# RSC Advances



Cite this: RSC Adv., 2017, 7, 20123

## Copper-catalyzed C–C direct cross-coupling: an efficient approach to phenyl-2-(phenylthiophenyl) methanones†

Qi Zhang, Wei Wang, Chong Gao, Rong-Rong Cai and Run-Sheng Xu D<sup>\*</sup>

Received 3rd February 2017 Accepted 23rd March 2017

DOI: 10.1039/c7ra01403a

rsc.li/rsc-advances

An efficient copper-catalyzed C–C bond direct cross-coupling reaction has been developed. Starting from diaryl sulfoxides and aromatic aldehydes, versatile phenyl-2-(phenylthiophenyl)-methanones were efficiently synthesized with high tolerance of functional groups under moderate conditions in water. This new methodology provides an economical and environmentally friendly approach toward  $C(sp^2) - C(sp^2)$ bond formation.

Transition-metal catalyzed direct cross-coupling reactions enable efficient preparation of multifunctional complex molecules, playing an essential role in the development of natural products, pharmaceuticals and functional materials.<sup>1-5</sup> Over the past few decades, nitrogen<sup>6</sup> and oxygen<sup>7</sup> group directed C–C bond coupling reactions via C–H bond activation have made great progress. Sulfur groups have a high electron density and are easy to modify, and have a non-maximal advantage in C–C bond direct cross-coupling.<sup>8</sup> However, the application of sulfur group-directed C–C cross-coupling reactions remains a formidable challenge.<sup>9</sup> One major problem is that regarding the competition between the sulfur atom and the reaction site, the coordination of the sulfur atom with the transition metal is very stable.<sup>10</sup> Namely, the transition metals are more inclined to lose their catalytic activity. Therefore, the development of a more efficient strategy of sulfur directed C–H functionalization is still highly desirable. PAPER<br> **EXERCT AND CREAT COOPERT-Catalyzed C-C direct cross-coupling: are<br>
Consider the control of the sign of the control of the sign of the control of the sign of the sign of the control of the sign of the control of th** 

Modern green synthetic chemistry is now well-established in the design and realization of organic synthesis, because it is seriously concerned with the environment and sustainable development.<sup>11</sup> Among the challenges currently facing synthetic chemists is the development of efficient and environmentally friendly chemical processes for the synthesis of complex molecules, especially required in the area of drug discovery and natural product synthesis.<sup>12</sup> Here, we report a practical method for the environmentally friendly and highly selective Cu-catalyzed C–C bond direct cross-coupling of diaryl sulfoxides with aromatic aldehydes. Versatile phenyl-2- (phenylthiophenyl)-methanones were efficiently synthesized with high tolerance of functional groups under moderate

conditions in water. This new methodology provides an efficient and economical approach toward  $C(sp^2)$ -C(sp<sup>2</sup>) formation.



The reaction conditions were screened based on a model reaction of 2-benzenesulfinyl-naphthalene 1a with benzaldehyde 2a in water (Table 1). Initially, the experimental results demonstrated that  $Cu(i)$  salts have higher catalytic activities than  $Cu(\pi)$  salts (entries 1-3). Besides, those results

Table 1 Optimization of the model reaction<sup>a</sup>





 $a$  Unless otherwise noted, reaction conditions were 1a (0.3 mmol), 2a (0.3 mmol), copper salt (20 mol%), Cs<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub> (2 equiv.), H<sub>2</sub>O (4 mL), 90 °C for 10 h.  $^b$  Isolated yield. <sup>c</sup> At 80 °C. <sup>*d*</sup> At 100 °C. <sup>*e*</sup> In CH<sub>3</sub>CN.

Department of Biology and Environment, Jiyang College of Zhejiang A&F University, Hangzhou 311800, Zhejiang, China. E-mail: 20140041@zafu.edu.cn

<sup>†</sup> Electronic supplementary information (ESI) available. See DOI: 10.1039/c7ra01403a



3i

Table 2 (Contd.)

 $3s$ 

#### Table 2 (Contd.)



<sup>a</sup> Reaction conditions: 1 (0.36 mmol), 2 (0.3 mmol), CuI (20 mol%),  $Cs_2CO_3$  (2 equiv.), in H<sub>2</sub>O (4 mL) at 90 °C for 10 h. <sup>b</sup> Isolated yield.

demonstrated that the reaction temperature is an important parameter whereby the desired product was formed in 66% yield at 80 °C (entry 8) and 73% yield at 100 °C (entry 9). Meanwhile, we observed that this reaction also proceeds smoothly in organic solvent, such as  $CH<sub>3</sub>CN$  (entry 11). However, the product yield was lower than that in water. Finally, the desired product 3a was formed in 82% yield under the optimum reaction conditions employing CuI (20 mol%) and  $Cs<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub>$  (2 equiv.) at 90 °C (entry 10).

With the optimized conditions in hand, the reaction scope was next investigated. A wide array of 2-benzenesulfinylnaphthalenes 1 and aromatic aldehydes 2 gave the desired products in good to excellent yields (Table 2). It was found that both the electron-donating and electron-withdrawing 2 benzenesulfinyl-naphthalenes 1 reacted smoothly with aromatic aldehydes 2 to give the desired compounds. 2- Benzenesulfinyl-naphthalenes 1 bearing electron-donating groups showed better activity than 1 bearing electronwithdrawing groups. Aromatic aldehydes 2 bearing electronwithdrawing groups showed better activity than 2 bearing electron-donating groups. Heteroatom aromatic aldehydes also gave the desired product (entries 9 and 10).

Furthermore, we turned our attention to other diaryl sulfoxides (Table 3). To our delight, diphenyl sulfoxides also smoothly gave the desired products in 79–85% yield. Diphenyl sulfoxides 4 bearing electron-donating groups (entry 6, 85% nitro group) showed better activity than those bearing electronwithdrawing groups (entry 2, 78% MeO group).

To obtain the preliminary details of the reaction mechanism, some additional reactions were done (Scheme 1). At first, the model reaction (Scheme 1I) was conducted in three other parallel reactions (Scheme 1II, III and IV). However, the results showed that only 2-phenylsulfanylnaphthalene 6 reacted with phenylmethanol 7 promoted by hydrogen peroxide under our

Table 3 Copper-catalyzed C–C bond direct cross-coupling of diphenyl sulfoxides with aromatic aldehydes<sup>4</sup>



<sup>a</sup> Reaction conditions: 4 (0.36 mmol), 2 (0.3 mmol), CuI (20 mol%),  $Cs<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub>$  (2 equiv.), H<sub>2</sub>O (4 mL), 90 °C for 10 h.  $b$  Isolated yield.

standard conditions, successfully obtaining the target product 3a in 67% yield (Scheme 2IV), indicating that diaryl sulfoxide was the necessary substrate for this reaction.

Many precedents from the literature have proved that sulfoxides are good directing groups<sup>13</sup> and oxidants<sup>14</sup> in C-H bond functionalization reactions. Based on the above results, a reaction mechanism was proposed (Scheme 2). At the beginning of



the reaction, an intermediate 9 was formed from CuI with diaryl sulfoxides by oxidative addition step.<sup>15</sup> There was a sixmembered ring in the intermediate 9 which was very favorable for the intramolecular oxidation reaction, namely the oxygen transfer step. Next, intermediate 9 produced intermediate 10 by intramolecular oxygen transfer.<sup>16</sup> Finally, intermediate 10 reacted with aromatic aldehyde 1 to furnish the desired product 3 and meanwhile concomitantly generated  $Cu(i)$ , which re-entered the catalytic cycle.

### Conclusions

In summary, an efficient copper-catalyzed C–C bond direct cross coupling of diaryl sulfoxides with aromatic aldehydes has been developed. Employing this methodology, various phenyl-2- (phenylthiophenyl)-methanone derivatives were efficiently synthesized under mild conditions in water. This new methodology provides an economical and environmentally friendly approach toward  $C(sp^2)$ - $C(sp^2)$  formation. Finally, a plausible reaction mechanism of the  $Cu(I)/Cu(m)$  catalytical cycle was proposed.

### Notes

#### General procedure for preparation of 3 and 5

A mixture of 2-benzenesulfinyl-naphthalene 1a (90.7 mg, 0.36 mmol), benzaldehyde 2a (69 mg, 0.3 mmol), CuI (38.0 mg, 20

mol%) and  $Cs_2CO_3$  (326.5 mg, 2 equiv.) in H<sub>2</sub>O (4 mL) was stirred in  $N_2$  at 90 °C for 10 h. After completion of the reaction, the mixture was quenched with saturated salt water (10 mL), and then the solution was extracted with ethyl acetate  $(3 \times 10)$ mL). The organic layers were combined and dried by sodium sulfate. The pure product phenyl-(2-phenylsulfanylnaphthalen-1-yl)-methanone 3a  $(83.7 \text{ mg}, 82\% \text{ yield})$  was obtained by flash column chromatography on silica gel, washed with 4 : 1 cyclohexane/ethyl acetate.

#### Acknowledgements

This work was supported by the Natural Science Foundation of Zhejiang Province (No. LQ15B020004).

#### References

- 1 For C–C direct cross-coupling, see: (a) M. Giannerini, M. Fañanás-Mastral and B. L. Feringa, Nat. Chem., 2013, 5, 667–672; (b) R. Rossi, F. Bellina, M. Lessi and C. Manzini, Adv. Synth. Catal., 2014, 356, 17–117; (c) L. Zhao, H. Zhan, J. Liao, J. Huang, Q. Chen, H. Qiu and H. Cao, Catal. Commun., 2014, 56, 65–67; (d) Z. Zuo, D. T. Ahneman, L. Chu, J. A. Terrett, A. G. Doyle and D. W. MacMillan, Science, 2014, 345, 437–440; (e) J. D. Denis, C. C. Scully, C. F. Lee and A. K. Yudin, Org. Lett., 2014, 16, 1338–1341; (f) N. Mukherjee, D. Kundu and B. C. Ranu, Chem. Commun., 2014, 5, 15784–15787; (g) Z. C. Cao, D. G. Yu, R. Y. Zhu, J. B. Wei and Z. J. Shi, Chem. Commun., 2015, 51, 2683–2686; (h) J. He, R. Takise, H. Fu and J. Q. Yu, J. Am. Chem. Soc., 2015, 137, 4618–4621; (i) X. Zhang and D. W. MacMillan, J. Am. Chem. Soc., 2016, 138, 13862– 13865;  $(j)$  B. J. Shields and A. G. Doyle, *J. Am. Chem. Soc.*, 2016, 138, 12719–12722.
- 2 For C–N direct cross-coupling, see:  $(a)$  J. Ke, C. He, H. Liu, M. Li and A. W. Lei, Chem. Commun., 2013, 49, 7549–7551; (b) R. W. Evans, J. R. Zbieg, S. Zhu, W. Li and D. W. MacMillan, J. Am. Chem. Soc., 2013, 135, 16074– 16077; (c) L. L. Zhou, S. Tang, X. T. Qi, C. T. Lin, K. Liu, C. Liu, Y. Lan and A. W. Lei, Org. Lett., 2014, 16, 3404– 3407; (d) X. H. Wei, G. W. Wang and S. D. Yang, Chem. Commun., 2015, 51, 832–835; (e) H. Yu, C. A. Dannenberg, Z. Li and C. Bolm, Chem.–Asian J., 2016, 11, 54–57; (f) F. F. Duan, S. Q. Song and R. S. Xu, Chem. Commun., 2017, 53, 2737–2739.
- 3 For C–O direct cross-coupling, see: (a) Z. Chen, H. Zeng, S. A. Girard, F. Wang, N. Chen and C. J. Li, Angew. Chem., Int. Ed., 2015, 54, 14487-14491; (b) A. M. Whittaker and V. M. Dong, Angew. Chem., 2015, 127, 1328–1331; (c) A. P. Jadhav, D. Ray, V. U. Rao and R. P. Singh, Eur. J. Org. Chem., 2016, 14, 2369–2382.
- 4 For C–S direct cross-coupling, see: (a) Y. Xu, X. Tang, W. Hu, W. Wu and H. Jiang, Green Chem., 2014, 16, 3720–3723; (b) P. F. Wang, X. Q. Wang, J. J. Dai, Y. S. Feng and H. J. Xu, Org. Lett., 2014, 16, 4586–4589; (c) G. Zhang, L. Zhang, H. Yi, Y. Luo, X. Qi, C. H. Tung and A. Lei, Chem. Commun., 2016, 52, 10407–10410.
- 5 For C–P direct cross-coupling, see: (a) D. Julienne, O. Delacroix and A. C. Gaumont, C. R. Chim., 2010, 13, 1099–1103; (b) T. Miao and L. Wang, Adv. Synth. Catal., 2014, 356, 967–971.
- 6 (a) L. Grigorjeva and O. Daugulis, Angew. Chem., 2014, 126, 10373–10376; (b) M. Bera, A. Modak, T. Patra, A. Maji and D. Maiti, Org. Lett., 2014, 16, 5760–5763; (c) W. Han, G. Zhang, G. Li and H. Huang, Org. Lett., 2014, 16, 3532– 3535; (d) Z.-W. Zhang, A. Lin and J. Yang, J. Org. Chem., 2014, 79, 7041–7050; (e) H. Kinuta, M. Tobisu and N. Chatani, J. Am. Chem. Soc., 2015, 137, 1593–1600.
- 7 (a) B. Liu, H. Z. Jiang and B. F. Shi, J. Org. Chem., 2014, 79, 1521–1526;  $(b)$  A. Seoane, N. Casanova, N. Quiñones, J. L. Mascareñas and M. Gulías, J. Am. Chem. Soc., 2014, 136, 7607–7610; (c) S. Kujawa, D. Best, D. J. Burns and H. W. Lam, Chem.–Eur. J., 2014, 20, 8599–8602; (d) F. L. Zhang, K. Hong, T. J. Li, H. Park and J. Q. Yu, Science, 2016, 351, 252–256.
- 8 (a) A. Wilsily, F. Tramutola, N. A. Owston and G. C. Fu, J. Am. Chem. Soc., 2012, 134, 5794–5797; (b) M. V. Pham, B. Ye and N. Cramer, Angew. Chem., 2012, 124, 10762–10766.
- 9 (a) I. Kato, M. Higashimoto and O. Tamura, J. Org. Chem., 2003, 68, 7983–7989; (b) S. E. Mann, A. E. Aliev and G. J. Tizzard, Organometallics, 2011, 30, 1772–1775; (c) D. Wang, X. Yu and W. Yao, Chem.–Eur. J., 2016, 22, 5543– 5546; (d) C. Luo, S. Niu and G. Zhou, Chem. Commun., 2016, 52, 12143–12146.
- 10 (a) A. Garca-Rubia, R. G. Arrays and J. C. Carretero, Angew. Chem., Int. Ed., 2009, 48, 6511–6515; (b) P. Villuendas and E. P. Urriolabeitia, Org. Lett., 2015, 17, 3178–3181; (c) H. Fei and S. M. Cohen, J. Am. Chem. Soc., 2015, 137, 2191– 2194; (d) C. Lin, D. Li and B. Wang, Org. Lett., 2015, 17, 1328–1331.
- 11 (a) M. Irimia-Vladu, Chem. Soc. Rev., 2014, 43, 588–610; (b) A. A. Ryan and M. O. Senge, Photochem. Photobiol. Sci.,

2015, 14, 638–660; (c) F. Roschangar, R. A. Sheldon and C. H. Senanayake, Green Chem., 2015, 17, 752–768; (d) M. Sutter, E. D. Silva, N. Duguet, Y. Raoul, E. Métay and M. Lemaire, Chem. Rev., 2015, 115, 8609–8651.

- 12 (a) A. Farrán, C. Cai, M. Sandoval, Y. Xu, J. Liu, M. J. Hernáiz and R. J. Linhardt, Chem. Rev., 2015, 115, 6811–6853; (b) P. RekhaáBoruah and A. AzizáAli, Chem. Commun., 2015, 51, 11489–11492.
- 13 For C–H bond functionalization reactions directed by sulfoxides, see: (a) B. Wang, Y. Liu, C. Lin, Y. Xu, Z. Liu and Y. Zhang, Org. Lett., 2014, 16, 4574–4577; (b) S. E. Ammann, G. T. Rice and M. C. White, J. Am. Chem. Soc., 2014, 136, 10834–10837; (c) Z. Chen, B. Wang, J. Zhang, W. Yu, Z. Liu and Y. Zhang, Org. Chem. Front., 2015, 2, 1107–1295; (d) Q. Cai, D. K. Li, R. R. Zhou, S. Y. Zhuang, J. T. Ma, Y. D. Wu and A. X. Wu, J. Org. Chem., 2016, 81, 8104–8111; (e) M. Y. Chang, Y. H. Huang and H. S. Wang, Tetrahedron, 2016, 72, 3022–3031; (f) J. A. Fernández-Salas, A. J. Eberhart and D. J. Procter, J. Am. Chem. Soc., 2016, 138, 790–793. Paper West Commons Articles. Ar
	- 14 For sulfoxides as oxidant in C–H bond functionalization reactions, see: (a) T. J. Osberger and M. C. White, J. Am. Chem. Soc., 2014, 136, 11176–11181; (b) D. L. Priebbenow and C. Bolm, Org. Lett., 2014, 16, 1650–1652; (c) M. Lin, Z. Wang, H. Fang, L. Liu, H. Yin, C. H. Yan and X. Fu, RSC Adv., 2016, 6, 10861–10864; (d) T. Yanagi, S. Otsuka, Y. Kasuga, K. Fujimoto, K. Murakami, K. Nogi and A. Osuka, J. Am. Chem. Soc., 2016, 138, 14582–14585.
	- 15 (a) D. Y. Lee, I. J. Kim and C. H. Jun, Angew. Chem., Int. Ed., 2002, 41, 3031–3033; (b) D. Y. Lee, B. S. Hong, E. G. Cho, H. Lee and C. H. Jun, J. Am. Chem. Soc., 2003, 125, 6372– 6373.
	- 16 (a) K. Nobushige, K. Hirano, T. Satoh and M. Miura, Org. Lett., 2014, 16, 1188-1191; (b) Y. F. Liang, K. Wu, S. Song, X. Li, X. Huang and N. Jiao, Org. Lett., 2015, 17, 876–879.