results and discussion

3.1 Effect of mass ratio of Fe/FeS on Zn removal rate

The batch test was carried out to clarify the effect of the mass ratio of Fe to FeS on Zn removal and Fe dissolution in the solution, as shown in Fig. 2. The pH value was kept at 5.6 with no addition of 0.1 M HNO₃ or 0.1 M NaOH. The lowest Zn concentration was obtained at the mass ratio of Fe/FeS = 3/7 (3Fe/7FeS), and the lowest Fe concentration also occurred at around Fe/FeS of 3/7. Therefore, the mixture of Fe and FeS particles was studied under the 3Fe/7FeS condition. Shiba et al. (2014) indicated that the TCE degradation rate was highest under the 3Fe/7FeS condition, while the γ_{Fe} and γ_{FeS} values were 0.17 and 0.34 m²/g, respectively, because the local cell reaction between Fe (anode) and FeS (cathode) proceeded most efficiently in this condition, as follows:





Here, RCl is TCE (trichloroethylene: $\text{ClCH}=\text{CCl}_2$).

The specific surface areas of Fe ($= 0.16 \text{ m}^2/\text{g}$) and FeS ($=0.30 \text{ m}^2/\text{g}$,) in the present study were also similar to the TCE degradation condition in the above-mentioned study, suggesting that the Zn removal rate was also promoted most effectively.

3.2 Effect of pH on Zn removal rate for Fe, 3Fe/7FeS and FeS

The temporal changes in the Zn removal rate and Fe and S concentrations in the column tests with the Fe, 3Fe/7FeS and FeS samples were compared. The graphs for the tests with pH = 3, 5.6 and 7 are shown in Figs. 3, 4 and 5, respectively. Here, the Zn removal rate, R (%), was defined as shown in Eq. (3).

$$R = \frac{C_0 - C(t)}{C_0} \times 100 \quad (3)$$

where, R is the Zn removal rate (%), C_0 is the initial Zn^{2+} concentration (mg/L) and $C(t)$ is the Zn^{2+} concentration (mg/L) at time, t (h).

The Zn removal rate and Fe and S concentrations of all samples gradually decreased with time.

This suggests that the surface area for Zn removal and the number of Fe and S dissolution sites decreased.

The Zn removal rate decreased in the order of 3Fe/7FeS, FeS and Fe, whereas the Fe concentration

decreased in the order of Fe, FeS and 3Fe/7FeS. In addition, the S concentration of FeS was larger than

that of 3Fe/7FeS. The above tendencies applied to all figures of Figs. 3 to 5. The enhancement of the Zn removal rate resulted in higher consumption of Fe and S dissolved in the solution, and thereby caused the decrease in the Fe and S concentrations.

In all samples, the pH increase enhanced the Zn removal rate, as also reported by Kishimoto et al. (2011) and Rangsvik and Jekel (2005), and decreased the Fe and S concentrations. At pH = 7, the Zn removal rate of 3Fe/7FeS was maintained at almost 100 %, and even the simple Fe sample eliminated more than 80 % of the Zn^{2+} in the solution in this study. The enhancement of the Zn removal rate by the larger pH value is estimated to be due to Zn^{2+} precipitation, as discussed in the following section.

3.3 Mechanism of Zn removal

XRD analyses of the samples were carried out before/after the experiment. The XRD patterns of 3Fe/7FeS and FeS, and Fe at pH = 5.6 are shown in Fig. 6 (A) and Fig. 6 (B), respectively. $ZnFe_2O_4$, Fe, FeS and ZnS were detected after the treatment. Interestingly, Fe was found even in the FeS sample. Firstly, it is suggested that the $ZnFe_2O_4$ was formed by the following coprecipitation (Eq. (4)) (Tokumura and Kawase, 2013) and sequential oxidation reactions of $ZnFe_2(OH)_6$ (Eq. (5)).



Here, O_2 of Eq. (5) depends on the dissolved oxygen under an aerobic condition of the solution or the

sample drying procedure before the XRD measurement. Eq. (4) indicates that a larger OH^- (higher pH value) promotes $\text{ZnFe}_2(\text{OH})_6$ formation thermodynamically, which causes the enhancement of the Zn removal rate seen in Section 3.2.

The detected ZnS resulted from the following reaction (Eq. (6)), which indicates higher Zn removal rates by the 3Fe/7FeS and FeS samples.



The observed Fe in the FeS sample after the experiment is due to the S^{2-} dissolution reaction, as follows:



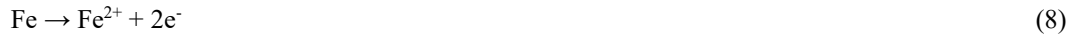
The electrons in Eq. (7) were generated by Fe dissolution ($\text{Fe} \rightarrow \text{Fe}^{2+}$) and were transferred from the Fe particles to the FeS particles.

The results of the XRD analyses of the samples at pH = 3 and 7 are shown in Fig. 7. Even under the higher acidity (pH = 3) and neutral (pH = 7) conditions, ZnFe_2O_4 was detected in all samples, and ZnS was detected in the 3FeS/7FeS and FeS samples after the treatment, as in Fig. 6. On the other hand, Fe was detected in the Fe sample at pH = 3 and 5.6, but was not observed in the 3Fe/7FeS and FeS samples at pH = 7 (neutrality). As shown in Figs. 3 to 5, the decreased S dissolution with increasing pH inhibited the reaction of Eq. (7) and the Fe formation on the FeS.

Based on the above facts, the Zn removal sites of the Fe/FeS particles are as shown schematically

in Fig. 8. Both electrons and Fe^{2+} are more easily generated by a local cell reaction between particles of Fe (anode) and FeS (cathode) (Shiba et al. 2014; Demiya et al. 2018). The electrons move from Fe to FeS particles and reduce the dissolved oxygen (O_2) to the hydroxyl ion (OH^-) in addition to the S^{2-} dissolution in Eq. (7). Zinc iron hydroxide ($\text{ZnFe}_2(\text{OH})_6$) is then formed by the chemical coprecipitation of Zn^{2+} , Fe^{2+} and OH^- , and subsequently, this compound is partially oxidized to zinc ferrite (ZnFe_2O_4), as indicated in the right and left sides of Fig. 8. The formation of $\text{ZnFe}_2(\text{OH})_6$ and ZnFe_2O_4 by simple Fe or FeS particles was also observed in Figs. 6 and 7, although a larger number of unreacted zinc ions remained in the solution in comparison with the Fe/FeS particles, as shown in Figs. 2 to 5. This is thought to be due to an incomplete local cell reaction. The above process is described by the following reactions:

Anode reaction (iron corrosion):



Cathode reaction (reduction of dissolved oxygen):



Coprecipitation of Zn^{2+} and Fe^{2+} :

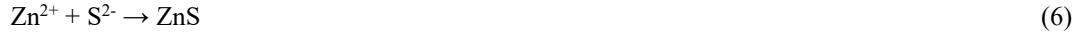


Oxidation of zinc-iron hydroxide (reduction of dissolved oxygen):



Zn^{2+} was sulfurized by S^{2-} as follows:

Sulfurization:



In this study, because the physically-mixed particles of 3Fe/7FeS (optimal combination of Fe and FeS) displayed more efficient Zn removal than Fe and FeS in all cases, the local cell reaction between Fe and FeS was the key factor for enhancement of the Zn removal rate. XPS (X-ray Photoelectron Spectrometry) is effective to analyze an elementary composition and chemical-bonding state just below some nanometers from a sample surface. As the next logical step, these results obtained from the XRD measurement must be confirmed by the XPS analysis.

3.4 Kinetic model of Zn removal rate

In this section, a kinetic model of Zn removal is indicated by using the results of batch test. The Zn removal occurred by the coprecipitation in Eq. (4) and sulfurization in Eq. (6) as seen in Fig. 8. From the batch test in Fig. 2, the most rapid Zn removal rate was obtained at Fe/FeS of 3/7 due to the most efficient Fe (anode) – FeS (cathode) coprecipitation reaction in addition to the Zn sulfurization. Thus, supposing that the Zn removal occurred at FeS surface in the whole range of Fe/FeS and additionally at Fe surface for Fe/FeS > 3/7 as well as Shiba et al. (2014) and Demiya et al. (2018), and the Zn removal rate was proportional to the Zn concentration, the following equations were given,

$$-\frac{dC(t)}{dt} = KC(t) \quad (7)$$

$$K = k_{\text{Fe-FeS}} a_{\text{FeS}} + k_{\text{FeS}} a_{\text{FeS}} + k_{\text{Fe}} a_{\text{Fe}} \quad (8)$$

where, K is the overall rate constant (h^{-1}), $k_{\text{Fe-FeS}}$, k_{FeS} and k_{Fe} are the rate constants (m/h) of Zn removal by anode-cathode reaction between Fe and FeS (coprecipitation), ZnS formation due to FeS dissolution (sulfurization), and additional anode-cathode reaction at Fe surface (coprecipitation), respectively, a_{FeS} and a_{Fe} are the effective surface area (m^2) of FeS and Fe particles, respectively.

At $\text{Fe/FeS} < 3/7$, a_{Fe} became 0, and Eq. (7) and a_{FeS} are expressed by Eqs. (9) and (10), respectively.

$$-\frac{dC(t)}{dt} = (k_{\text{Fe-FeS}} a_{\text{FeS}} + k_{\text{FeS}} a_{\text{FeS}}) C(t) \quad (9)$$

$$a_{\text{FeS}} = W_{\text{FeS}} \gamma_{\text{FeS}} / V \quad (10)$$

where, W_{FeS} is the mass (g) of FeS and V is the Zn solution volume (m^3).

At $\text{Fe/FeS} > 3/7$, the anode-cathode reaction occurs in Fe particle alone in addition to Fe-FeS, and the effective surface area, a_{Fe} , of Fe is given by the following equation.

$$a_{\text{Fe}} = W'_{\text{Fe}} \gamma_{\text{Fe}} / V \quad (11)$$

$$W'_{\text{Fe}} = W_{\text{Fe}} - [(\text{mass}\% \text{ Fe})/(\text{mass}\% \text{ FeS})]_{\text{peak}} W_{\text{FeS}} \quad (12)$$

where, W'_{Fe} is the mass (g) of Fe without contribution of the Fe (anode) – FeS (cathode) reaction, $[(\text{mass}\% \text{ Fe})/(\text{mass}\% \text{ FeS})]_{\text{peak}}$ is the mass ratio of Fe/FeS to obtain the maximum Zn removal rate ($=3/7$).

By substituting $a_{\text{FeS}} = 0$ in Eq. (8) and $W_{\text{FeS}}=0$ in Eq. (12) for the Fe particles alone, and $k_{\text{Fe-FeS}}=0$ in Eq. (9) for FeS particles alone, $k_{\text{Fe}}=8.77 \times 10^{-6} \text{ m/h}$ and $k_{\text{FeS}}=1.26 \times 10^{-5} \text{ m/h}$ were obtained from the batch test data, respectively. The $k_{\text{Fe-FeS}}$ values were calculated from Eqs. (9)-(12) by using these k_{Fe} and k_{FeS} .

The relationship between $k_{\text{Fe-FeS}}$ and mass ratio of Fe/FeS is shown in Fig. 9. The average $k_{\text{Fe-FeS}}$ value of Fe/FeS=7/3, 5/5 and 3/7 became 1.25×10^{-5} m/h. Compared between k_{Fe} , $k_{\text{Fe-FeS}}$ and k_{FeS} values, the anode-cathode reaction rate between Fe and FeS particles was almost same as the sulfurization of FeS, and slightly larger than the anode-cathode reaction rate within Fe particles. The magnitude of average $k_{\text{Fe-FeS}}$ ($=1.25 \times 10^{-5}$ m/h) for Zn removal in this study was 4.8 times as large as that for TCE dechlorination (Demiya et al. 2018). The effects of the operation parameters such as Zn concentration, particle diameters of Fe and FeS, respectively, and mass ratio of Fe/FeS on the Zn removal rate are predictable by using the above rate constant values of the batch test.

These k_i ($i=\text{Fe-FeS, Fe, FeS}$) values were also applicable to the reaction rate of column tests, however, the overall Zn removal rate decreases with time due to laminar flow with very slow velocity which makes it difficult to peel the adsorbent such as ZnFe_2O_4 and ZnS on the FeS and Fe particles. The Zn removal reaction model for the column test is needed to consider the peeling factors as well.

4. Conclusions

Zn removal from a solution by Fe, Fe/FeS and FeS particles was investigated in batch and column tests. Compared with simple Fe or FeS particles, the Zn removal rate by physically-mixed particles of 3Fe/7FeS (mass ratio of Fe/FeS =3/7) was enhanced due to a local cell reaction between the Fe and FeS. The electrons caused by Fe corrosion moved to the FeS surface and reduced the dissolved oxygen in the

252 solution. Zn^{2+} , Fe^{2+} and OH^- ions in the solution were then coprecipitated on the particle surface as
253 $\text{ZnFe}_2(\text{OH})_6$ and oxidized to ZnFe_2O_4 . Moreover, Zn^{2+} was sulfurized as ZnS by both the FeS of the
254 Fe/FeS mixture and the simple FeS particles. In this study, the Zn removal rate increased with increasing
255 pH in the range of pH 3 to 7.

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349 Figures and Table captions

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351 Fig. 1 Schematic diagram of column equipment

352 Fig. 2 Effect of Fe/FeS mass ratio on Zn and Fe concentrations (batch test, pH=5.6)

353 Fig. 3 Comparison of temporal change in Zn removal rate and Fe and S concentrations between iron-based

354 samples (column test, pH=3)

355 Fig. 4 Comparison of temporal change in Zn removal rate and Fe and S concentrations between iron-based

356 samples (column test, pH=5.6)

357 Fig. 5 Comparison of temporal change in Zn removal rate and Fe and S concentrations between iron-based

358 samples (column test, pH=7)

359 Fig. 6 X-ray diffraction patterns of 3Fe/7FeS, FeS and Fe samples before/after column test (pH=5.6).

360 Fig. 7 X-ray diffraction patterns of 3Fe/7FeS, FeS and Fe samples after column test (pH=3, 7).

361 Fig. 8 Schematic diagram of Zn removal sites of Fe/FeS particles.

362 Fig. 9 Relationship between rate constant of Zn removal by coprecipitation and mass ratio of Fe/FeS.

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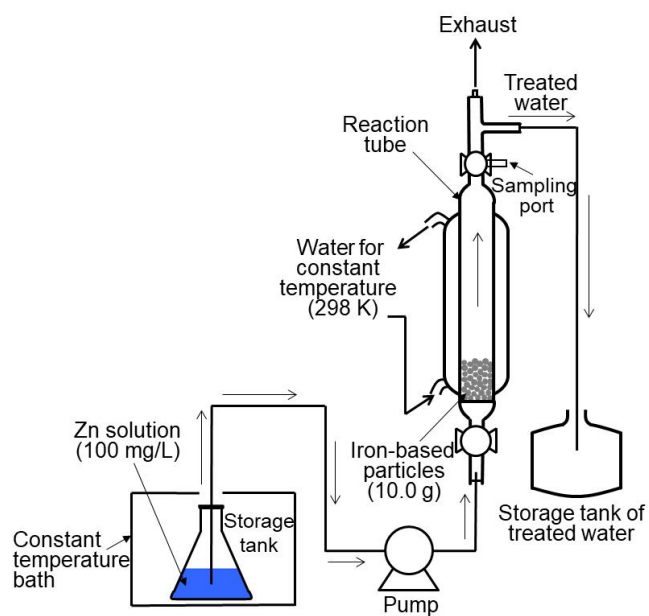
364 Table 1 Particle density and specific surface area of Fe and FeS

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Fig. 1 Schematic diagram of column equipment

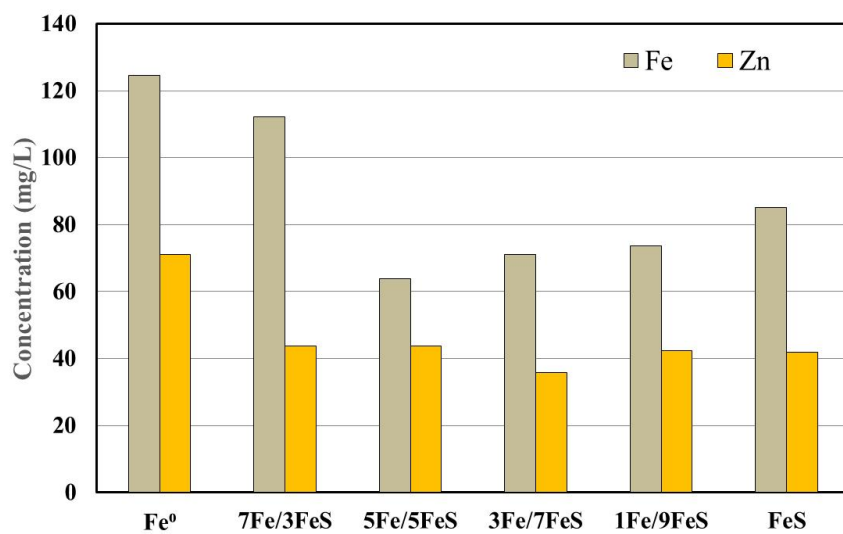
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Fig. 2 Effect of Fe/FeS mass ratio on Zn and Fe concentrations (batch test, pH=5.6)

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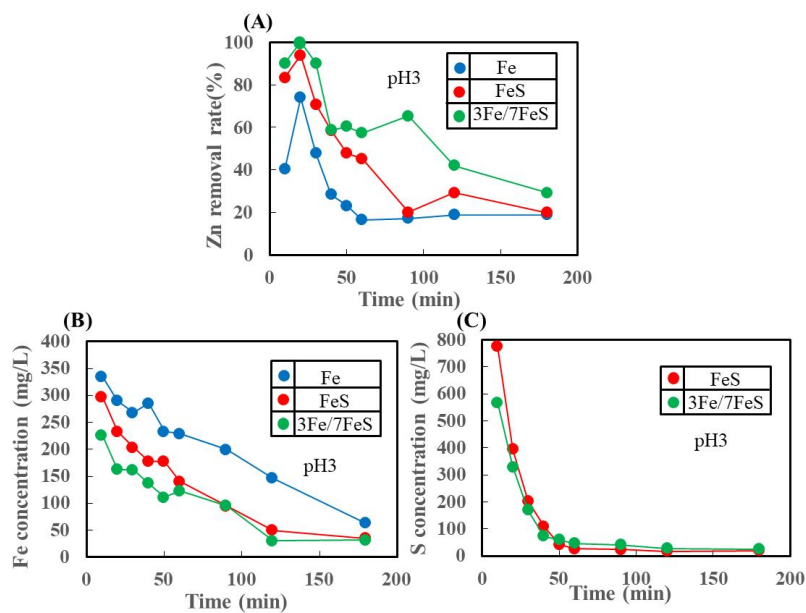


Fig. 3 Comparison of temporal change in Zn removal rate, and Fe and S concentrations between iron-based samples (column test, pH=3)

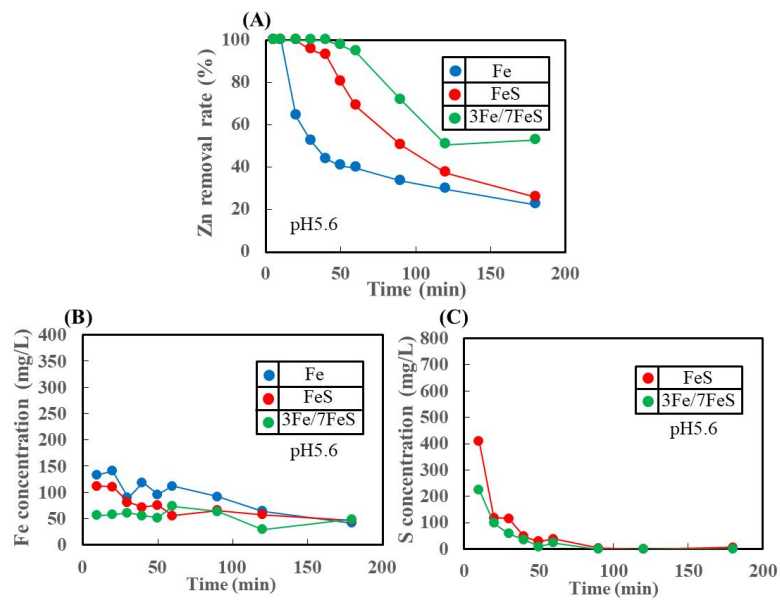


Fig. 4 Comparison of temporal change in Zn removal rate, and Fe and S concentrations between iron-based samples (column test, pH=5.6)

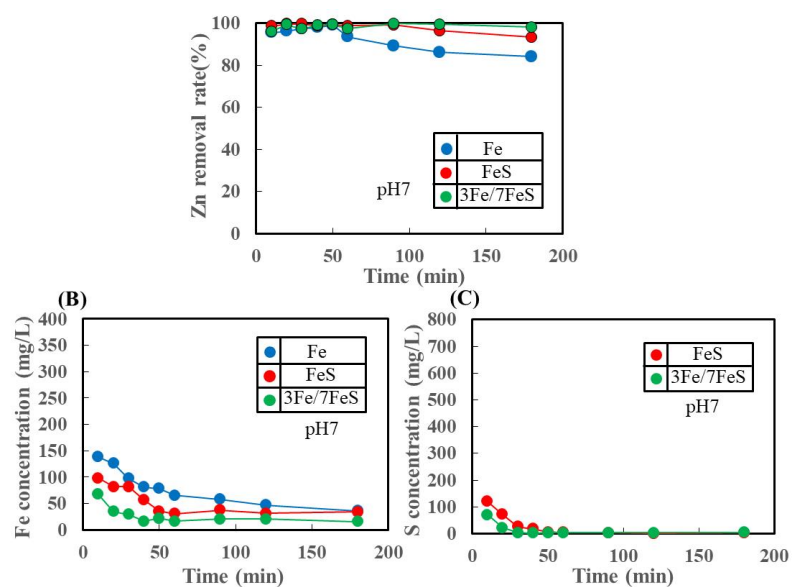


Fig. 5 Comparison of temporal change in Zn removal rate, and Fe and S concentrations between iron-based samples (column test, pH=7)

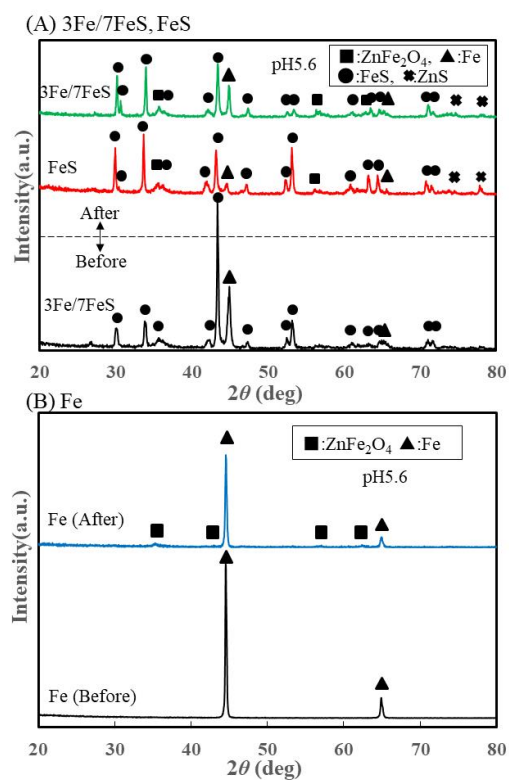


Fig. 6 X-ray diffraction patterns of 3Fe/7FeS, FeS and Fe samples before/after column test (pH=5.6).

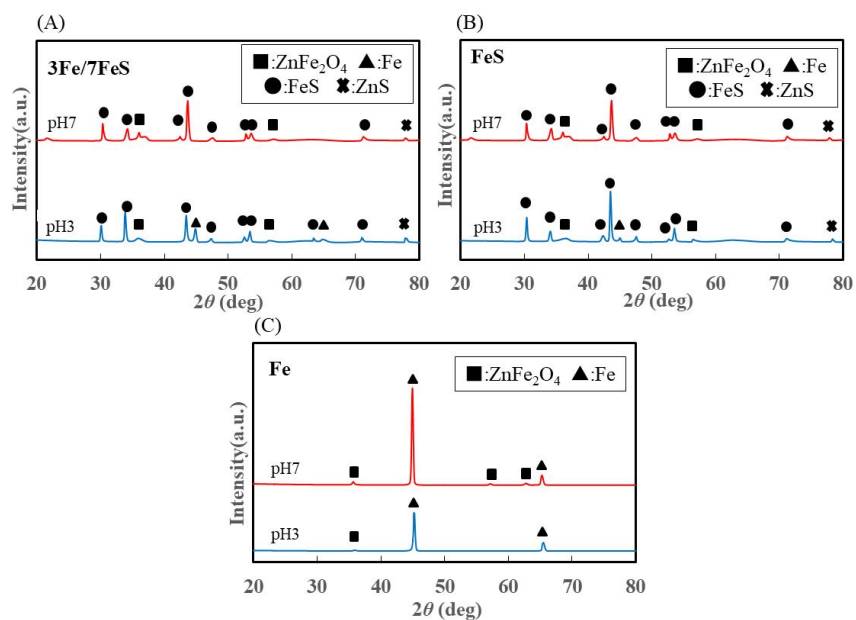


Fig. 7 X-ray diffraction patterns of 3Fe/7FeS, FeS and Fe samples after column test (pH=3, 7).

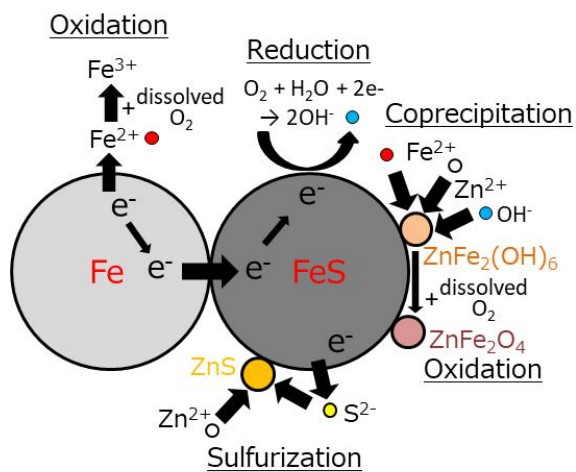


Fig. 8 Schematic diagram of Zn removal sites of Fe/FeS particles.

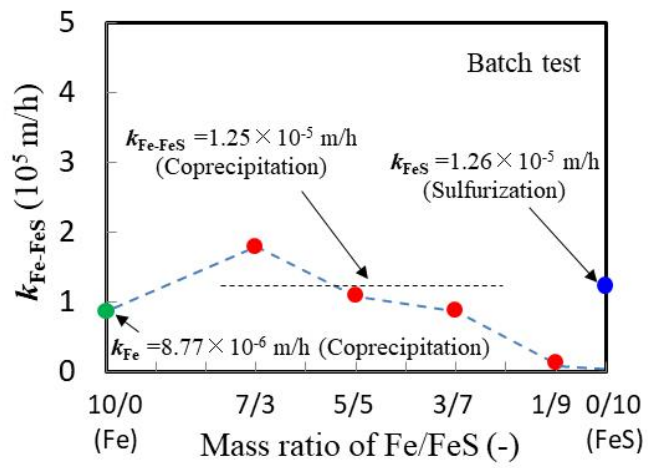


Fig. 9 Relationship between rate constant of Zn removal by coprecipitation and mass ratio of Fe/FeS.

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Table 1 Particle density and specific surface area of Fe and FeS

	Density (kg/m ³)	Specific surface area (m ² /g)
Fe	7.87x10 ³	0.160
FeS	4.85x10 ³	0.304

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