Ionic Hydrogenation of Carbonyl Groups With Molybdenum and Tungsten Complexes

Jeong-Sup Song

Abstract Metalhydrides such as Cp(CO)$_2$(L)MH (L = t-butylisocyanide and 2,6-dimethylphenylisocyanide M = Mo and W) have been synthesized and used for ionic hydrogenation of the carbonyl groups in the presence of triflic acid. When these complexes have also used as catalyst precursors for hydrogenation of 3-pentanone under mild conditions (23°C, <4.1 atm H$_2$), the turnover rates were very slow, with the fastest initial rate of about 2 turnovers per 1 day for the [Cp(CO)$_2$(ArNC)Mo][BF$_4$]$^-$ system.

요약 CO와 유사한 분자체도함수를 갖는 isocyanide 리간드가 포함된Cp(CO)$_2$(L)MH (L = t-butylisocyanide and 2,6-dimethylphenylisocyanide M = Mo and W)을 합성하고, 이 작물과 triflic acid를 사용하여 카르보닐기를 알코올로 전환시키는 실험을 하였다. 또한, 이를 작물을 촉매 전구체로 이용하여 3-pentanone의 수소화 반응을 음속한 조건 (23°C, <4.1 atm H$_2$)에서 수행하였다. 속에 활성은 매우 높았으며, [Cp(CO)$_2$(ArNC)Mo][BF$_4$]$^-$의 경우 2 turnovers/day의 결과를 나타내었다.

Key Words: Metal Hydride Complex, Ionic Hydrogenation, Isocyanide Ligand.

1. Introduction

Hydrogenation of carbonyl groups to alcohol is a reaction of fundamental importance and practical utility, being used in the synthesis of fine chemicals as well as compounds used in the pharmaceutical and agricultural industries. Main group hydride reagents such as NaBH$_4$ and LiAlH$_4$ are often used for the reduction of C=O bonds; these reactions are well developed and immensely useful, but they consume stoichiometric amounts of the hydride reagent and produce waste by-products.

Many transition metal homogeneous hydrogenation catalysts have been developed. The traditional mechanism of these hydrogenations involves coordination of the carbonyl group to the metal, followed by insertion of the carbonyl into the metal-hydrogen bond as shown in eq. 1 for the case of ketone hydrogenation. The alcohol product is released from the metal through a reductive elimination reaction involving the second metal hydride bond.$^{[1]}$

\[
\text{M} + \text{CHO} \rightarrow \text{M} - \text{OH} \quad \text{(eq. 1)}
\]
An alternative hydrogenation method was reported by Kursanov and coworkers over 30 years ago. An authoritative review published in 1974 documented the utility of this process for stoichiometric hydrogenation of a variety of C=C and C=O bonds.[2] They also showed that delivery of H₂ to the carbonyl could be achieved through ionic hydrogenation that did not require coordination of the carbonyl group to the metal. The versatile reactivity patterns of metal hydrides suggest the possibility of using a metal hydride bond as a source of protons, and a second metal hydride bond as a hydride donor in ionic hydrogenations.[3] The development of 

\[ [\text{CpM(CO)}_2(\text{PR}_3)(\text{H})_2] \text{ (M = Mo, W; } \text{R = Cyclohexyl, Phenyl, Methyl)} \] as catalyst precursors for the homogeneous hydrogenation of ketones was presaged by studies of two of the key individual steps of the reaction - transfer and hydride transfer reactions of metal hydrides,[5] as well as demonstrations of stoichiometric hydrogenations using metal hydrides.[6] This demonstrates a connection between kinetic and mechanistic studies of fundamental reactivity patterns and the evolution of the knowledge gained from such studies into the development of new catalysts.

Improved catalysts will be sought that exhibit higher activities and longer lifetimes than those studied thus far. Mechanistic information implies that an improved catalyst should have sufficient steric bulk of the phosphine ligand to destabilize ketone binding. At the same time, increasing the acidity of the cationic metal dihydride is desired since protonation of a ketone by the dihydrides \[ [\text{CpM(CO)}_2(\text{PR}_3)(\text{H})_2] \text{ is thermodynamically unfavorable.}[7] \] A comprehensive study of the kinetics of hydride transfers showed that substitution of one CO ligand by a phosphine can dramatically affect the kinetic hydricity of the metal hydride. The electronic effect of the phosphine is to make the metal center more electron-rich, and this effect is manifested in the greatly enhanced kinetic hydricity of the phosphine-substituted metal hydride. The electronic effect clearly predominates over the steric effect of the phosphine.[8]

We had studied ionic hydrogenations of ketones with a new series of complexes such as \[ \text{CpM(CO)}_2(\text{R}_2\text{PCH}_2\text{CH}_2\text{PR}_3)_2\text{H} \text{ (M = Mo, W; } \text{R = 3,5-}(\text{CF}_3)_2\text{C}_6\text{H}_3, \text{ C}_6\text{F}_3) \] because partially phosphine ligands appeared to have precisely the properties that are required: they would be sterically demanding to suppress ketone binding to the metal, yet concurrently the electron-withdrawing substituents would help to enhance the acidity of the complex. We expected to find that ketones and aldehydes could be easily hydrogenated by HOTF and \[ \text{Cp(CO)}(\text{R}_2\text{PCH}_2\text{CH}_2\text{PR}_3)_2\text{MH} \] to give free alcohol and the metal triflate complex \[ \text{Cp(CO)}(\text{R}_2\text{PCH}_2\text{CH}_2\text{PR}_3)_2\text{MOTf} \] and \[ \text{H}_2 \]. The hydrogenated organic product, 1-propanol, was not observed, indicating that the reaction of protonated aldehyde with \[ \text{Cp(CO)}(\text{R}_2\text{PCH}_2\text{CH}_2\text{PR}_3)_2\text{MH} \] was sterically hindered.[9]

Since isocyanide and CO are isoelectronic, their molecular orbital descriptions are very similar and more sterically demanding substituents can also be introduced to the isocyanide carbon. We report here the preparation of isocyanide-substituted hydride complexes of molybdenum and tungsten, and a study of their use in hydrogenation of carbonyl groups by an ionic mechanism.

2. Experimental Section

General Procedures. All manipulations were carried out under an atmosphere of argon using Schlenk or vacuum-line techniques, or in a Vacuum Atmospheres drybox. Organic reagents were obtained commercially and were used without purification. \[ \text{Cp(CO)}_3\text{MoH} \] and \[ \text{Cp(CO)}_3\text{WH} \] were prepared by literature methods.[10] \(^1\text{H}\) and \(^13\text{C}\) NMR spectra were recorded on a Bruker AM-3000 spectrometer, chemical shifts were referenced to the residual proton peak of CD₃Cl₂ at δ 5.32. IR spectra were recorded on a Mattson Polaris FT-IR spectrometer with 0.1 mm CaF₂ solution cells. Elemental Analyses were measured by using EA 1108 Elmer CHNS-O.

Preparation of \[ \text{Cp(CO)}_2(\text{ArNC})\text{MoH} \] \[ (492 \text{ mg, 2 mmol}) \] was dissolved in 5 mL of hexane and 2,6-dimethylphenylisocyanide \[ (262 \text{ mg, 2 mmol}) \] was added under vigorous stirring, and an immediate CO evolution was observed. The reaction mixture was stirred for 30 min at room temperature. The resulting yellowish white precipitate was isolated by filtration and washed.
with hexane (3 mL x 2). The product was dried at room temperature for 6 hours in vacuo to Cp(CO)₂(35 NC)MoH (635 mg, 91%).

**Preparation of Cp(CO)₂(t-BuNC)MoH.** Cp(CO)₂WH (520 mg, 2.11 mmol) was dissolved in 5 mL of hexane. To this was added t-butylisocyanide (250 μL, 2.21 mmol) and was added under vigorous stirring in the absence of light. The reaction mixture was stirred for 10 min at room temperature. The resulting yellowish solid precipitate was then isolated by filtration and washed with hexane (3 mL x 2). The product was dried at room temperature for 6 hours in vacuo to Cp(CO)₂(t-BuNC)WH (564 mg, 89%).

**Preparation of Cp(CO)₂(35 NC)MoH.** Cp(CO)₂WH (167 mg, 0.5 mmol) was dissolved in 5 mL of hexane. To this was added 2,6-dimethylphenylisocyanide (66 mg, 0.5 mmol) and was added under vigorous stirring, and an immediate color change of the solution was observed. The reaction mixture was stirred for 15 hours at room temperature. The solvent was then removed to ~1 mL and the resulting yellowish white precipitate was isolated by filtration and washed with hexane (2 mL x 2). The product was dried at room temperature for 6 hours in vacuo to Cp(CO)₂(35 NC)WH (160 mg, 73%).

**Preparation of Cp(CO)₂(35 NC)MoH and HOTf.** Cp(CO)₂(35 NC)MoH (12 mg, 34 μmol) and propionaldehyde (3 μL, 41 μmol) were placed in an NMR tube and Cd₂Cl₂ (0.67 mL) was added. After addition of HOTf (4 μL, 46 μmol), the tube was shaken for 5 min at room temperature. The 1H NMR spectrum of the resulting red-brown solution showed the formation of an alcohol complex (~25%) along with 1-propanol (~33%) and the unreacted propionaldehyde (~42% based on the starting material).

**Ionic Hydrogenation of propionaldehyde using Cp(CO)₂(35 NC)MoH and HOTf.** Cp(CO)₂(35 NC)MoH (10 mg, 33 μmol) and propionaldehyde (3 μL, 41 μmol) were placed in an NMR tube and Cd₂Cl₂ (0.70 mL) was added. After addition of HOTf (4 μL, 46 μmol), the tube was shaken for 5 min at room temperature. The 1H NMR spectrum of the resulting red-brown solution showed the formation of an alcohol complex (~29%) along with 1-propanol (~16%) and the unreacted...
propionaldehyde (~55% based on the starting material). Thet-BuNC ligand was also protonated by HOTF. After 25 hours at room temperature 42% of free 1-propanol and 46% of aldehyde were observed.

**Ionic Hydrogenation of 3-pentanone using Cp(CO)₂(ArNC)WH and HOTF.** Cp(CO)₂(ArNC)WH (17 mg, 39 μmol) and 3-pentanone (4 μL, 38 μmol) were placed in an NMR tube and CD₂Cl₂ (0.65 mL) was added. After adding HOTF (3.5 μL, 40 μmol), the tube was shaken for 5 min at room temperature. The ¹H NMR spectrum of the resulting red-brown solution showed the cis-alcohol complex (31%), free 3-pentanol (4%), and the unreacted 3-pentanone (65% based on the starting material). After 14 hours at room temperature 13% of the cis-alcohol complex, 54% of 3-pentanol, and 33% of 3-pentanone were observed.

¹H NMR of [Cp(CO)₂(ArNC)W(3-pentanol)]OTf in CD₂Cl₂: δ 6.51 (d, J = 8.0Hz, 1H, OH), 6.00 (s, 5H, Cp), 3.16 (m, 1H, OCH), 1.47 (m, 4H, 2 CH₂), 0.89 (t, J = 7.4Hz, 3H, CH₃), 0.83 (t, J = 7.4Hz, 3H, CH₃).

**Catalytic Hydrogenation of 3-pentanone using [Cp(CO)₂(ArNC)Mo][BARF₄].** Cp(CO)₂(ArNC)MoH (7.3 mg, 21 μmol) and [Ph₃C][BARF₄] (19 mg, 21 μmol) was placed in a 5 mm NMR tube equipped with a J. Young valve. Then, 0.70 mL of the standard 300 mM solution of 3-pentanone in CD₂Cl₂ was added, giving a catalyst concentration of 30 mM. The ¹H NMR spectrum of the resulting red-brown solution showed the two Cp peaks at δ 5.91 and 5.74 indicating the formation of cis/trans ketone complexes. The tube was filled with H₂ (1.1atm) while frozen in liquid nitrogen, giving < 4.1atm H₂ when warmed to 23°C. The pressure was maintained by periodically refilling with H₂ as needed. The tube was wrapped with an aluminum foil to avoid any possible photochemical reaction and spun slowly using a mechanical stirring motor.

**3. Results and Discussions**

**Synthesis and Characterization of Cp(CO)₂[RNC]MH (M = Mo, W; R = 2,6-dimethylphenyl, t-butyl).** The reaction of Cp(CO)₂MH (M = Mo, W) with RNC (R = 2,6-dimethylphenyl, t-butyl) at room temperature formed Cp(CO)₂[RNC]MH in high yield (eq. 2).

The highly air-sensitive hydride complexes were identified by their characteristic IR bands, and two IR bands were observed in the IR spectrum between 1960-1890 cm⁻¹, higher in energy than values reported for the more electron-rich systems Cp(CO)₂(PCy₃)MoH (1927 and 1850 cm⁻¹) and Cp(CO)₂(PCy₃)WH (1915 and 1821 cm⁻¹).¹ The N=C stretching band of the coordinated isocyanide ligand was observed between 2090-2050 cm⁻¹, indicating that the metal to ligand d₅-p₅ back bonding is considerably strong. In free isocyanides, nNC values are about 2130 cm⁻¹. It is noteworthy that the d₅-p₅ back donation in the W-isocyanide complex (V₅C₅ 2059 cm⁻¹ for Cp(CO)₂(t-BuNC)WH) is slightly stronger than that in the Mo-isocyanide complex (V₅C₅ 2071 cm⁻¹ for Cp(CO)₂(t-BuNC)MoH). This observation is consistent to the fact that third row metals tend to form stronger bonds to ligands than second row metals.

**Ionic Hydrogenation of propionaldehyde and 3-pentanone using Cp(CO)₂(RNC)MH (M = Mo, W; R = 2,6-dimethylphenyl, t-butyl) in the presence of HOTF.** Several examples of were known in which stoichiometric ionic hydrogenations of C=O bonds could be carried out by molybdenum metal hydrides upon reaction with acids.¹¹ Addition of triflic acid (CF₃SO₃H, abbreviated as HOTF) to a solution of propionaldehyde and Cp(CO)₂(RNC)MoH (R = 2,6-dimethylphenyl, t-butyl) resulted in rapid hydrogenation of the aldehyde (eq. 3).
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\[
\text{Cp(CO)}_2(\text{RNC})\text{MoH} + \text{EtCHO} \xrightarrow{\text{HOTf}} \text{Cp(CO)}_2(\text{RNC})\text{MoOTf} + 1\text{-propanol}
\]

(eq. 3)

The formation of an alcohol complex was confirmed by \(^1\text{H}\) NMR spectrum, and an alcoholic OH resonance at \(\delta 6.51\) for \([\text{Cp(CO)}_2(\text{ArNC})\text{Mo(3-pentanone)})\text{OTf}\]

suggested that the alcohol OH and an oxygen on the triflate counterion were attached via a hydrogen bond in solution.\(^{12}\)

Catalytic Hydrogenations of 3-pentanone using \([\text{Cp(CO)}_2(\text{ArNC})\text{Mo(3-pentanone)})\text{[BA}^{\text{F}}_4\text{]}\) \((\text{Ar} = 2,6\text{-dimethylphenyl}; \text{Ar}^{\text{F}} = \text{C}_6\text{F}_5)\). Bullock and Voge suggested that the ketone complexes, \([\text{Cp(CO)}_2(\text{PR})_2(\text{Et}_2\text{C}=\text{O})\text{M}[\text{BA}^{\text{F}}_4]\) \((\text{M} = \text{Mo, W}; \text{R} = \text{phenyl, cyclohexyl, methyl}),\) can hydrogenate ketones such as 3-pentanone at room temperature under <4 atm \(\text{H}_2\).\(^{13}\) Similarly, the catalyst formed in situ by the abstraction of hydride from by \([\text{Cp(CO)}_2(\text{ArNC})\text{MoH}\] was studied under same reaction conditions used for by \([\text{Cp(CO)}_2(\text{PR})_2(\text{Et}_2\text{C}=\text{O})\text{M}[\text{BA}^{\text{F}}_4]\). When the ketone complex in \(\text{CD}_2\text{Cl}_2\) was reacted under \(\text{H}_2\) with 3-pentanone, hydrogenation of the \(\text{C} = \text{O}\) bond occurs, leading to the alcohol product, 3-pentanol (eq. 4).

The experiment was carried out in a 5 mm NMR tube sealed under 1 atm \(\text{H}_2\) at liquid nitrogen temperature. When warmed to room temperature, this leads to an actual pressure in the tube of almost 4 atm. Under this condition the concentration of \(\text{H}_2\) dissolved in the \(\text{CD}_2\text{Cl}_2\) is about 15 mM, as determined by integration of the resonance for dissolved \(\text{H}_2\) at \(\delta 4.60\).\(^{13}\) The total amount \(\text{H}_2\) in the tube is sufficient to hydrogenate all of the ketone, but most of it is in the gas phase above the solution. The reaction was monitored by \(^1\text{H}\) NMR spectroscopy, indicating the appearance of the product alcohol as well as smaller amounts of its ether (Et₂CH)₂O arising from condensation of two alcohols (eq. 5).

[Fig. 1] shows the time profile of the concentrations from the catalytic hydrogenation of 3-pentanone by \([\text{Cp(CO)}_2(\text{ArNC})\text{Mo(3-pentanone)})\text{[BA}^{\text{F}}_4\text{]}\]. Slow hydrogenation occurs, producing 3-pentanol, giving the fastest initial rate of about 2 turnovers per 1 day. After 3 days, the concentration of 3-pentanol was 219 mM and that of the ether (Et₂CH)₂O was 17 mM. As the catalytic reaction proceeds, the formation of \([\text{Cp(CO)}_2(\text{ArNC})\text{Mo(3-pentanone)})^+\] is accompanied by other organometallic product, such as \([\text{Cp(CO)}_2(\text{ArNC})\text{MoH}\]. Most revealing is the formation of protonated isocyanide ligand which suggests that isocyanide ligand dissociates from the metal to reduce the catalytic activity.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{[Cp(CO)}_2(\text{ArNC})\text{Mo(3-pentanone)})\text{[BA}^{\text{F}}_4\text{]} \xrightarrow{\text{H}_2 (< 4.1 \text{ atm})} & \text{OH} \quad \text{(eq. 4)} \\
\text{2OH} \xrightarrow{\text{H}^+} & \text{O} + \text{H}_2\text{O} \quad \text{(eq. 5)}
\end{align*}
\]
Fig 1. Time profile of the catalytic hydrogenation of 3-pentanone by [Cp(CO)(ArN)(Mo(3-pentanone))][Ba_{2}] under H_{2} (<4.1 atm) in CD_{2}Cl_{2} at 23^\circ C.

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References


[13] The amount of H_{2} in solution determined by \textsuperscript{1}H NMR integration is less than the actual amount because of the presence of 25% para-H_{2} present in H_{2}, so a correction factor has to be applied to account for this, multiplying the integrated amount by 1.33 to determine the actual concentration.

송 정섭 (Jeong-Sup Song) [정회원]

- 1983년 2월 : 서울대학교 화학교 육과 (이학사)
- 1984년 8월 : 한국과학기술원 화학과 (이학석사)
- 1990년 12월 : 펜실바니아 주립 대학교 화학과 (이학박사)
- 1995년 3월 ~ 현재 : 신문대학교 화학과 부교수

<관심분야>
- 유기금속화학, 전자재료

유가금속화학, 전자재료