

6-20-2018

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Recommended Citation

Mohamadpour, Farzaneh (2018) "ZnSO₄.7H₂O Catalyzed One-pot and Facile Synthesis of Highly Substituted Dihydro-2-oxopyrroles at Room Temperature," *Makara Journal of Science*: Vol. 22 : Iss. 2 , Article 4.

DOI: 10.7454/mss.v22i2.8792

Available at: <https://scholarhub.ui.ac.id/science/vol22/iss2/4>

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Cover Page Footnote

We gratefully acknowledge financial support from the Research Council of the Young Researchers and Elite Club of Islamic Azad University of Shiraz.

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Received December 17, 2017 | Accepted May 9, 2018

Abstract

A mild and facile ZnSO₄·7H₂O-catalyzed procedure is developed for the convenient one-pot synthesis of highly substituted dihydro-2-oxopyrroles under mild reaction conditions. In this procedure, dihydro-2-oxopyrroles are synthesized *via* the four-component reactions of amines, dialkyl acetylenedicarboxylates and formaldehyde. The present procedure is an economical and mild approach that offers numerous advantages, including good to high yields, simplicity, inexpensive and readily available catalyst, and high atom economy.

Abstrak

Sintesis Dihidro-2-oksopirrol Tersubstitusi Terkatalisis ZnSO₄·7H₂O secara One-pot dan Sederhana pada Suhu Ruang. Prosedur sintesis menggunakan katalis ZnSO₄·7H₂O telah dikembangkan untuk *one-pot* sintesis dari dihidro-2-oxopyrroles pada kondisi reaksi yang sederhana. Dalam prosedur ini, dihidro-2-oxopyrroles disintesis melalui reaksi empat komponen amina, dialkil asetilendikarboksilat dan formaldehida. Prosedur ini adalah pendekatan yang ekonomis dan ringan yang menawarkan banyak keuntungan, termasuk hasil yang tinggi, teknik yang sederhana, katalis yang murah dan mudah tersedia, dan ekonomi atom tinggi.

Keywords: Highly substituted dihydro-2-oxopyrroles, ZnSO₄·7H₂O, inexpensive and readily available catalyst, high atom economy

Introduction

Pyrrole rings are an important class of heterocyclic compounds with extensive biological activities. For example, pyrrole rings are present in human cytomegalovirus protease [1] and CD45 protein tyrosinphosphatase [2]. Moreover, these structures are present in compounds with anticancer activities [3]. Pyrrole rings are present in thiomarinol A4, an antibiotic [4]; numerous biologically active alkaloids [5]; UCS1025A [6], Oteromycin [7]; and HIV integrase [8]. They also exhibit herbicidal [9] activities. Numerous protocols have been developed to exploit the biological, pharmacological, and synthetic importance of highly substituted dihydro-2-oxopyrroles. Among these various protocols, the most widely used are the one-pot multi-component condensation of dialkylacetylenedicarboxylate, formaldehyde, and amines. Cu(OAc)₂·H₂O [10], InCl₃ [11], I₂ [12], AcOH [13], [n-Bu₄N][HSO₄] [14], Al(H₂PO₄)₃ [15], oxalic acid [16], and ZrCl₄ [17] are applied as catalysts in the synthesis of

dihydro-2-oxopyrroles. However, some of the pathways for the synthesis of pyrrole rings suffer from one or more drawbacks, such as poor yields and long reaction times. In addition, these pathways require the use of toxic catalysts at excessively high loadings. Therefore, the development of a simple and economical procedure for the synthesis of highly substituted dihydro-2-oxopyrroles is necessary. Over the past decades, the use of zinc compounds as environmentally safe catalysts [18-21] in organic synthesis has attracted considerable interest because of the notable advantages of zinc. These advantages include nontoxicity, facile handling, high efficiency, and low cost. In addition, zinc compounds can be successfully used to generate carbon-carbon bonds under mild reaction conditions. Furthermore, the usage of organic solvents under reflux conditions and the need for column chromatography to purify products are sources of environmental pollution. In this present work, products were obtained through simple filtration without the need for column chromatographic separation.

As a part of our research on the identification and development of efficient and economical catalysts for multicomponent reactions [22-29] and in consideration of the above, herein, we report an efficient and simple procedure for the synthesis of highly substituted dihydro-2-oxopyrroles *via* a one-pot four-condensation domino reaction among amines (aromatic or aliphatic **1** and **3**), dialkyl acetylenedicarboxylate **2**, and formaldehyde **4** in the presence of ZnSO₄·7H₂O at room temperature. Compared with some of the earlier reported methods, our protocol, which requires the use of a nontoxic catalyst, is more efficient, facile, inexpensive, and environmentally friendly. Moreover, it provides good to high yields and requires a short reaction time.

Materials and Methods

General. The melting points of all compounds were determined by using an Electro thermal 9100 apparatus. Nuclear magnetic resonance and ¹H NMR spectra were recorded on a Bruker DRX-400 Avance instrument with CDCl₃ as a solvent. All reagents and solvents were purchased from Merck, Fluka, and Acros chemical companies and were used without further purification.

General procedure for the preparation of highly substituted dihydro-2-oxopyrroles (5a–q). A mixture of amine **1** (1.0 mmol) and dialkyl acetylenedicarboxylate **2** (1.0 mmol) was stirred in MeOH (3 mL) for 15 min. Next, amine **3** (1.0 mmol), formaldehyde **4** (1.5 mmol), and ZnSO₄·7H₂O (20 mol %) were added to the mixture, and the reaction was stirred for the appropriate duration. After the reaction was completed, the mixture was separated through filtration with thin layer chromatography (TLC). The recovered solid was washed with ethanol (3 times × 2 mL) to obtain the pure compounds **5a–q** without the need for column chromatographic separation [12, 14]. The catalyst is soluble in ethanol and removable from the reaction mixture. The products were characterized through the comparison of spectroscopic data (¹H NMR). The spectral data of the products are presented below.

Methyl(4-(4-fluorophenylamino)-1-(4-fluorophenyl)-2,5-dihydro-5-oxo-1H-pyrrole-3-carboxylate (5e). Yield: 89%; M.p. 164 °C–166 °C; ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): 3.79 (3H, s, OCH₃), 4.52 (2H, s, CH₂-N), 7.04 (2H, t, *J* = 8.4 Hz, ArH), 7.08–7.16 (4H, m, ArH), 7.73–7.76 (2H, m, ArH), 8.05 (1H, s, NH).

Methyl(4-(4-methoxyphenylamino)-1-(4-methoxyphenyl)-2,5-dihydro-5-oxo-1H-pyrrole-3-carboxylate (5i)). Yield: 82%; M.p. 172 °C–174 °C; ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): 3.77 (3H, s, CH₃), 3.83 (6H, s, 2OCH₃), 4.50 (2H, s, CH₂-N), 6.89 (4H, d, *J* = 17.6 Hz, ArH), 7.13 (1H, s, ArH), 7.68 (1H, s, ArH), 8.03 (1H, s, NH).

Ethyl(4-(4-methoxyphenylamino)-1-(4-methoxyphenyl)-2,5-dihydro-5-oxo-1H-pyrrole-3-carboxylate (5j)). Yield: 85%; M.p. 150 °C–152 °C; ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): 1.26 (3H, t, *J* = 7.2 Hz, CH₂CH₃), 3.83 (6H, s, 2OCH₃), 4.23 (2H, q, *J* = 7.2 Hz, CH₂CH₃), 4.50 (2H, s, CH₂-N), 6.87 (2H, d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, ArH), 6.93 (2H, d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, ArH), 7.12 (2H, d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, ArH), 7.69 (2H, d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, ArH), 8.02 (1H, s, NH).

Methyl(4-(4-methylphenylamino)-1-(4-methylphenyl)-2,5-dihydro-5-oxo-1H-pyrrole-3-carboxylate (5k)). Yield: 88%; M.p. 178 °C–180 °C; ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): 2.36 (6H, s, 2CH₃), 3.77 (3H, s, OCH₃), 4.52 (2H, s, CH₂-N), 7.06 (2H, d, *J* = 8.4 Hz, ArH), 7.14 (2H, d, *J* = 8.4 Hz, ArH), 7.21 (2H, d, *J* = 8.4 Hz, ArH), 7.68 (2H, d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, ArH), 8.03 (1H, s, NH).

Ethyl(4-(4-methylphenylamino)-1-(4-methylphenyl)-2,5-dihydro-5-oxo-1H-pyrrole-3-carboxylate (5l)). Yield: 86%; M.p. 131 °C–133 °C; ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): 1.25 (3H, t, *J* = 7.2 Hz, CH₂CH₃), 2.37 (6H, s, 2CH₃), 4.23 (2H, q, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 2CH₂CH₃), 4.53 (2H, s, CH₂-N), 7.06 (2H, d, *J* = 8.4 Hz, ArH), 7.14 (2H, d, *J* = 8.4 Hz, ArH), 7.21 (2H, d, *J* = 8.4 Hz, ArH), 7.69 (2H, d, *J* = 8.4 Hz, ArH), 8.01 (1H, s, NH).

Results and Discussion

The reaction conditions of this four-condensation reaction were optimized. The reaction among aniline, dimethyl acetylenedicarboxylate (DMAD), and formaldehyde was investigated as the model reaction. Then, the effects of different amounts of catalyst in MeOH solvent on the protocol were investigated. A trace amount of the product was detected after 10 h in the absence of the catalyst (Table 1, entry 1), and good yields were obtained in the presence of the catalyst. The optimal amount of the catalyst was 20 mol% (Table 1, entry 5). Increasing the amount of the catalyst did not increase product yields (Table 1, entry 14). The results are summarized in Table 1. In addition, the effect of various solvents, namely, H₂O, EtOH, H₂O/EtOH, CH₂Cl₂, CHCl₃, CH₃CN and DMF, on the protocol was investigated, and MeOH was identified as the optimal solvent for this methodology (Table 1, entry 5). Finally, a convenient, expedient, and efficient procedure for the synthesis of highly substituted dihydro-2-oxopyrroles *via* the one-pot four-condensation of amines (aromatic or aliphatic **1** and **3**), dialkyl acetylenedicarboxylate (**2**), and formaldehyde (**4**) under ambient temperature in the presence of ZnSO₄·7H₂O (Scheme 1) was described. The results are summarized in Table 2.

The proposed mechanism for the synthesis of highly substituted dihydro-2-oxopyrroles in the presence of ZnSO₄·7H₂O is illustrated in scheme 2. First, an

amine (**1**) reacts with dialkyl acetylenedicarboxylate (**2**) to yield intermediate **A**. Second, condensation between amine **3** and formaldehyde **4** in the presence of $\text{ZnSO}_4 \cdot 7\text{H}_2\text{O}$ produces imine **B**. Intermediate **A** possesses an enamine character and can thus readily react

with imine **B** to in the presence of $\text{ZnSO}_4 \cdot 7\text{H}_2\text{O}$ to generate intermediate **C**. The cyclization of intermediate **C** yields intermediate **D**, which tautomerizes to the corresponding highly substituted dihydro-2-oxopyrrole (**5**) in the final step.



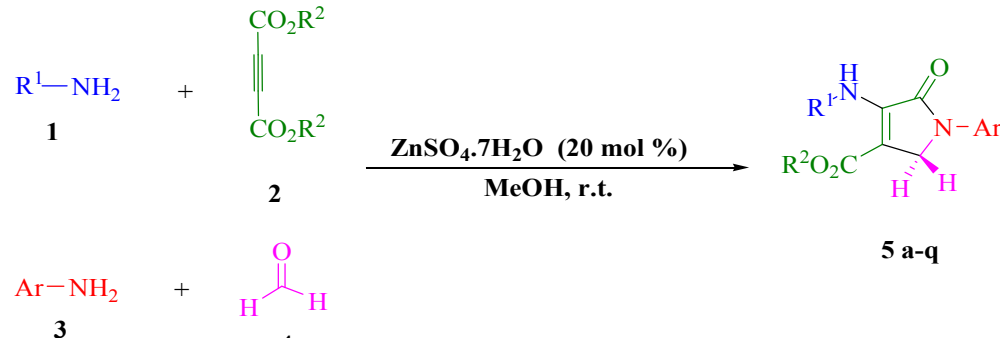
Scheme 1. Synthesis of Highly Substituted Dihydro-2-oxopyrroles

Table 1. Optimization of Reaction Conditions for the Synthesis of **5a** in the Presence of Different Amounts of $\text{ZnSO}_4 \cdot 7\text{H}_2\text{O}$ and Different Solvents^a

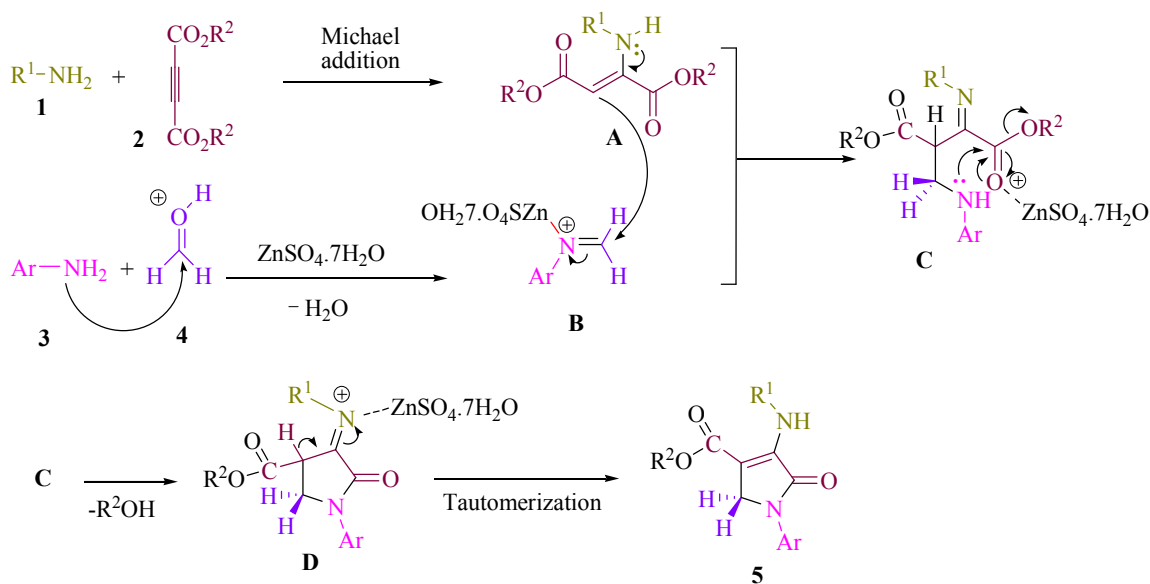
Entry	$\text{ZnSO}_4 \cdot 7\text{H}_2\text{O}$ (mol %)	Solvent	Time (h)	Isolated Yields (%)
1	Catalyst free	MeOH	10	trace
2	5	MeOH	8	34
3	10	MeOH	8	51
4	15	MeOH	5	73
5	20	MeOH	4	86
6	20	Solvent free	10	27
7	20	H_2O	7	24
8	20	EtOH	4	61
9	20	$\text{H}_2\text{O}/\text{EtOH}$	6	45
10	20	CH_2Cl_2	12	11
11	20	CHCl_3	12	16
12	20	CH_3CN	6	47
13	20	DMF	6	43
14	25	MeOH	4	88

^aReaction conditions: aniline (2.0 mmol), dimethyl acetylenedicarboxylate (1.0 mmol) and formaldehyde (1.5 mmol), and catalyst in various solvents at room temperature.

Table 2. Synthesis of Highly Substituted Dihydro-2-oxopyrroles



Entry	R ¹	R ²	Ar	Product	Time (h)	Yield (%) ^a	M.p. °C	Lit. M.p. °C
1	Ph	Me	Ph	5a	4	86	156–158	155–156 ¹²
2	Ph	Et	Ph	5b	4	85	139–141	138–140 ¹³
3	4-Cl-C ₆ H ₄	Me	4-Cl-C ₆ H ₄	5c	5	78	170–172	171–173 ¹⁴
4	4-Cl-C ₆ H ₄	Et	4-Cl-C ₆ H ₄	5d	5	76	168–170	168–170 ¹⁴
5	4-F-C ₆ H ₄	Me	4-F-C ₆ H ₄	5e	3	89	164–166	163–165 ¹⁶
6	4-F-C ₆ H ₄	Et	4-F-C ₆ H ₄	5f	3	88	173–175	172–174 ¹⁴
7	4-Br-C ₆ H ₄	Me	4-Br-C ₆ H ₄	5g	5	75	177–179	175–177 ¹⁴
8	4-Br-C ₆ H ₄	Et	4-Br-C ₆ H ₄	5h	5	73	167–170	169–171 ¹³
9	4-OMe-C ₆ H ₄	Me	4-OMe-C ₆ H ₄	5i	4	82	172–174	172–175 ¹⁴
10	4-OMe-C ₆ H ₄	Et	4-OMe-C ₆ H ₄	5j	4.5	85	150–152	152–154 ¹⁵
11	4-Me-C ₆ H ₄	Me	4-Me-C ₆ H ₄	5k	3	88	178–180	177–178 ¹²
12	4-Me-C ₆ H ₄	Et	4-Me-C ₆ H ₄	5l	3.5	86	131–133	131–132 ¹³
13	PhCH ₂	Me	Ph	5m	4.5	82	138–140	140–141 ¹³
14	PhCH ₂	Et	Ph	5n	5.5	79	132–134	130–132 ¹³
15	PhCH ₂	Me	4-F-C ₆ H ₄	5o	4	84	167–169	166–168 ¹⁵
16	n-C ₄ H ₉	Me	Ph	5p	4.5	80	60–62	60 ¹²
17	n-C ₄ H ₉	Me	3,4-Cl ₂ -C ₆ H ₃	5q	5	75	99–101	97–99 ¹⁵

^a Isolated yield

Scheme 2. Proposed Mechanistic Route for the Synthesis of Highly Substituted Dihydro-2-oxopyrroles

Table 3. Comparison of the Catalytic ability of Some Previously Reported Catalysts for the Synthesis of Highly Substituted Dihydro-2-oxopyrroles

Entry	Compound	Catalyst	Conditions	Time/Yield (%)	References
1	5a	Cu(OAc) ₂ .H ₂ O	MeOH, r.t.	6h/91	[10]
2	5a	InCl ₃	MeOH, r.t.	3h/85	[11]
3	5a	I ₂	MeOH, r.t.	1 h/82	[12]
4	5a	[n-Bu ₄ N][HSO ₄]	MeOH, r.t.	4 h/88	[14]
5	5a	Al(H ₂ PO ₄) ₃	MeOH, r.t.	5 h/81	[15]
6	5a	ZrCl ₄	MeOH, r.t.	4 h/84	[17]
7	5a	ZnSO ₄ .7H ₂ O	MeOH, r.t.	4 h/86	This work
8	5b	Cu(OAc) ₂ .H ₂ O	MeOH, r.t.	5h/85	[10]
9	5b	InCl ₃	MeOH, r.t.	3h/85	[11]
10	5b	I ₂	MeOH, r.t.	1 h/81	[12]
11	5b	[n-Bu ₄ N][HSO ₄]	MeOH, r.t.	4 h/86	[14]
12	5b	Al(H ₂ PO ₄) ₃	MeOH, r.t.	5 h/80	[15]
13	5b	ZrCl ₄	MeOH, r.t.	3.5 h/83	[17]
14	5b	ZnSO ₄ .7H ₂ O	MeOH, r.t.	4 h/85	This work

The comparison of the catalytic ability of some previously reported catalysts in the synthesis of highly substituted dihydro-2-oxopyrroles is shown in Table 3. ZnSO₄.7H₂O has extraordinary potential as an alternative, inexpensive, readily available, and efficient catalyst for the one-pot synthesis of biologically active heterocyclic compounds. Good to high yields and short reaction times are the notable advantages of the present methodology.

Conclusion

ZnSO₄.7H₂O was used as a readily available, economical, and efficient catalyst in the simple synthesis of highly substituted dihydro-2-oxopyrroles under mild reaction conditions. Results showed that the efficiency of ZnSO₄.7H₂O is higher than those of other reported catalysts, especially in the terms of reaction times and yields. The important aspects of this protocol are simplicity, environmental friendliness, and ease while requiring the use of an inexpensive and readily available catalyst.

Acknowledgments

We gratefully acknowledge financial support from the Research Council of the Young Researchers and Elite Club of Islamic Azad University of Shiraz.

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