# Efficient Cross-coupling Reaction of Functionalized Alkyl Bromides with Aryl Halides by Using Electrochemical Method

Aishah Abdul Jalil<sup>1</sup>, Nobuhito Kurono<sup>2</sup>, Shingo Takasugi<sup>2</sup> and Masao Tokuda<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Chemical Engineering, Faculty of Chemical and Natural Resources Engineering, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, 81310 UTM Skudai, Johor Bahru, Johor.

> <sup>2</sup>Division of Molecular Chemistry, Graduate School of Engineering, Hokkaido University, Sapporo 060-8628, Japan.

Corresponding author email address: aishah@fkkksa.utm.my

#### Abstract

Highly reactive zinc metal was readily prepared by electrolysis of a DMF solution containing naphthalene and a supporting electrolyte in a one-compartment cell fitted with a platinum cathode and a zinc anode. This reactive zinc (EGZn/Naph) was used for transformation of bromoalkanes into the corresponding organozinc bromides, which can not be achieved by the use of usual zinc metals. Reaction of the organozinc compounds thus prepared with various aryl iodides in the presence of 5 mol% of palladium catalyst gave the corresponding cross-coupling products in high yields. Arylzinc iodides were also prepared by the use of EGZn/Naph, and they were reacted with other aryl iodides to give the corresponding cross-coupled biaryl in good yields.

Keywords: electrolysis, reactive zinc, alkylbromide, cross-coupling, palladium catalyst

#### Introduction

We have already reported a new method for preparation of reactive zinc (EGZn) by electrolysis [1-3] and its use in facile isoprenylation [1] and allylation [2,3] as well as cross-coupling of functionalized alkyl iodides with aryl halides [4]. Recently, we further developed a new electrochemical method for preparation of more highly reactive zinc (EGZn/Naph) by using naphthalene as a mediator. EGZn/Naph could readily be prepared by electrolysis of a DMF solution containing 0.1M Et<sub>4</sub>NClO<sub>4</sub> and naphthalene using a platinum cathode and a zinc anode. Although the true nature and structure of this EGZn/Naph are not clear at the present stage, it was found that this zinc was very reactive toward an oxidative addition to organic bromide such as ethyl 4-bromobutanoate. Commercial zinc metals, Zn-Cu couple and EGZn were not reactive in such oxidative addition.

Usually, organozinc compounds can be prepared by direct reaction of organic halides with activated zinc [5] or by transmetallation of the corresponding organolithium or Grignard reagents with zinc halides [6]. However, an activation of zinc metal by these methods requires high temperature, long reaction times, the use of hazardous lithium metal, or vigorous stirring during the reaction. Contrary to these methods, the use of the electrogenerated highly reactive zinc (EGZn/Naph) is environmentally benign and economical since the used naphthalene can be isolated after the reaction and reused for further preparation of EGZn/Naph.

On the other hand, cross-coupling reactions of organozinc compounds with a variety of organic electrophiles using transitions metal catalysts provide efficient methods for chemo- and regioselective formation of carbon-carbon bonds [6]. For example, organozinc compounds derived from alkyl, aryl and vinyl halides using Rieke zinc underwent a variety of cross-coupling reactions with acid chlorides,  $\alpha,\beta$ -unsaturated ketones, allylic halides and aryl or vinyl halides [5]. Although these results are of synthetic interest, the use of lithium metal for preparation of Rieke zinc might be one of disadvantages from safety problem.

After several attempts, the authors have found that not only ethyl 4-bromobutanoate but also various alkyl bromides could be readily converted under mild conditions within a short reaction time to the corresponding organozinc compounds by using EGZn/Naph. Therefore, in this paper the authors describes the efficient cross-coupling reactions of organozinc compounds derived from functionalized alkyl bromides with various aryl iodides in a one-pot DMF solution in the presence of palladium catalyst which gave the corresponding cross-coupled products in high yield.

#### Result and Discussion

# Electrochemical preparation of highly reactive zinc (EGZn/Naph)

Electrogenerated highly reactive zinc (EGZn/Naph) was readily prepared by electrolysis of a DMF solution containing 0.1M Et<sub>4</sub>NClO<sub>4</sub> in the presence of naphthalene as a mediator in a one-compartment cell fitted with a platinum plate cathode (2x2 cm<sup>2</sup>) and a zinc plate anode (2x2 cm<sup>2</sup>).

#### Scheme 1

Electrolysis at -10°C at a constant current of 60 mA/cm² in a nitrogen atmosphere was found to give highly reactive zinc metal, EGZn/Naph (Scheme 1).

# Cross-coupling of functionalized bromoalkanes with aryl iodides using EGZn/Naph

A DMF solution containing EGZn/Naph was readily used in the preparation of organozinc compounds after the zinc anode was removed from the electrochemical cell. The reaction of ethyl #4-bromobutanoate (1) with the EGZn/Naph thus prepared (1.2 equivalents) at 50°C for 1 h gave the corresponding organozinc bromide (2) in an almost quantitative yield.

Br 
$$CO_2$$
Et  $EGZn/Naph$   $BrZn$   $CO_2$ Et  $DMF$ ,  $50^{\circ}$ C, 1 h  $2a$  (> 95%)

#### Scheme 2

To a DMF solution containing alkylzinc bromide 2a were added aryl iodides (4 mmol) and 5 mol%  $Pd(P(o-Tol)_3)_2Cl_2$  and the reaction mixture was stirred at  $70^{\circ}C$  for 3 h. The results of the cross-coupling reaction are summarized in Table 1. Cross-coupling of 2a with iodobenzene, 4-

acetyliodobenzene or 4-methoxyiodobenzene gave the corresponding cross-coupled products **4a**, **4b** and **4c** in 75-97% isolated yields (Scheme 3) (Table 1, entries 1-3).

4-Bromobutanenitrile (1b) and bromohexane (1c) could also be converted into the corresponding organozinc bromides 2b and 2c by their reaction with EGZn/Naph. Palladium(II)-catalyzed reaction of 2b and 2c with aryl iodide carrying electron-withdrawing or electron-donating substituents gave the corresponding cross-coupled product in high yields (Table 1, entries 4-9).

The reaction of a secondary-alkyl bromide such as bromocyclohexane with EGZn/Naph also efficiently gave the corresponding alkylzinc bromide, which was reacted with aryl iodides in the presence of a Pd(II) catalyst to give the corresponding cross-coupled products in high yields. Ethyl 3-bromopropanoate, instead of ethyl 4-bromobutanoate (1a), was also transformed into the corresponding organozinc compound by a similar reaction with EGZn/Naph.

Table 1. Cross-coupling of functionalized bromoalkanes (1a-1c) with aryl iodides using EGZn/Naph<sup>a)</sup>

entry	Bromide	Arl	Product	Isolated Yield (%)
1	Br(CH <sub>2</sub> ) <sub>3</sub> CO <sub>2</sub> Et (1a)	C <sub>6</sub> H <sub>5</sub> I	C <sub>6</sub> H <sub>5</sub> (CH <sub>2</sub> ) <sub>3</sub> CO <sub>2</sub> Et ( <b>4a</b> )	97
2	$Br(CH_2)_3CO_2Et(1a)$	p-CH <sub>3</sub> COC <sub>6</sub> H <sub>4</sub> I	p-CH <sub>3</sub> COC <sub>6</sub> H <sub>4</sub> (CH <sub>2</sub> ) <sub>3</sub> CO <sub>2</sub> Et ( <b>4b</b> )	84
3	Br(CH2)3CO2Et (1a)	p-CH <sub>3</sub> OC <sub>6</sub> H <sub>4</sub> I	p-CH <sub>3</sub> OC <sub>6</sub> H <sub>4</sub> (CH <sub>2</sub> ) <sub>3</sub> CO <sub>2</sub> Et ( <b>4c</b> )	75
4	Br(CH <sub>2</sub> ) <sub>3</sub> CN ( <b>1b</b> )	C <sub>6</sub> H <sub>5</sub> I	C <sub>6</sub> H <sub>5</sub> (CH <sub>2</sub> ) <sub>3</sub> CN (4d)	89
5	Br(CH <sub>2</sub> ) <sub>3</sub> CN (1b)	p-CH <sub>3</sub> COC <sub>6</sub> H <sub>4</sub> I	p-CH <sub>3</sub> COC <sub>6</sub> H <sub>4</sub> (CH <sub>2</sub> ) <sub>3</sub> CN (4e)	91
6	Br(CH <sub>2</sub> ) <sub>3</sub> CN (1b)	p-CH <sub>3</sub> OC <sub>6</sub> H <sub>4</sub> I	p-CH <sub>3</sub> OC <sub>6</sub> H <sub>4</sub> (CH <sub>2</sub> ) <sub>3</sub> CN ( <b>4f</b> )	97
7	Br(CH <sub>2</sub> ) <sub>5</sub> CH <sub>3</sub> ( <b>1c</b> )	C <sub>6</sub> H <sub>5</sub> I	C <sub>6</sub> H <sub>5</sub> (CH <sub>2</sub> ) <sub>5</sub> CH <sub>3</sub> ( <b>4g</b> )	89
/		p-CH <sub>3</sub> COC <sub>6</sub> H <sub>4</sub> I	p-CH <sub>3</sub> COC <sub>6</sub> H <sub>4</sub> (CH <sub>2</sub> ) <sub>5</sub> CH <sub>3</sub> ( <b>4h</b> )	85
8 9	Br(CH <sub>2</sub> ) <sub>5</sub> CH <sub>3</sub> ( <b>1c</b> ) Br(CH <sub>2</sub> ) <sub>5</sub> CH <sub>3</sub> ( <b>1c</b> )	p-CH <sub>3</sub> COC <sub>6</sub> H <sub>4</sub> I	p-CH <sub>3</sub> OC <sub>6</sub> H <sub>4</sub> (CH <sub>2</sub> ) <sub>5</sub> CH <sub>3</sub> ( <b>4i</b> )	71

a) Bromides 1a-1c (5 mmol) were reacted at 50°C for 1 h with EGZn/Naph (6 mmol), and the resulting DMF solutions containing 2a-2c were reacted with Arl (4 mmol) in the presence of 5 mol % Pd(P(o-Tol)<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>)Cl<sub>2</sub> at 70°C for 3 h.

## Aryl-aryl cross-coupling using EGZn/Naph

Aryl iodides carrying a p-acetyl, p-methoxy-, or p-cyano group (5) can readily be transformed into the corresponding arylzinc iodides (6) by reaction with EGZn/Naph. Preparation of arylzinc compounds is not readily achieved when usual zinc metal is used. This fact shows that the electrochemically generated EGZN/Naph has a very high reactivity. The reaction of arylzinc iodides (6) with other aryl iodides gave the cross-coupled biaryls (7) in good yields (Scheme 4).

## Scheme 4

#### Reaction pathways

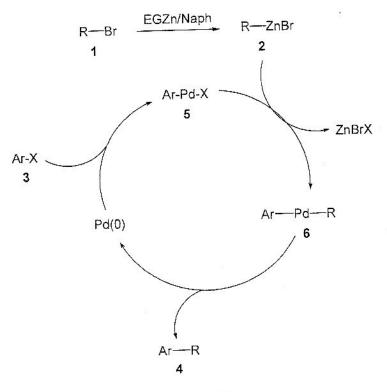
Probable reaction pathway for the formation of EGZn/Naph is shown in Scheme 5. At the cathode, a one-electron reduction of naphthalene molecule readily occurred to give naphthalene radical anion preferentially. The formation of the naphthalene radical anions was shown by the dark green color which appeared on the surface of the cathode. On the other hand, at the anode, dissolution of the zinc metal occurred to give zinc ions, which were reduced by the naphthalene radical anions to give zero-valence EGZn/Naph.

Scheme 5

Probable reaction pathways of the present cross-couplings are shown in Scheme 6. Oxidative addition of Pd(0) to aryl halides would give Ar-Pd-X (5), which undergoes metal exchange reaction with organozinc bromide 2 to give an intermediate 6. Reductive elimination of 6 would give the cross-coupling product, 4.

#### Conclusion

We developed a new electrochemical method for the preparation of highly reactive zinc (EGZn/Naph) by using naphthalene as a mediator in the electrolysis. The corresponding organozinc bromide could readily be prepared under mild conditions by the reaction of bromoalkanes with EGZn/Naph. Subsequent cross-coupling reaction of the organozinc bromide thus prepared with various aryl iodides readily took place in the presence of a palladium catalyst to give the corresponding cross-coupled products, 4 in high yields. Arylzinc iodides were also prepared by the use of EGZn/Naph, and they were reacted with other aryl iodides to give the corresponding cross-coupled biaryl 7 in good yields.



Scheme 6

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