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ScienceDirect
Tetrahedron Letters
Tetrahedron Letters 48 (2007) 6771–6775

Chitosan-supported palladium(0) catalyst for microwave-prompted Suzuki cross-coupling reaction in water

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Received 14 May 2007; revised 8 July 2007; accepted 13 July 2007
Available online 21 July 2007

Abstract—A chitosan-supported palladium (Pd) (0) catalyst was prepared by simple adsorption of palladium(II) ion onto chitosan beads and a subsequent reduction process. To maintain mechanical stability, the chitosan-supported palladium(0) catalyst was cross-linked with either glutaraldehyde or diglycidyl ether polyethylene glycol. The catalysts were utilized for the Suzuki cross-coupling reaction in water. The catalyst, in the presence of a tetrabutylammonium bromide (TBAB) additive, showed excellent catalytic activity in microwave-prompted Suzuki cross-coupling reactions using various aryl halides and boronic acids. In addition, the catalyst was successfully reused up to five times without significant loss of catalytic activity.

Palladium (Pd) is one of the most useful transition metal catalysts for the synthesis of organic compounds, especially carbon–carbon cross-coupling reactions.[1] However, its use is limited in homogeneous reaction systems due to difficulties in separating the palladium catalyst and ligand from the final product and recycling the catalyst. Accordingly, many varieties of solid-supported palladium catalysts have been developed by immobilizing palladium(II) on several supported ligands (phosphine,[2] N-heterocyclic carbene[2,3]) or by immobilizing ligand-free palladium(0) particles[2,4] on various solid supports (Polystyrene (PS),[2] PS-PEG,[2] silica,[2] cellulose,[5a] starch[5b] and so on).

Recently, water and aqueous solvents have received much attention in coupling reactions catalyzed by solid-supported palladium because of their environmental friendliness.[6] Uozumi et al. reported that their amphiphilic resin-supported palladium nanoparticles exhibited catalytic activity in aqueous conditions.[7] A rapid coupling reaction is another important issue for the industrial applications of palladium catalysts. Li et al. recently reported a rapid Suzuki cross-coupling reaction using $Pd(OAc)_2$/MeONa catalytic system.[8] In the heterogeneous palladium catalyst system, microwave energy can be a useful tool to dramatically enhance organic reactions.[9] Although water has a medium dielectric loss factor[9a] in microwave systems, it may be a useful solvent for microwave-prompted organic synthesis.[10] Indeed, microwave promoted coupling reactions have been reported with palladium catalyst and the use of water as a solvent has been increasingly encouraged.[11]

As a biopolymer, chitosan is considered a suitable water-compatible solid support for the immobilization of metal catalyst because it has a high sorption capacity for metal ions, it can easily be chemically modified and it is highly abundant in nature.[12] Recently, Hardy et al.[13a] reported the use of chitosan as a support to anchor a palladium–pyridyl imine complex to promote the Suzuki and Heck reactions. In addition, Cui et al.[13b] used a chitosan–palladium complex catalyst for the Heck reaction. However, the chitosan–palladium catalysts were used in organic solvent and a relatively long reaction time was required for high product yields with conventional heating in the coupling reaction.

In this Letter, we report the preparation of a bead-type chitosan-supported ligand-free palladium(0) catalyst using a simple reduction process and the application of the prepared catalyst to the Suzuki cross-coupling reaction in water.[14] Also, we applied microwave energy to the heterogeneous system to promote a rapid coupling reaction.

Keywords: Chitosan support; Microwave; Suzuki cross-coupling; Palladium; Water.
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0040-4039/$ - see front matter © 2007 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.
doi:10.1016/j.tetlet.2007.07.093

A bead-type chitosan support (M_w 20,000–50,000, 95% deacetylation) was prepared using an air atomization spray nozzle method.[15] The average diameter of prepared wet chitosan beads was 1.3 mm. Chitosan-supported ligand-free palladium catalysts were fabricated by treating the chitosan beads (3 mL) with $Pd(OAc)_2$ (45 mg) in dimethylsulfoxide at 80 °C for 10 min and the resulting mixture was stirred at room temperature for 2 h to obtain the brown chitosan-supported palladium(II) (Fig. 1).[16] After the beads were filtered and washed, palladium(II) in the chitosan beads was converted to palladium(0) by treatment with 10% hydrazine hydrate in methanol.[16] The color of palladium immobilized chitosan beads changed from brown to black (Fig. 2a). The chitosan-supported palladium catalyst **1** was filtered and thoroughly washed with methanol, ethanol, acetone, and water, sequentially.

To enhance the chemical and physical stability in the organic reaction, catalyst **1** was cross-linked using two different cross-linkers, glutaraldehyde and diglycidyl ether polyethylene glycol (M_w 526), to yield catalysts **2** and **3**, respectively.[17] With glutaraldehyde cross-linking, the imine that formed initially was reduced with $NaBH_4$ to prevent hydrolysis of the cross-linker.[17] The final catalysts were washed with water and freeze-dried for 24 h. A TEM image of cross-sectioned catalyst **3** showed that palladium(0) in the chitosan bead formed aggregated nanoparticles (Fig. 2b). Microspot TEM-EDS analysis confirmed the existence of palladium(0) in the chitosan bead (Fig. 2c). Palladium(0) in the chitosan bead was also characterized by X-ray powder diffraction (XRD) spectra (Fig. 3). After a reduction step, specific peaks of palladium(0) ($2\theta = 38°$, 46°, 67°, 80°; Ref. JCPDS 87-0645) appeared as shown in Figure 3b. Both TEM and XRD analyses revealed that the size of palladium particles in the chitosan beads ranged from 3 to 10 nm, which confirmed that palladium existed in an aggregated form. The palladium loading levels of catalysts **1**–**3**, which was measured by inductively coupled plasma-atomic emission spectrometry (ICP-AES), were 1.95, 1.50, and 1.46 mmol/g, respectively. Palladium loading levels were also indirectly analyzed by CHNO elementary analyses, which gave similar values (1.99 mmol/g; Pd 21.19%, 1.67 mmol/g; Pd 17.83% and 1.70 mmol/g; Pd 18.83%, respectively). The palladium loading levels on chitosan beads are rather high compared with previous data for polystyrene beads[3b,c,6d] due to the high metal ion sorption capacity.

The catalytic activity of cross-linked chitosan-supported palladium(0) catalyst **2** was investigated for microwave-prompted Suzuki cross-coupling in water.[18] As a model reaction, the coupling of bromoacetophenone (0.5 mmol) with phenylboronic acid (0.75 mmol) was performed using catalyst **2** (0.5 mol %) in water for 5 min at 150 °C under microwave conditions (100 W). [Caution: Appropriate care should be exercised when water is rapidly heated to 150 °C.] The amount of catalyst and the microwave power were determined considering the effect on deboronation.[11a]

When we first carried out the Suzuki cross-coupling, the reaction did not proceed sufficiently (Table 1, entry 1). We reasoned that the poor solubility of the hydrophobic substrate (aryl halide) in water might cause reduced reaction performance. We therefore added tetrabutylammonium bromide (TBAB), which can assist with Suzuki cross-coupling in water,[11] to the reaction medium in order to increase solubility. As shown in Table 1 (entry 2), the coupling yield improved dramatically from 48% to 95% when TBAB was added. Some reports have indicated that the ammonium salt facilitated solvation of substrates in water and enhanced the rate of coupling by activating boronic acid toward the formation of a boronate complex $[ArB(OH)_3]^-[R_4N]^+$.[11a,b] When we carried out other coupling reactions with TBAB, we obtained high product yields (above 90%), regardless of the base used. To confirm the effectiveness of microwave energy, the same coupling reaction (Table 1, entry 2) was tested in a closed system under conventional heating conditions (150 °C). In the absence of microwave energy, it took 1 h to obtain a similar yield (93%). This reaction time was relatively long compared with that required under microwave conditions (5 min). This indicates that microwave irradiation is a very effective tool in Suzuki coupling using the chitosan-supported palladium catalyst.

We also examined the feasibility of repetitive use of chitosan-supported palladium catalyst under the same microwave conditions. The catalyst was recovered by

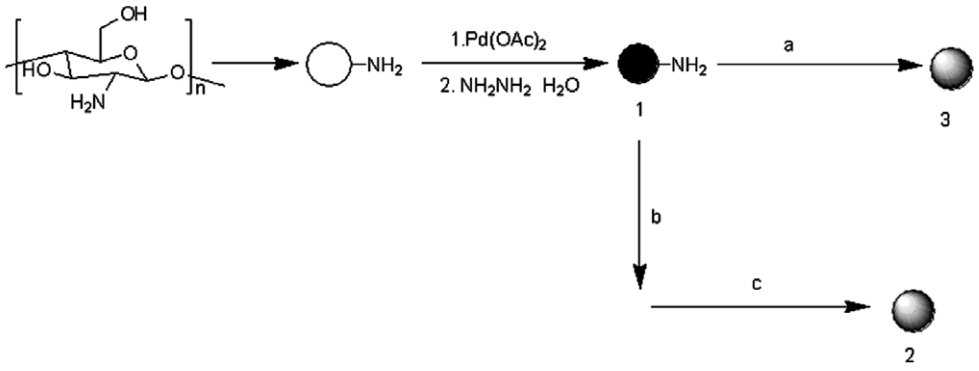

Figure 1. Preparation of chitosan-supported palladium(0) catalyst. Reagents and conditions: (a) Diglycidyl ether polyethylene glycol, NaOH(aq), 50 °C, 12 h; (b) Glutaraldehyde, pH 5.5, 25 °C, 2 h; (c) $NaBH_4$, pH 9, 25 °C, 1 h.