## Homogeneous Catalysis

## Highly Enantioselective Reactions of α-Sulfonyl Carbanions of Trifluoromethyl Sulfones\*\*

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The formation of carbon-carbon bonds by using readily generated  $\alpha$ -sulfonyl carbanions<sup>[1]</sup> and their applications to the synthesis of natural products<sup>[2]</sup> have been extensively studied. Sulfones having chirality at the  $\alpha$  position are known to show biological activity, for example, dorzolamide has antiglaucoma activity,<sup>[3]</sup> but little attention has been paid to the enantioselective reaction of  $\alpha$ -sulforyl carbanions,<sup>[4]</sup> probably because of the difficulty in obtaining high enantioselectivity. However, there are a few precedents: the enantioselective reaction of a-lithio sulfones derived from an allyl sulfone using a chiral amino alcohol as a chiral ligand<sup>[4a]</sup> and by using chiral lithium amides.<sup>[4b]</sup> However, the enantioselectivities reported in these reports are unsatisfactory. Herein we report the first highly and catalytic enantioselective reaction of a-lithiated sulfones.<sup>[5]</sup>

We first attempted the enantioselective reaction of  $\alpha$ -carbanions of various benzyl sulfones, for example, methyl, *t*Bu, phenyl, pentafluorophenyl, and 2-pyridyl benzyl sulfones **1a–e**, respectively (Table 1). The benzyl sulfones were treated with *n*BuLi (1.2 equiv) and bis(oxazoline)-phenyl **3a** 



Entry	1	Chiral ligand	Product	Yield <sup>[a]</sup> [%]	d.r. <sup>b]</sup> syn:anti	e.r. <sup>[c]</sup> syn	e.r. <sup>[c]</sup> anti
1 <sup>[d]</sup>	1a	3 a	2 a	19 <sup>[e]</sup>	50:50	55:45	51:49
2 <sup>[d]</sup>	1Ь	3 a	2 b	71 <sup>[e]</sup>	64:36	65:35	61:39
3 <sup>[d]</sup>	1c	3 a	2c	83 <sup>[e]</sup>	68:32	66:34	71:29
4 <sup>[d]</sup>	1 d	3 a	2 d	72	86:14	62:38	57:43
5 <sup>[d]</sup>	le	3 a	2e	66 <sup>[e]</sup>	61:39	52:48	54:46
6 <sup>[d]</sup>	1 f	3 a	2 f	56(56 <sup>[e]</sup> )	>98:2	85:15	
7 <sup>[d]</sup>	1 f	3 b	2 f	55	>98:2	71:29	
8 <sup>[d]</sup>	1 f	3 c	2 f	58	>98:2	50:50	
<b>9</b> <sup>[d]</sup>	1 f	4	2 f	31	>98:2	51:49	
10 <sup>[f]</sup>	1 f	3 a	2 f	87	95:5	94:6	nd <sup>[]</sup>
11	1 f	3 a	2 f	84	93:7	87:13	nd
12	1 f	3 d	2 f	74	93:7	97:3	nd
13	1 f	3 e	2 f	74	92:8	97:3	nd
14	1 f	3 f	2 f	76	90:10	93:7	nd
15	1 f	3 g	2 f	87	96:4	97:3	nd
16 <sup>[g]</sup>	1 f	3 g	2 f	87	96:4	97:3	nd
17 <sup>[h]</sup>	1 f	3 g	2 f	44	95:5	95:5	nd

[a] Conversion yield determined by <sup>19</sup>F NMR analysis. [b] Determined by <sup>1</sup>H NMR analysis. [c] Determined by HPLC analysis on a chiral stationary phase. [d] The reaction was carried out at -78 °C with 125 mol% **3**. [e] Yield of isolated product. [f] **3a** (125 mol%) was used. [g] **3g** (10 mol%) was used. [h] **3g** (2 mol%) was used. [i] Not determined.

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- [\*\*] We thank Dr. Jon Bordner, Shin-ichi Sakemi, and Dr. Masami Nakane, Pfizer Inc., for X-ray crystallographic analysis. This work was partly supported by the Asahi Glass Foundation.
- Supporting information for this article is available on the WWW under http://www.angewandte.org or from the author.

(1.25 equiv) in toluene and subsequently with benzaldehyde. Trimethylsilyl chloride (TMSCl) was added for the trimethylsilylation of the formed alkoxide, thereby suppressing the retro-aldol-type reaction. Most of the reactions gave high yields of a diastereomeric mixture of the *syn* and *anti* isomers of the products **2a–e**, with each isomer having low enantio-selectivity. Trifluoromethyl sulfones are known to have unusual configurational stability.<sup>[6]</sup> Indeed, when benzyl trifluoromethyl sulfone **1f** was allowed to react with a stoichiometric amount of the bis(oxazoline)s at -78 °C under similar reaction conditions, the *syn-2* **f** was formed exclusively. This *syn* isomer was obtained in high enantiose-



lectivity with bis(oxazoline)-Ph 3a (Table 1, entry 6), whereas bis(oxazoline)-tBu 3b, -iPr 3c, and (-)-sparteine (4) gave lower enantioselectivity but exclusive formation of syn-2f (Table 1, entries 7–9). Other solvents such as cumene, Et<sub>2</sub>O, or THF did not improve the enantioselectivity. The best enantioselectivity was obtained when the reaction was carried out at -30 °C in toluene using **3d** (Table 1, entry 10).<sup>[7]</sup> Furthermore, we were pleased to find that the reaction of 1 f proceeded with a substoichiometric amount of 3a. Thus, the reaction of 1f was performed with 30 mol% of 3a at -30 °C to give syn-2 f as the major product in high yield and with high enantioselectivity (Table 1, entry 11). Several bis(oxazoline) derivatives also showed excellent results (Table 1, entries 12-15). Even 10 mol% of the dibenzyl bis(oxazoline) derivative **3g** worked well (Table 1, entry 16). Notably, 2 mol% of 3g was found to show even higher enantioselectivity (Table 1, entry 17). O'Brien and co-workers have reported an asymmetric deprotonation of a methylene proton  $\alpha$  to amino and oxy groups in the presence of a substoichiometric amount of (-)-sparteine to give products with high enantioselectivity, with an achiral ligand used to regenerate the BuLi/(-)-sparteine complex.<sup>[8]</sup> Interestingly, our enantioselective reaction proceeded in a catalytic manner without any additives.[9]

The reaction of 1 f with various aromatic aldehydes such as *p*-tolualdehyde, *p*-methoxybenzaldehyde, *p*-chlorobenzaldehyde, 2-naphthaldehyde, and 2-furaldehyde in the presence of 3g gave the products 5-9 with excellent diastereoselectivities and high enantioselectivities (Table 2, entries 1–6).

Table 2: Enantioselective reaction of trifluoromethyl sulfone 1 f with various aldehydes in the presence of 3 g.

	O O S Ph	1) //BULI (1.2 equiv) 3g (30 mol%) 2) RCHO (1.5 equiv) 3) TMSCI (1.1 equiv) toluene, -30 °C		OH _6м HCl _ Ph ↓		
	CF <sub>3</sub> 1f			THF, 0 °C Š 15 min 2f		O <sub>2</sub> CF <sub>3</sub> f, <b>5–9</b>
Entry	R	Product	Yield <sup>[a,b]</sup> [9	%] d.r. <sup>[c]</sup> sγ	en:anti e	e.r. <sup>[d]</sup> syn
1 <sup>[e]</sup>	Ph	2 f	74 (87)	96:4	ç	97:3
2	p-CH <sub>3</sub> C <sub>6</sub> H <sub>4</sub>	5	70 (84)	97:3	9	97:3
3	<i>p</i> -MeOC <sub>6</sub> H <sub>4</sub>	6	57 (91)	97:3	9	99:1
4	p-ClC <sub>6</sub> H <sub>4</sub>	7	66 (85)	90:10	9	92:8
5 <sup>[e]</sup>	2-naphthyl	8	54 (80)	94:6	9	98:2
6	2-furyl	9	35 (58)	93:7	9	95:5
<b>7</b> <sup>[f]</sup>	p-ClC <sub>6</sub> H <sub>4</sub>	7	16 (18) <sup>[g]</sup>	90:10	9	9:1

[a] Yield of isolated product. [b] Yield in parenthesis is the conversion yield. [c] Determined by <sup>1</sup>H NMR analysis. [d] Determined by HPLC analysis on a chiral stationary phase. [e] **3g** (10 mol%) was used. [f] *p*-ClC<sub>6</sub>H<sub>4</sub>CHO (0.2 equiv) was used. [g] Based on **1 f**.

 $\alpha$ -Fluorinated sulfur compounds can also serve as synthetic intermediates or precursors for the synthesis of fluorinated molecules<sup>[10]</sup> and bioactive compounds.<sup>[11]</sup> We further studied the preparation of optically active  $\alpha$ -fluorobenzyl sulfones. Fluorination of **1 f** with *N*-fluorobenzensulfonimide (NFSI) with 1.25 equivalents of **3 a** afforded (*R*)-**10** exclusively in moderate yield (Scheme 1).<sup>[12]</sup>



Scheme 1. Enantioselective fluorination of lithiated 1 f.

To define the enantiodetermining step in the enantioselective reaction of  $\alpha$ -lithiated sulfones, we studied the reaction of the racemic product *syn*-**6** (*rac-syn*-**6**) by treating it with 1.2 equivalents of *n*BuLi and a substoichiometric amount of **3g** to cause the retro-aldol-type reaction and then subsequent reaction with *p*-chlorobenzaldehyde (Scheme 2).



Scheme 2. Enantioselective reaction of the racemic carbanion.

It was found that *syn-***7** was obtained with high enantioselectivity. Furthermore, the reaction of lithiated **1f** with a deficient amount of benzaldehyde afforded **2f** with complete enantioselectivity (compare entries 4 and 7 in Table 2). These results show that the reaction of **1f** proceeds through a dynamic thermodynamic resolution pathway.<sup>[9,13]</sup> The highly enantio- and diastereoselective reaction of lithiated trifluoromethylsulfone can be ascribed to high configurational stability of the carbanion as a result of the large  $n-\sigma^*$  interaction.<sup>[14]</sup>

In summary, we have disclosed the first highly enantioselective reactions of carbanions  $\alpha$  to the sulfonyl group using bis(oxazoline) derivatives. The reaction of lithiated **1f** proceeds through a dynamic thermodynamic resolution pathway. Furthermore, the success of the catalytic reaction is surprising, considering that a stoichiometric amount of butyllithium is used. To the best of knowledge, this is the first report for the catalytic enantioselective reaction through a dynamic thermodynamic resolution. This novel reaction should provide insight for the development of enantioselective reactions of carbanions. A detailed study of the reaction mechanism is currently under investigation and will be reported in due course.

Received: May 17, 2007 Published online: August 31, 2007

**Keywords:** asymmetric synthesis · carbanions · enantioselectivity · homogeneous catalysis · sulfones

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