Silyl Ketene Imines
Compiled by Fausto Daniel dos Santos Queda

Fausto Daniel dos Santos Queda was born in 1990 in Barreiro, Portugal. He received his B.Sc. in biochemistry from the Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Portugal in 2012. Presently, he is carrying out research under the supervision of Professor M. Manuel B. Marques at the Faculdade de Ciências e Tecnologia of the Universidade Nova de Lisboa. His research focuses on the synthesis of functionalized chitooligosaccharides.

REQUIMTE, Departamento de Química, Faculdade de Ciências e Tecnologia, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, 2829-516 Caparica, Lisboa, Portugal
E-mail: f.queda@campus.fct.unl.pt

Silyl ketene imines (SKIs) are a wide variety of nucleophiles possessing a pair of orthogonal substituents within a cumulene group and can have other functional groups, including alkenes, allenines, ketenes, and amines. SKIs can be employed in a wide range of reactions involving C–C bond formation and/or the formation of stereogenic centers.

When combined with an appropriate catalyst and ligand, C–C bond forming reactions with SKIs are highly stereoselective. SKIs can be converted into nitriles which are precursors of many other functional groups including carboxylic acids, amines, and aldehydes. One of the first synthetic applications of SKIs was described in 1987: a Diels–Alder [4+2] cycloaddition stating a versatile method to obtain anilines and cyclohexanones, leading to a range of aromatic amines in 52–89% yield.

Due to their geometry and the presence of two orthogonal substituents, SKIs have proven to be excellent nucleophiles in order to obtain stereogenic centers. SKIs are not commercially available, but they can be easily prepared from organic nitriles in the presence of a strong base, such as LDA, and of a silylating agent (Scheme 1).

Abstracts

(A) β-Amino nitriles are important precursors in organic synthesis because they are easily converted into β-amino acids. Feng and coworkers reported a three-component, one-pot method in which SKIs were reacted in the presence of a chiral N,N′-dioxide ligand and scandium(III) to provide β-amino nitriles in high enantiomeric excess (up to 97% ee) and yield (up to 95%).

(B) The Lewis base catalyzed conjugated addition of SKIs to α,β-un saturated aldehydes and ketones resulted in an improvement of diastereomeric and enantiomeric ratio in these Mukaiyama–Michael reactions. The corresponding adducts were obtained in high regioselectivity (1,4/1,2 = 92:8), yield, diastereomeric ratio, and enantioselectivity.
Several SKIs were studied in an aldol-type reaction to generate β-hydroxy nitriles with an α-quaternary center. This study involved the use of many aromatic aldehydes using a SiCl₄−bisphosphoramidate system for this new Lewis base catalyzed aldol reaction. SKIs have also been reported as substrates for aldol-type reactions to prepare β,γ-dihydroxy nitriles.

The addition of SKIs to acyl hydrazines in the presence of a chiral silane Lewis acid has been reported as an easy and enantioselective strategy for Mannich-type reactions. Depending of the presence of a chiral catalyst, such as a 4-(pyrrolidino)piperine derivative, the acylation products are obtained with high enantioselectivity.

Catalytic asymmetric protonation of SKIs is an important route to access α-nitrile stereogenic centers. Due to the versatility of the α-aryl silyl ketene acetals and imines in highly enantioselective Mannich reactions. The intermolecular acylation of SKIs leads to the formation of a new carbon–carbon bond. At room temperature and in the absence of a catalyst, SKIs are inert to a variety of acylating agents, but in the presence of a chiral catalyst, such as a 4-(pyrrolidino)piperine derivative, the acylation products are obtained with high enantioselectivity (81–82% ee) under anhydrous conditions. The first catalytic asymmetric synthesis of verapamil using an enantioselective acylation of SKIs was described; with a 25% total yield.

References

1. Denmark, S. E.; Wilson, T. W. Synlett 2010, 1723.