

Pyrrole Functionalization

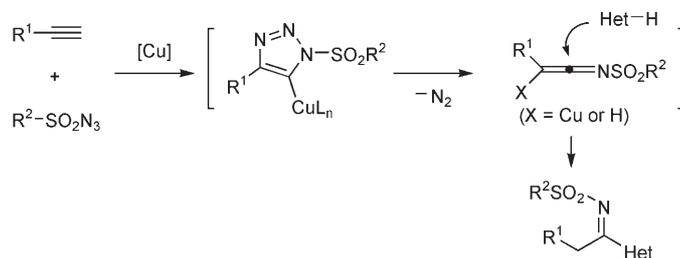
Room Temperature Copper-Catalyzed 2-Functionalization of Pyrrole Rings by a Three-Component Coupling Reaction**

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Dedicated to Professor Sang Chul Shim

The efficient construction of a C–C bond is an important process in modern synthetic chemistry.^[1] In particular, the functionalization of heterocycles such as pyrrole units, which have utility in organic synthesis and medicinal chemistry,^[2] relies on the C–C bond forming strategies. A wide range of synthetic strategies involving Friedel–Crafts reactions have been devised.^[3]

Recently, we developed a Cu-catalyzed three-component coupling reaction of terminal alkynes and sulfonyl azides with amines, alcohols, or water to afford amidines, imidates, and amides, respectively.^[4] The reaction was versatile with regard to the substrate scope and the synthetic applicability. The reaction is proposed to proceed through a ketenimine intermediate, which is generated in situ from the triazole cycloadduct upon release of N₂ gas.^[5] Our ongoing work in this area led us to propose that the construction of a C–C bond would be feasible by employing aromatic heterocycles in our multicomponent protocol (Scheme 1).^[6]



Scheme 1. Proposed route to substituted aromatic heterocycles by using the three-component reaction.

At the outset of these studies we treated a mixture of phenylacetylene (1.2 equiv), *p*-toluenesulfonyl azide, and triethylamine (1.2 equiv) in chloroform with indole (3.0 equiv). However, no reaction was observed in the

presence of a copper catalyst (Table 1, entry 1). The same result was obtained with an *N*-methylindole derivative (Table 1, entry 2).^[7] In contrast, when we employed a pyrrole unit as the heterocyclic substrate, the reaction proceeded to afford the anticipated product in good yield (78%) under mild conditions (Table 1, entry 3).^[8] The structure of the isolated pyrrole derivative was confirmed by X-ray crystallographic analysis.^[9]

Table 1: Survey of aromatic heterocycles in the Cu-catalyzed three-component coupling reaction.^[a]

| Entry | Heterocycles | (Het-H) | Yield [%] ^[b] |
|------------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 | | R ³ = H | < 1 |
| 2 | | Me | < 1 |
| 3 | | R ⁴ = H | 78 |
| 4 ^[c] | | H | 70 |
| 5 ^[d] | | H | 43 |
| 6 | | Me | 28 |
| 7 | | CH ₂ Ph | 20 |
| 8 | | <i>t</i> BuOC(O) | < 1 |

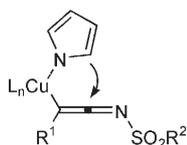
[a] Alkyne (0.6 mmol), sulfonyl azide (0.5 mmol), Et₃N (0.6 mmol), heterocycle (1.5 mmol), and CuCl (10 mol%) in chloroform (1.0 mL). [b] Yield was determined by ¹H NMR spectroscopy by using an internal standard (1,1,2,2-tetrachloroethane). [c] CuI (10 mol%) was employed as a catalyst. [d] Used 1.2 equiv of azide (to phenylacetylene).

Interestingly, the use of CuI as the catalyst, which was most successfully employed in our previous studies,^[4] resulted in a slightly lower product yield (Table 1, entry 4). The ratio of the three components was found to be important as it affected the product yields. In fact, whereas the product was obtained in 78% with a slight excess of alkyne (1.2 equiv) relative to sulfonyl azide (Table 1, entry 3), a notably lower yield was obtained with a reversed ratio of the two reactants (Table 1, entry 5). More interestingly, when *N*-substituted pyrrole derivatives were used, the reaction was sluggish and afforded poor yields compared to the parent pyrrole unit (Table 1, entries 6–8). The electronic variation of the *N*-substituents on the pyrrole ring did not alter the reactivity. Different types of heterocycles such as furan, thiophene, or imidazole rings do not participate in the reaction under the optimized conditions.^[8]

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Scheme 2. Proposed Cu-chelated ketenimine intermediate for accessing 2-functionalized pyrrole rings.

The results obtained above and the inability of the indole substrates participate in the reaction led us to propose that the pyrrole nitrogen atom coordinates to the copper center as the pyrrole attacks the ketenimine intermediate, thereby facilitating the progress of the reaction (Scheme 2). In fact, a similar chelation assisted pathway was recently proposed by Baran et al. in the addition of a pyrrole unit to the α -carbon of enolizable carbonyl compounds (e.g. ketones, esters, amides, lactones, or lactams) in the presence of a stoichiometric Cu^{II} species.^[10] However, the possibility that the unbound pyrrole unit (no coordination to copper) directly attacks the ketenimine intermediate cannot be ruled out at the moment.

The substrate scope of the present three-component coupling reaction with the parent pyrrole substrate was investigated next (Table 2). A wide range of 1-alkynes and sulfonyl azides readily participated in the reaction with the pyrrole reactant at ambient temperatures. Reactions with either aromatic or aliphatic alkynes were complete within a few hours irrespective of their electronic or steric variations (Table 2, entries 1–5).

The presence of various functional groups such as halides, conjugated double bonds, or alkoxy moieties did not inhibit the catalytic reactions (Table 2, entries 6, 7, and 8, respectively). Notably, the Boc-protected (Boc = *tert*-butylcarboxy)-amino group was also tolerated (Table 2, entry 9).

A reaction employing an optically active unprotected propargyl alcohol furnished an interesting product, 2-(1-imino-3-hydroxy)-pyrrole, in a respectable yield with complete retention of the stereochemistry at the stereogenic center (Table 2, entry 10). Such compounds can be versatile in that they are attractive precursors for the formation of 2-(1,3-aminohydroxyl)pyrroles by undergoing selective reduction of the sulfonylimino group.^[11]

The scope of the sulfonyl azides was also examined and revealed that azido compounds such as 4-acetamido benzenesulfonyl- or methanesulfonyl azide can be used. In each case, satisfactory product yields were obtained from the catalytic reactions (see the Supporting Information for details).

Next we employed pyrrole derivatives, bearing various substituents, as reactants under the optimized conditions and found that the reactions proceeded smoothly (Table 3). Pyrrole rings substituted at the 2-position or at both the 2- and 4-positions were viable components (Table 3, entries 1–2), and the reaction of a 3-substituted pyrrole substrate afforded a product bearing the sulfoniminoalkyl moiety at the 2-position with excellent selectivity (Table 3, entry 3). When 2,2'-bispyrrole (**1a**) was subjected to the reaction conditions a monosubstituted product **2d** was provided in good yield (Table 3, entry 4).^[12] Remarkably, we found that the progress of the reaction can be controlled by the stoichiometry of reactants. For example, with 2,2'-dipyrrolomethane (**1b**) either the monosubstituted product **2e** or the disubstituted product **2f** could be obtained depending upon the number of

Table 2: 2-Functionalization of pyrrole rings by the Cu-catalyzed three-component coupling reaction.^[a]

| Entry | R ¹ | Product | R ² | Yield [%] ^[b] |
|------------------|----------------|---------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 | | | R ² = H | 78 |
| 2 | | | CF ₃ | 70 |
| 3 | | | CH ₃ | 71 |
| 4 | | | | 89 |
| 5 | | | | 85 |
| 6 | | | | 86 |
| 7 | | | | 75 |
| 8 ^[c] | | | | 77 |
| 9 | | | | 82 |
| 10 | | | | 54 ^[d] |

[a] Alkyne (0.6 mmol), sulfonyl azide (0.5 mmol), Et₃N (0.6 mmol), pyrrole (1.5 mmol), and CuCl (10 mol%) in chloroform (1.0 mL). [b] Yield of isolated product. [c] Run with alkyne (1.0 mmol for 8 h at the same temperature). [d] A mixture of inseparable stereoisomers (imino group) with a 4.3:1 ratio determined from ¹H NMR spectroscopy.

equivalents of alkyne and azide used (Table 3, entries 5 and 6, respectively). As a result, the disubstituted product **2g**, having two different sulfoniminoalkyl groups, could be obtained in excellent yield by a sequential reaction procedure (Table 3, entry 7). The bipyrrole or dipyrrolomethane derivatives obtained are potentially useful as synthetic building blocks in the areas of corrole or porphyrin chemistry.^[13]

An optically active propargylsilylether was used in the three-component coupling with subsequent hydrolysis to deliver a pyrrole derivative substituted with a 3-hydroxycarbonyl group [Eq. (1)].^[14] The stereochemistry of the

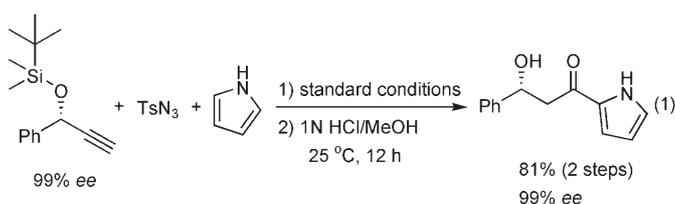


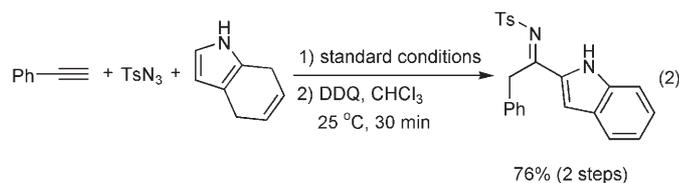
Table 3: 2-Functionalization of various pyrrole derivatives.

| Entry | Pyrrole | Product | Yield [%] ^[a] |
|------------------|-----------|---------|--------------------------|
| 1 | | | 2a 75 |
| 2 ^[b] | | | 2b 67 |
| 3 | | | 2c 71 |
| 4 ^[c] | | | 2d 79 |
| 5 ^[c] | | | 2e 80 |
| 6 ^[d] | 1b | | 2f 84 |
| 7 ^[e] | 2e | | 2g 91 |

[a] Yield of isolated product. [b] CuI (10 mol%) was used as a catalyst. [c] Used 1.0 equiv phenylacetylene and sulfonyl azide. [d] Used 2.1 equiv phenylacetylene and sulfonyl azide. [e] Used 1.0 equiv 1-hexyne (relative to **2e**).

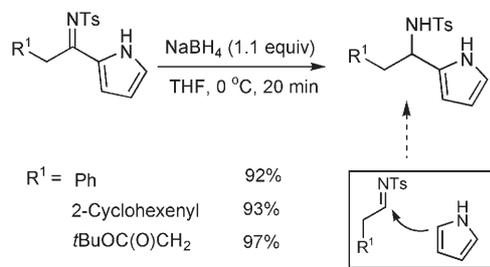
stereogenic center in the 1,3-difunctionalized pyrrole product was completely retained during the course of the transformations.

The synthetic utility of the present protocol was demonstrated by employing 4,7-dihydroindole as a substrate [Eq. (2)].^[15] The Cu-catalyzed three-component reaction between phenylacetylene, *p*-toluenesulfonyl azide, and 4,7-dihydroindole proceeded smoothly under the optimized conditions to afford the desired compound (82%). Aromatization of the 4,7-dihydroxyindole product bearing an imino



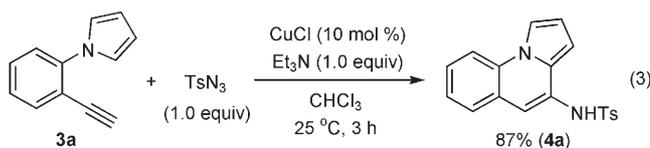
group was achieved by using 2,3-dichloro-5,6-dicyano-1,4-benzoquinone (DDQ) in chloroform to provide 2-substituted indole derivative (93%). Indole rings are usually functionalized at the 3-position under Friedel–Crafts conditions,^[16] whereas our approach may be developed as a complementary method to prepare 2-substituted indole compounds.^[3c,17]

After optimizing the protocol for generating 2-functionalized pyrroles we turned to the development of a tandem procedure for the synthesis of 2-(α -aminoalkyl)pyrrole derivatives.^[18] Such a procedure would be valuable as an efficient alternative to the conventional routes to aminoalkylated pyrrole derivatives by using *N*-sulfonyl imines. The known protocols sometimes involve double Friedel–Crafts reactions that give dipyrrolomethane as an undesired side product, which consequently lowers the yields of the desired products.^[19] With regard to the above consideration,^[20] the successful synthesis of 2-(α -aminoalkyl)pyrrole compounds from the hydride reduction of preformed 2-iminopyrroles would be noteworthy (Scheme 3). We successfully made three examples of the 2-(α -aminoalkyl)pyrrole derivatives and they were obtained in excellent yields under mild conditions.



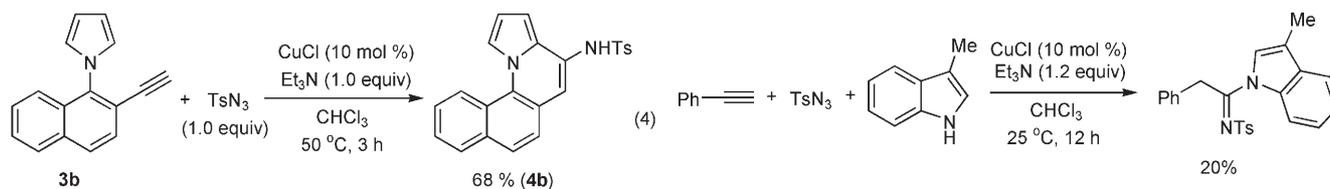
Scheme 3. Examples of the reduction of 2-iminopyrrole compounds.

We were also pleased to observe that the present protocol can be readily used in an intramolecular reaction [Eq. (3)].



For example, 1-(2-ethynylphenyl)pyrrole (**3a**) reacted with a sulfonyl azide in the presence of a CuCl catalyst to afford an isomeric pyrrolo[1,2-*a*]quinoline derivative **4a**^[21] in high yield under mild conditions. Furthermore, 1-(2-ethynylphenyl)pyrrole (**3b**) was transformed to the benzo[*h*]pyrrolo[1,2-*a*]quinoline derivative **4b** in reasonable yield at slightly higher temperatures. To the best of our knowledge, this represents the first preparative example for multiply functionalized pyrrolo[1,2-*a*]quinoline derivatives by the action of Cu catalyst.

In summary, we have developed a preparative protocol for 2-functionalized pyrroles by using the Cu-catalyzed three-component reactions between 1-alkynes, sulfonyl azides, and pyrrole derivatives. This new procedure for C–C bond



formation appears to offer high selectivity, mild conditions, and a wide substrate scope. A diverse range of studies on the biological activity of the compound library we have accessed is in progress.

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