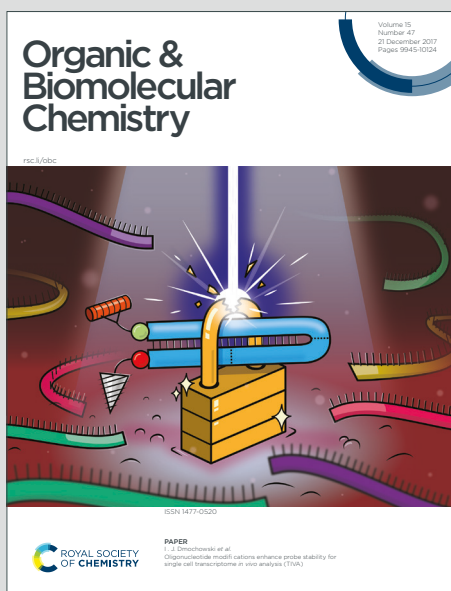


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One-pot Synthesis of 1,3,4-Oxadiazol-2(3H)-ones with CO₂ as C1 Synthon Promoted by Hypoiodite

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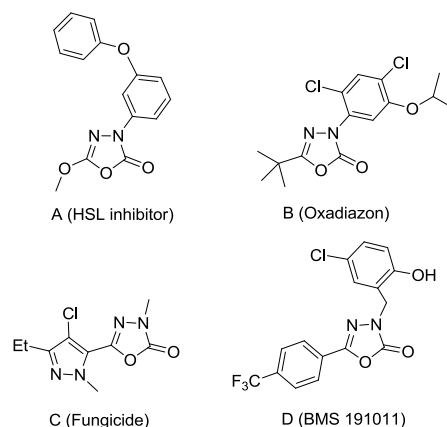
A convenient and efficient route has been developed to synthesize 1,3,4-oxadiazol-2(3H)-ones from CO₂, hydrazines and aryl or aliphatic aldehydes. Promoted by hypoiodite (IO⁻) generated in situ from KI and oxidant TBHP, the one-pot synthesis could proceed smoothly to afford the desired products in moderate to high yields. Mechanism studies revealed that nitrile imine was an important intermediate in this transformation. Notably, a commercial herbicide Oxadiazon could be successfully synthesized by this route.

Introduction

In 2010, Ishihara, Uyanik and co-workers reported that quaternary ammonium hypoiodite generated in situ from ammonium iodide (R₄NI) and oxidant hydrogen peroxide (H₂O₂) could induce enantioselective oxidative cycloetherification of ketophenols.¹ Afterwards, some researchers focused on the studies of the hypoiodite and have achieved many other interesting transformations promoted by the in situ generated hypoiodite from iodides and oxidant H₂O₂ or TBHP.² These non-radical catalytic processes of iodides attracted our attention as well.

Carbon dioxide as a green, abundant, cheap and renewable C1 synthon has been widely used to synthesize many kinds of value-added chemicals over the decades.³ For example, CO₂ could react with amines and electrophiles to generate carbamates,⁴ or react with unsaturated hydrocarbons^{5,6} or epoxides⁷ to form cyclic or chain carbonyl-containing products. Matsubara and co-workers revealed that CO₂ could also react with nitrile imines through 1,3-dipolar cycloaddition reactions to synthesize 1,3,4-oxadiazolin-2-ones.⁸

1,3,4-Oxadiazol-2(3H)-one core is an important scaffold in pharmaceutical chemistry.⁹ Some compounds bearing 1,3,4-oxadiazol-2(3H)-one skeleton have been proved to have good pharmaceutical activities and biological activities. For instance, some of substituted 1,3,4-oxadiazol-2(3H)-ones have been used as hormone-sensitive lipase (HSL) inhibitor (Scheme 1, A), herbicide (Oxadiazon) (Scheme 1, B), fungicide (Scheme 1, C), or opener of large-conductance Ca²⁺-activated potassium (Maxi-K) channels (Scheme 1, D).¹⁰

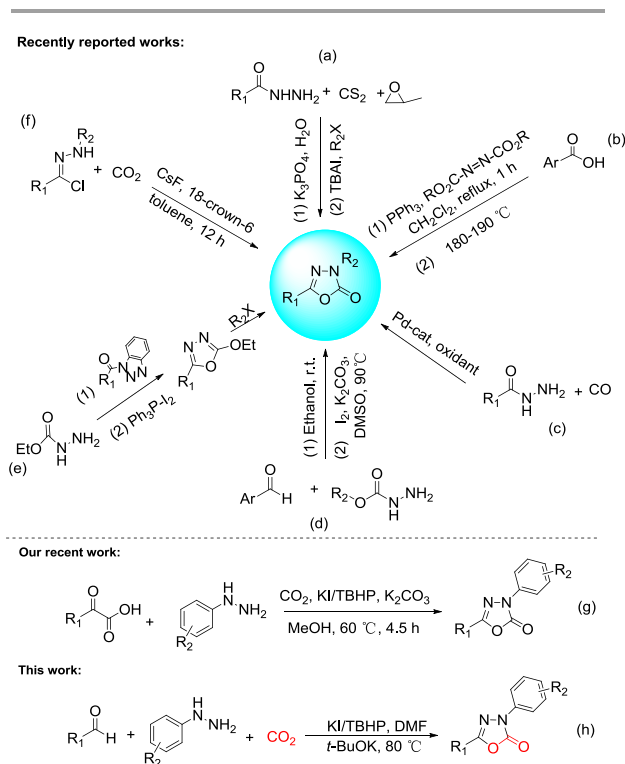


Scheme 1 Structures of some representative substituted 1,3,4-oxadiazol-2(3H)-ones.

Many methods have been developed for the synthesis of substituted 1,3,4-oxadiazol-2(3H)-ones.^{11–13} And recently, some new and efficient methods have been reported. As shown in Scheme 2a, 3,5-disubstitued-1,3,4-oxadiazole-2(3H)-ones could be obtained via four-component reactions of acylhydrazines with carbon disulfide, propylene oxide and organic halides.¹⁴ Under solvent-free conditions at 180 – 190 °C, the reactions of carboxylic acids with Mitsunobu reagents could generate substituted 1,3,4-oxadiazol-2(3H)-ones as well (Scheme 2b).¹⁵ Moreover, 1,3,4-oxadiazol-2(3H)-ones could be synthesized through palladium-catalyzed oxidative carbonylation of hydrazides with CO (Scheme 2c),¹⁶ or by I₂-mediated reactions of methyl/benzyl carbazates with aldehydes (Scheme 2d).¹⁷ 1,3,4-Oxadiazol-2(3H)-ones also could be prepared via the one-pot sequential *N*-acylation/dehydrative cyclization between ethyl carbazate and *N*-acylbenzotriazoles in the presence of Ph₃P/I₂ (Scheme 2e),¹⁸ or through 1,3-dipolar cycloaddition of nitrile imines with

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Scheme 2 Different methods for the synthesis of substituted 1,3,4-oxadiazol-2(3H)-ones.

carbon dioxide (Scheme 2f).¹⁹ Although much progress has been made in the synthesis of substituted 1,3,4-oxadiazol-2(3H)-ones, there still exist drawbacks in some synthetic processes. For example, some synthetic methods involved multi-step-reaction, limited substrate scope, or hazardous phosgene and expensive transition metal catalysts. Therefore, to develop efficient and simple method for the synthesis of substituted 1,3,4-oxadiazol-2(3H)-ones remains highly desirable. In our previous investigations,^{20a} we developed a convenient and efficient electrochemical method to synthesize 1,3,4-oxadiazol-2(3H)-ones from CO₂, aryl hydrazines and paraformaldehyde. However, this electrochemical route was only efficient in the synthesis of mono-substituted 1,3,4-oxadiazol-2(3H)-ones with paraformaldehyde, which greatly limited its practical applications. Recently, we disclosed KI-catalyzed synthesis of 1,3,4-oxadiazol-2(3H)-ones from aryl hydrazines, α -oxocarboxylic acids in the presence of CO₂ (Scheme 2g).^{20b} As part of our continuing work, herein we report in situ generated hypiodite induced one-pot synthesis of 1,3,4-oxadiazol-2(3H)-ones from CO₂, aldehydes and hydrazines under mild conditions (Scheme 2h).

The present synthetic route greatly broadens the scope of aldehydes, which is not only suitable for substituted aryl aldehydes but also applicable to aliphatic aldehydes. 5-Alkyl-1,3,4-oxadiazol-2(3H)-ones can also be obtained in this work, while only 3,5-diaryl-1,3,4-oxadiazol-2(3H)-one products were synthesized in our previous work.^{20b} In addition, the raw material aldehydes are more easily available and cheaper than

α -oxocarboxylic acids. Moreover, it is remarkable that this synthetic route can be successfully applied to synthesize a commercial herbicide Oxadiazon, demonstrating its potential applications.

Results and discussion

We chose benzaldehyde (**1a**), phenylhydrazine (**2a**) and CO₂ as model substrates to explore reaction conditions in initial studies. The results were shown in Table 1. In the presence of KI catalyst, *t*-butyl hydroperoxide (TBHP) oxidant and *t*-BuOK base, the reaction was conducted at 80 °C for 8 h to give desired product **3a** in 38% yield when methanol was used as the solvent (entry 1). Encouraged by this result, we further tested other solvents such as CH₃CN, DMSO and DMF (entries 2–4). The results indicated that DMF was the most suitable solvent for the reaction, affording **3a** in 84% isolated yield (entry 4). With DMF used as the solvent, the effect of various bases on this reaction was then examined. The yields of **3a** became unsatisfactory (entries 5–8) when *t*-BuOK was

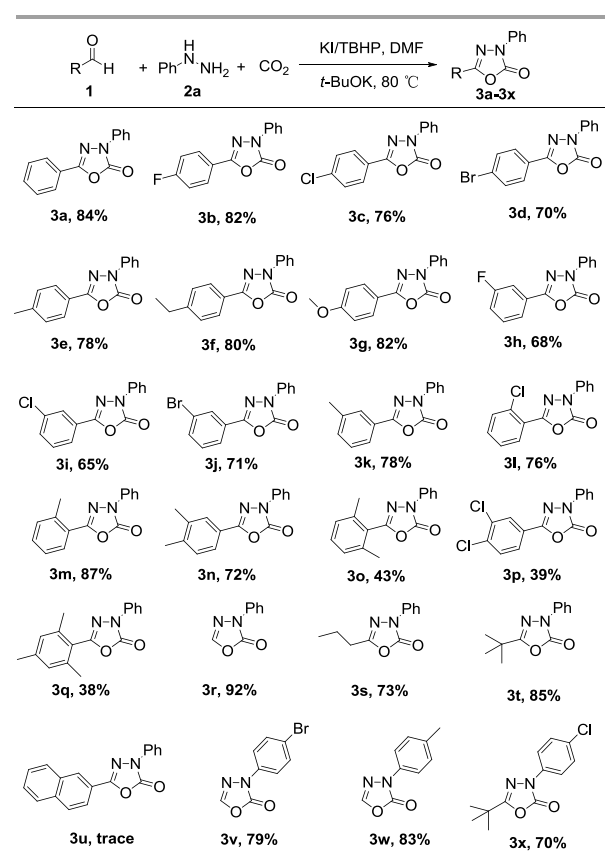
Table 1 Optimization of reaction conditions^a

Entry	Solvent	Catalyst	[O]	Base	T (°C)	Yield ^b (%)
1	MeOH	KI	TBHP	<i>t</i> -BuOK	80	38
2	MeCN	KI	TBHP	<i>t</i> -BuOK	80	17
3	DMSO	KI	TBHP	<i>t</i> -BuOK	80	trace
4	DMF	KI	TBHP	<i>t</i> -BuOK	80	89(84) ^c
5	DMF	KI	TBHP	Et ₃ N	80	49
6	DMF	KI	TBHP	DBU	80	38
7	DMF	KI	TBHP	K ₂ CO ₃	80	32
8	DMF	KI	TBHP	Cs ₂ CO ₃	80	46
9	DMF	NH ₄ I	TBHP	<i>t</i> -BuOK	80	72
10	DMF	<i>n</i> -Bu ₄ NI	TBHP	<i>t</i> -BuOK	80	82
11	DMF	NaI	TBHP	<i>t</i> -BuOK	80	77
12	DMF	KBr	TBHP	<i>t</i> -BuOK	80	6
13	DMF	KCl	TBHP	<i>t</i> -BuOK	80	trace
14	DMF	-	TBHP	<i>t</i> -BuOK	80	n. r. ^d
15	DMF	KI	TBHP	<i>t</i> -BuOK	60	13
16	DMF	KI	TBHP	<i>t</i> -BuOK	100	79
17	DMF	KI	DTBP	<i>t</i> -BuOK	80	trace
18	DMF	KI	H ₂ O ₂	<i>t</i> -BuOK	80	trace

^a Reaction conditions: benzaldehyde **1a** (0.5 mmol), phenylhydrazine **2a** (0.5 mmol), CO₂ (2 MPa), KI (0.2 equiv), TBHP (3.0 equiv), base (2.0 equiv), solvent (5 mL), 8 h. ^b Yield was analyzed by GC-MS with *n*-dodecane as an internal standard. ^c Isolated yield. ^d No reaction.

replaced with Et₃N, DBU, K₂CO₃ and Cs₂CO₃, respectively. Catalysts were further investigated (entries 9–14). It was found that iodides (e.g., NH₄I, *n*-Bu₄NI and NaI) were more efficient than bromide (KBr) or chloride (KCl). In the absence of any iodide catalysts, the product **3a** was not detected at all (entry 14). Further studies demonstrated that temperature either lower or higher than 80 °C was unfavorable for the transformation (entries 15 and 16). For oxidants, di-*tert*-butyl peroxide (DTBP) or H₂O₂ was proved to be ineffective for the reaction (entries 17 and 18), which might be related to the different active species formed by oxidation of I⁻ ions. In the H₂O₂ case, the oxidative decomposition of H₂O₂ might proceed preferentially at high temperature so that the transformation was prohibited, while TBHP could oxidize I⁻ ions to generate IO⁻ ions which could effectively promote this transformation.²¹ The details would be discussed in the reaction mechanism studies.

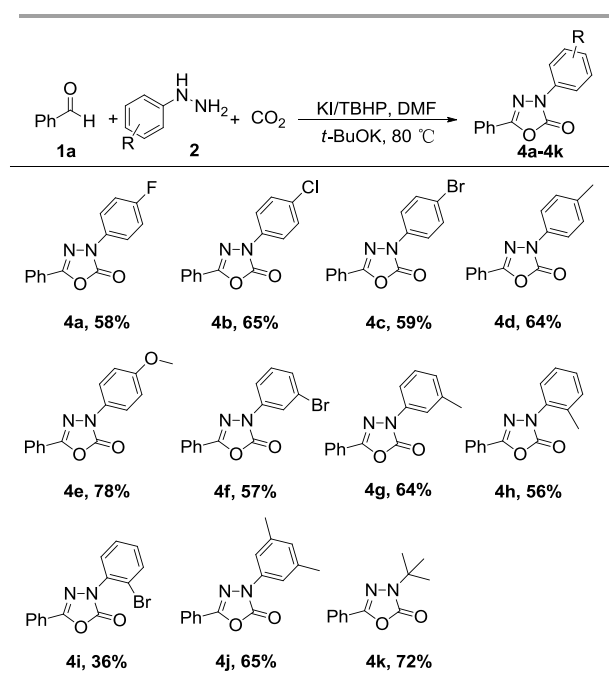
Based on the optimized conditions, we further examined the scope of aldehydes, and the results were shown in Scheme 3. A series of *para*-substituted benzaldehydes, including with the electron-withdrawing groups (fluoro, chloro, bromo) and the electron-donating groups (methyl, ethyl), could be converted into the desired products in good yields (**3b–3g**). Furthermore,



Scheme 3 Scope of various aldehydes. Reaction conditions: aldehydes **1a–1x** (0.5 mmol), phenylhydrazine **2a** (0.5 mmol), CO₂ (2 MPa), KI (0.2 equiv.), TBHP (3.0 equiv.), *t*-BuOK (2.0 equiv.), DMF (5 mL), 8 h. Isolated yields.

the *meta*- and *ortho*-substituted benzaldehydes could generate the corresponding products in moderate to good yields as well (**3h–3m**). The *poly*-substituted benzaldehydes were also able to be transformed into the 1,3,4-oxadiazol-2(3H)-one products smoothly (**3n–3q**). Notably, alkyl aldehydes such as formaldehyde, *n*-butylaldehyde, and pivaldehyde adapted the transformation well, providing the desired products in 92%, 73%, and 85% yields, respectively. These experimental results demonstrated that this synthetic route was applicable to aromatic aldehydes as well as aliphatic aldehydes. However, β -naphthaldehyde was not able to accomplish this reaction effectively (**3u**). In addition, aliphatic aldehydes could also react with substituted phenylhydrazine to form the target products smoothly (**3v–3x**).

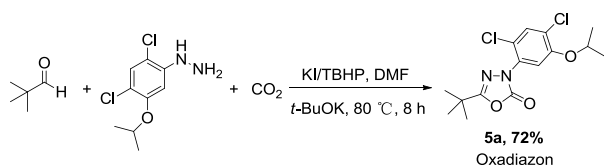
The scope of hydrazines was also examined (Scheme 4). A variety of hydrazines could be transformed smoothly through this process. Phenylhydrazines bearing electron-withdrawing groups on *para*-position afforded the corresponding products in moderate yields (**4a–4c**), while the *para*-substituted phenylhydrazines with electron-donating ones gave slight higher yields of 1,3,4-oxadiazol-2(3H)-one products (**4d** and **4e**). The *meta*- and *ortho*-substituted phenylhydrazines could successfully generate the desired products in moderate to high yields as well (**4f–4i**). Moreover, the dimethyl-substituted phenylhydrazine could be converted to the product **4j** in 65% yield. Aliphatic hydrazine such as *tert*-butyl hydrazine could also be transformed to the target product smoothly (**4k**).



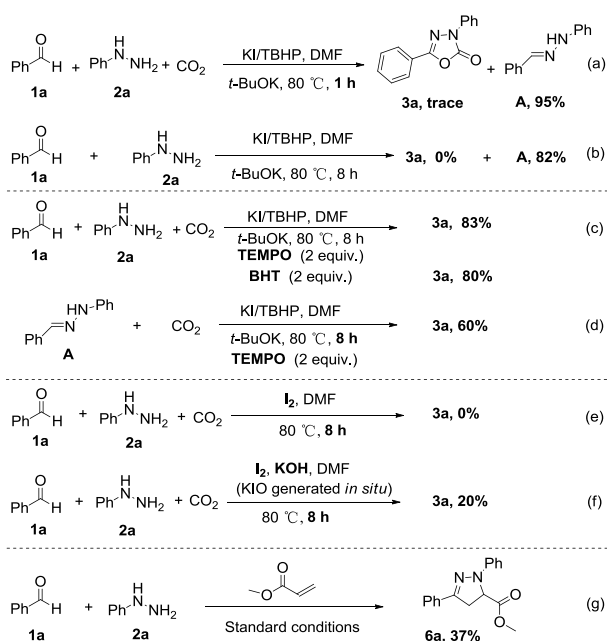
Scheme 4 Scope of hydrazine derivatives. Reaction conditions: benzaldehyde **1a** (0.5 mmol), hydrazine derivatives **2a–2k** (0.5 mmol), CO₂ (2 MPa), KI (0.2 equiv.), TBHP (3.0 equiv.), *t*-BuOK (2.5 equiv.), DMF (5 mL), 8 h. Isolated yields.

Unfortunately, hydrazine hydrate or phenylsulfonyl hydrazide as the substrate could not be converted into the corresponding 1,3,4-oxadiazol-2(3*H*)-one products under the present conditions.

With easily accessibility of raw material and high efficiency, the synthesis route provides a feasible access to valuable compounds containing 1,3,4-oxadiazol-2(3*H*)-one structure. In particular, we successfully synthesized the commercial herbicide Oxadiazon in 72% yield through this route (Scheme 5).



Scheme 5 Synthesis of Oxadiazon.



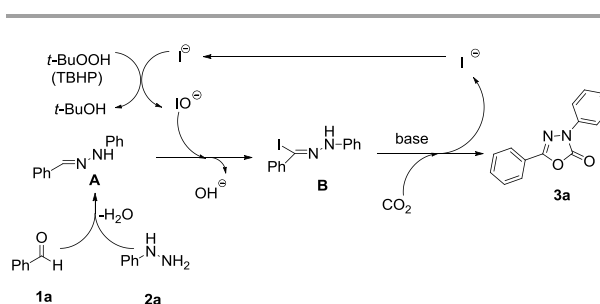
Scheme 6 Control Experiment.

Several control experiments were further conducted to explore the reaction mechanism. When the reaction processed for 1 h, a large amount of product 1-benzylidene-2-phenylhydrazine (**A**) could be observed and only a trace amount of **3a** was detected (Scheme 6a). This meant that benzaldehyde (**1a**) could easily react with phenylhydrazine (**2a**) to form the intermediate **A** under the present conditions, and **A** might be an important intermediate in this transformation. Without CO₂, the product **3a** could not be detected (Scheme 6b), which indicated that CO₂ was essential for the formation of 1,3,4-oxadiazol-2(3*H*)-ones. When 2,2,6,6-tetramethyl-1-piperidinyloxy (TEMPO, 2.0 equiv.) or 2,6-di-tert-butyl-4-methylphenol (BHT, 2.0 equiv.) was added into the reaction system, only a slight change in the yield of **3a** was observed (Scheme 6c). The radical scavenger did not affect the reaction

of **A** with CO₂ as well (Scheme 6d). Thus, we inferred that the reaction might not undergo a radical process. In addition, the reaction could not proceed smoothly with 1.0 equiv. of I₂ as the promoter in the absence of bases (Scheme 6e), while hypoiodite (IO⁻ ions) generated in situ in the presence of KOH base^{21,22} could induce the reaction to generate **3a** in 20% yield (Scheme 6f). So we deduced that IO⁻ ions instead of I₂ played a key role in the transformation process.

Under the standard conditions, we employed methyl acrylate instead of CO₂ in another control experiment and gained the corresponding cycloadduct **6a** in 37% yield (Scheme 6g). This experiment could demonstrate that nitrile imine was generated as a 1,3-dipole in this transformation. It could also be deduced that **3a** could be generated through 1,3-dipolar cycloaddition of nitrile imine and CO₂.

According to these experimental results and the related literatures, a possible reaction mechanism was outlined in Scheme 7. At first, benzaldehyde (**1a**) reacted with phenylhydrazine (**2a**) quickly to produce intermediate 1-benzylidene-2-phenylhydrazine **A**. At the same time, I⁻ ions were oxidized to IO⁻ ions by TBHP.^{21,22} Then, the fresh formed IO⁻ ions attacked **A** to form intermediate *N*-phenylbenzohydrazonoyl iodide (nitrile imine) **B**. In the presence of bases, the intermediate **B** could react with CO₂ to give the product **3a** via a 1,3-dipolar cycloaddition,^{8,19} accompanying with the elimination of I⁻ ions. Moreover, the regenerated iodide ions could join to the next catalytic cycle.



Scheme 7 Possible reaction mechanism.

Conclusions

In summary, we have developed in situ generated hypoiodite induced reaction of CO₂ with aldehydes and hydrazines for the synthesis of substituted 1,3,4-oxadiazol-2(3*H*)-ones. This one-pot multi-component synthetic method greatly simplified the process of synthesizing 1,3,4-oxadiazol-2(3*H*)-one derivatives. Moreover, this synthetic route not only broadened the synthetic scope of 1,3,4-oxadiazol-2(3*H*)-one derivatives but also could effectively utilize CO₂. In addition, the successful synthesis of commercial herbicide Oxadiazon by this method

demonstrated the present work having a practical application value in pharmaceutical synthesis.

Experimental

General procedure for the synthesis of compound 3a

In a typical procedure, various reagents, including benzaldehyde **1a** (0.5 mmol), phenylhydrazine **2a** (0.5 mmol), KI (0.2 equiv.), TBHP (3.0 equiv. 70% in water) and *t*-BuOK (2 equiv.), were dissolved in 5 mL DMF in a dried 15 mL polytetrafluoroethylene (PTFE) reaction vessel. The vessel was placed in a stainless-steel autoclave with a pressure regulating system. Then CO₂ was charged into the autoclave from a cylinder. The reaction was performed at the selected temperature under magnetic stirring for 8 h and pressure was kept constant during the reaction. After the reaction was finished, the vessel was cooled and the pressure was released slowly to atmospheric pressure. Then, the saturated Na₂S₂O₃ aqueous solution (10 mL) was added to the reaction mixture to quench the remaining oxidants. Next, the reaction mixture was diluted with H₂O (20 mL) and extracted with EtOAc (15 mL×3). The combined organic layer was dried by using anhydrous MgSO₄ and then filtered. The solvent was removed under vacuo and the crude product was further purified by column chromatography on a silica gel column with petroleum ether/ethyl acetate as eluent to give the desired product.

Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts to declare.

Acknowledgements

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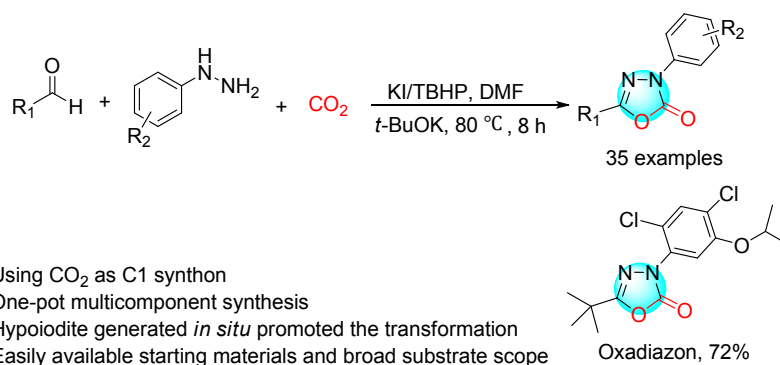
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One-pot Synthesis of 1,3,4-Oxadiazol-2(3*H*)-ones with CO₂ as C1

Synthon Promoted by Hypoiodite

Na Yang, Gaoqing Yuan*

Graphical abstract:



- √ Using CO₂ as C1 synthon
- √ One-pot multicomponent synthesis
- √ Hypoiodite generated *in situ* promoted the transformation
- √ Easily available starting materials and broad substrate scope