**Effects of Modification of Electrophilic Center from C=O to C=S**

**Bull. Korean Chem. Soc. 2013, Vol. 34, No. 5** 1525

http://dx.doi.org/10.5012/bkcs.2013.34.5.1525

**Metal-Ion Catalysis in Alkaline Ethanolysis of 2-Pyridyl Thionobenzoate: Effects of Modification of Electrophilic Center from C=O to C=S**

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Received February 21, 2013, Accepted February 27, 2013

Pseudo-first-order rate constants ($k_{obs}$) have been measured spectrophotometrically for the nucleophilic substitution reactions of 2-pyridyl thionobenzoate (5b) with alkali-metal ethoxides (EtOM, $M^+$ = Li⁺, Na⁺, K⁺, and 18-crown-6-ether complexed K⁺) in anhydrous ethanol at 25.0 ± 0.1 °C. The plots of $k_{obs}$ vs. [EtOM]₀ curve upward regardless of the nature of the $M^+$ ions, while those of $k_{obs}/[EtO]_o$ vs. [EtO]₀ are linear with a positive intercept. Dissection of $k_{obs}$ into $k_{EIO}$ and $k_{EtOM}$ (i.e., the second-order rate constants for the reactions with the dissociated EtO⁻ and ion-paired EtOM, respectively) has revealed that the ion-paired EtOM is more reactive than the dissociated EtO⁻, and $M^+$ ions catalyze the reactions in the order $K^+ < Na^+ < Li^+ < 18C6$-complexed K⁺. The plot of log $k_{EtOM}$ vs. 1/Stokes results in an excellent linear correlation, indicating that the reactions are catalyzed by the solvated $M^+$ ions but not by the bare $M^+$ ions. The reactions of 5b with EtOM have been concluded to proceed through a six-membered cyclic TS, in which the solvated $M^+$ ions increase the electrophilicity of the reaction center and the nucleofugality of the leaving group.

**Key Words**: Alkali metal ion, Solvent-separated ion-pair, Transition state, Electrophilicity, Nucleofugality

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**Introduction**

Alkali metal ions are ubiquitous in nature and are known to play important roles in biological processes, e.g., the Na⁺/K⁺ pump to maintain high K⁺ and low Na⁺ concentration in mammalian cells. Moreover, alkali metal ions have often been reported to catalyze acyl-group transfer reactions as a Lewis acid catalyst. The first systematic study has been carried out by Bunce et al. on nucleophilic substitution reactions of 4-nitrophenyl diphenylphosphinate (1a) with alkali metal ethoxides (EtOM, $M^+$ = Li⁺, Na⁺ and K⁺) in anhydrous ethanol to investigate the effect of alkali metal ions on the phosphinyl transfer reaction. They have found that the $M^+$ ions catalyze the reactions and the catalytic effect increases as the size of $M^+$ ions decreases, i.e., $K^+ < Na^+ < Li^+$. However, the catalytic effect has been shown to disappear in the presence of complexing agents, e.g., 18-crown-6-ether for K⁺ (18C6), 15-crown-5-ether (15C5) for Na⁺, and 2,1,1-cryptand for Li⁺.

Recently, a contrasting $M^+$ ion effect has been reported for the corresponding reactions of 4-nitrophenoxy diphenylphosphiniothioate (1b), i.e., Li⁺ ion inhibits the reaction while the other $M^+$ ions including the K⁺ ion complexed by 18C6 behave as a catalyst in the order Na⁺ < K⁺ < Li⁺/18C6, indicating that the effect of $M^+$ ions is strongly dependent on the nature of the electrophilic centers (i.e., $P=O$ vs. $P=S$). Similar results have been observed for the corresponding reactions of the insecticides paraoxon (2a), parathion (2b), and methylparathion (3b). The reactions of the P=O centered electrophiles (i.e., 2a and 3a) were catalyzed by $M^+$ ions in the order $K^+ < Na^+ < Li^+$. In contrast, the reactions of the P=S centered electrophiles (i.e., 2b and 3b) were inhibited by Li⁺ ion but were catalyzed by the K⁺ ion complexed by 18C6.

One might suggest that $M^+$ ions catalyze the reactions either by increasing the electrophilicity of the reaction center through TS₁ or by enhancing the nucleofugality of the leaving group through TS₂. If the enhanced nucleofugality through TS₂ is responsible for the metal ion catalysis, the effect of $M^+$ ions should be similar for the reactions of the $P=O$ and $P=S$ centered electrophiles, since their leaving groups are identical. However, the effects of $M^+$ ions have been found to be strongly dependent on the nature of the electronic substituent Y in the leaving group (i.e., $P=O$ vs. $P=S$) as mentioned above.

Accordingly, it has been concluded that $M^+$ ions catalyze the reaction by increasing the electrophilicity through TS₁. This idea has been further supported by the kinetic result that the catalytic effect shown by K⁺ ion is independent of the electronic nature of the substituent Y in the leaving group of Y-substituted phenyl diphenylphosphiniothioates (i.e., 1b and its derivatives) and related compounds.

The effect of $M^+$ ions on benzoyl transfer reactions has also been studied for the reactions of 4-nitrophenoxy benzoate...
(4) and 2-pyridyl benzoate (5a) with EtOM in anhydrous ethanol. The effect of M⁺ ions on reaction rates has been reported to be insignificant for the reactions of 4, while the reaction of 5a has been demonstrated to be strongly catalyzed by the M⁺ ions in the order K⁺ < Na⁺ < Li⁺. Our study has now been extended to the reactions of 2-pyridyl thionobenzoate (5b) with EtOM in anhydrous ethanol to get further information on the role of the M⁺ ions in the acyl-group transfer reactions (Scheme 1). The kinetic results obtained in this study have been compared with those reported previously for the corresponding reactions of 5a to investigate the effect of modification of the electrophilic center from C=O to C=S. 

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Ph-C-O-N} + \text{EtOM} &\rightarrow \text{Ph-C-OEt} + \text{MO} \\
M = \text{Li, Na, K, K/18C6}
\end{align*}
\]

Scheme 1

Results and Discussion

The kinetic study was performed spectrophotometrically under pseudo-first-order conditions, i.e., [EtOM] >> [5b]. All reactions in the current study obeyed pseudo-first-order kinetics. Pseudo-first-order rate constants (k_{obtd}) were obtained from the slope of linear plots of ln A vs. t. The correlation coefficients of the linear plots are usually higher than 0.9995. The uncertainty in the k_{obtd} values is estimated to be less than ±3% from replicate runs. The kinetic conditions and results are summarized in Table 1.

Effect of M⁺ Ions on Reactivity. Figure 1(b) demonstrates that the plots of k_{obtd} vs. [EtOM] for the reactions of 5b with EtOM curve upward as the concentration of EtOM increases. The upward curvature is most significant for the reaction with EtOLi but is insignificant for that with EtOK. The corresponding reactions of 5a have resulted in similarly curved plots with the same reactivity order (i.e., EtOLi > EtONA > EtOK) when the complexing agent 18C6 is absent (Figure 1(a)). However, in the presence of 18C6, the reactivity of EtOK exhibits quite different patterns for the reactions of 5a and 5b, i.e., the plot of k_{obtd} vs. [EtOK] is linear with decreased k_{obtd} values for the reaction of 5a (Figure 1(a)) but curves upward with enhanced k_{obtd} values for the reactions of 5b (Figure 1(b)). It is also noted that 5b is much less reactive than 5a. Thus, the current study demonstrates convincingly that the effects of modification of the electrophilic center from C=O to C=S on reactivity and the role of M⁺ ions are significant.

The upward curvature shown in Figure 1(a) and 1(b) for the plot of k_{obtd} vs. [EtOM] is typical of reactions in which M⁺ ions have been reported to behave as a Lewis acid catalyst. In fact, it has been concluded that the M⁺ ions catalyze the reactions of 5a with EtOM. Thus, one can suggest that the M⁺ ions including the 18C6 complexed K⁺ ion catalyze the reactions of 5b as a Lewis acid catalyst.

Dissection of k_{obtd} into k_{EIO} and k_{EIO}. To examine the above idea, k_{obtd} has been dissected into k_{EIO} and k_{EIO}, the second-order rate constant for the reaction with the dissociated EtO⁻ and ion-paired EtOM, respectively. EtOM in anhydrous ethanol was previously reported to exist mainly as the dissociated EtO⁻ and ion-paired EtOM. Accordingly, 5b would react with the dissociated EtO⁻ and ion-paired EtOM with the rate constants k_{EIO} and k_{EIO}, respectively, as shown in Scheme 2.

Table 1. Summary of Kinetic Data for the Reactions of 2-Pyridyl Thionobenzoate (5b) with EtOM in Anhydrous Ethanol at 25.0 ± 0.1 °C

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EtOM</th>
<th>10[^{[EtOM]}/M]</th>
<th>10[^{k_{obtd}}/s⁻¹]</th>
<th>No. of runs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EtOLi</td>
<td>4.04-55.2</td>
<td>1.33-24.6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EtONA</td>
<td>9.35-56.1</td>
<td>2.42-17.7</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EtOK</td>
<td>4.38-51.2</td>
<td>0.90-12.3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EtOK/18C6</td>
<td>4.33-50.6</td>
<td>0.94-18.4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[^{5b} = 8 × 10⁻³ M.]

Figure 2. Plots illustrating dissection of $k_{\text{obsd}}$ into $k_{\text{EtO}^-}$ and $k_{\text{EtOM}}$ for the reactions of 2-pyridyl thionobenzoate 5b with EtOM in anhydrous ethanol at 25.0 ± 0.1 °C.

is consistent with the result illustrated in Figure 2, in which the plots result in a common intercept regardless of the nature of $M^+$ ions. The $k_{\text{EtOM}}$ value is larger than the $k_{\text{EtO}^-}$ value, indicating that the ion-paired EtOM is more reactive than the dissociated EtO$^-$ in the reactions of 5b. Besides, the $k_{\text{EtOM}}$ value is dependent on the nature of the $M^+$ ions, i.e., it increases in the order $k_{\text{EtOM}} < k_{\text{EtO}^-} < k_{\text{EtOM}/18C6}$. Interestingly, the 18C6-complexed K$^+$ ion exerts the largest catalytic effect (i.e., the $k_{\text{EtOM}/k_{\text{EtO}^-}}$ ratio) among the $M^+$ ions studied. This is contrasting to the result reported previously for the corresponding reaction of 5a, i.e., the catalytic effect shown by K$^+$ ion disappears in the presence of 18C6 (Figure 1a), the linear plot with significantly decreased $k_{\text{obsd}}$ value for the reaction 5a with EtOK in the presence of 18C6. To account for the contrasting metal ion effects found in the reactions of 5a and 5b, the TS structures are depicted in the following section.

**TS Structures and Role of M$^+$ Ions.** Three different TS structures are plausible for the reactions of 5a and 5b with EtOM, i.e., TS$_{III}$, TS$_{IV}$ and TS$_{V}$. The reactions could be catalyzed by increasing the electrophilicity of the reaction center through TS$_{IV}$. However, the four-membered cyclic TS is expected to be less favorable than the six-membered cyclic TSs due to large ring strain. Accordingly, one can suggest that the reactions would proceed either through TS$_{IV}$ which increases both the electrophilicity of the reaction center and the nucleofugality of the leaving group, or via TS$_{V}$ that enhances the nucleofugality of the leaving group.

![TS Structures](image)

If the reactions of 5a and 5b proceed through TS$_{IV}$, one might expect that the $M^+$ effect should be similar for the reaction of the C=O and C=S centered electrophiles (i.e., 5a and 5b, respectively). This is because the X (i.e., O or S) of the C=X moiety of TS$_{IV}$ is not involved in the ring member. In contrast, the C=X moiety of TS$_{IV}$ is involved in the six-membered ring. Thus, if the reactions proceed through TS$_{IV}$, the effect of $M^+$ ions would be dependent on the nature of the electrophilic centers (i.e., C=O vs. C=S). In fact, as mentioned above, the 18C6-complexed K$^+$ ion exerts no catalytic effect in the reaction of 5a but exhibits the largest catalytic effect in the reaction of 5b. Thus, one can suggest that the reactions proceed through TS$_{IV}$ in which $M^+$ ions increase both the electrophilicity of the reaction center and the nucleofugality of the leaving group.

It is apparent that the C=O bond in 5a is a hard electrophilic center while the C=S bond in 5b is a soft one. Similarly, the O and S atoms in the C=X moiety of TS$_{IV}$ could behave as a hard base and a soft base, respectively, while Li$^+$ ion and the 18C6-complexed K$^+$ ion are a hard acid and a soft acid, respectively. Thus, one might expect that the O atom of the C=O moiety in TS$_{IV}$ would interact strongly with Li$^+$ ion but weakly with the 18C6-complexed K$^+$ ion on

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EtOM</th>
<th>$k_{\text{EtO}^-}/M^{-1}s^{-1}$</th>
<th>$k_{\text{EtOM}}/M^{-1}s^{-1}$</th>
<th>$k_{\text{EtOM}/k_{\text{EtO}^-}}$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EtOLi</td>
<td>0.189 ± 0.017</td>
<td>0.528 ± 0.008</td>
<td>2.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EtONa</td>
<td>0.191 ± 0.024</td>
<td>0.361 ± 0.016</td>
<td>1.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EtOK</td>
<td>0.179 ± 0.010</td>
<td>0.266 ± 0.008</td>
<td>1.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EtOK/18C6</td>
<td>0.195 ± 0.010</td>
<td>0.645 ± 0.030</td>
<td>3.31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the basis of the hard and soft acids and bases (HSAB) principle. This idea is consistent with the kinetic results shown in Figure 1(a), in which the reactivity of EtOM toward M$^+$ increases as the size of M$^+$ ions decreases, i.e., EtOK/18C6 < EtOK < EtONa < EtOLi. In contrast, one might expect that EtOK/18C6 is the most reactive species toward 5b while EtOLi is the least reactive on the basis of the HSAB principle. In fact, the 18C6-complexed K$^+$ ion exhibits the largest catalytic effect in the reactions of 5b (Table 2). However, interestingly the activity of the other EtOM is opposite to the expectation since it increases as the radius of the bare M$^+$ ions decreases, i.e., EtOK < EtONa < EtOLi.

EtOM can form solvated separated ion-pairs in ethanol. The radius of solvated M$^+$ ions (i.e., the Stokes radius) in anhydrous ethanol was reported to decrease as the size of the bare-metal ions increases, i.e., 4.43, 3.73, and 3.21 Å for Li$^+$, Na$^+$, and K$^+$, respectively. It is noted that the order of reactivity of EtOM shown in Table 2 increases as the radius of solvated M$^+$ ions (i.e., the Stokes radius) increases. Thus, one can suggest that the M$^+$ ions in TSV for the reactions of 5b are not the bare-metal ions but the solvated-metal ions from the solvent separated ion-pair. This idea is also consistent with the Eisenmann’s theory of ion-exchange selectivity patterns, since the polarizable S atom in TSV would interact weakly with the bare M$^+$ ions but strongly with the solvated-metal ions.

To examine the above idea, a plot of log $k_{EtOM}$ vs. the reciprocal of the Stokes radius of M$^+$ ions (1/r$_{Stokes}$) for the reactions of 5b with EtOM in anhydrous ethanol at 25.0°C.

**Conclusions**

The current reactions of 5b with EtOM have allowed us to conclude the following: (1) The ion-paired EtOM is more reactive than the dissociated EtOM. (2) M$^+$ ions catalyze the reactions of 5b and the catalytic effect increases in the order K$^+ < $Na$^+ < $Li$^+ < K$^+/18C6. (3) Substance 5b is less reactive than 5a. Furthermore, 18C6-complexed K$^+$ ion, which exerts no catalytic effect for the reaction of 5a, strongly catalyzes the reaction of 5b, indicating that the effects of modification of the electrophilic center from C=O to C=S on the reactivity and the role of M$^+$ ions are significant. (4) The reactions of 5b with EtOM proceed through TSV in which M$^+$ ions increase the electrophilicity of the reaction center and the nucleofugality of the leaving group. (5) The plot of log $k_{EtOM}$ vs. 1/r$_{Stokes}$ results in an excellent linear correlation, indicating that the reactions of 5b are catalyzed by the solvated M$^+$ ions rather than by the bare M$^+$ ions.

**Experimental Section**

**Materials.** Compound 5b was readily prepared from the reaction of dithiobenzoic acid and di-2-pyridyl carbonate (2-DPC) in the presence of 0.1 equiv. of 4-dimethylaminopyridine in methylene chloride at room temperature. The crude compound 5b was purified by short pathway silica gel column chromatography and subsequent recrystallization. The purity was confirmed by the melting point (43-45°C) and $^1$H and $^{13}$C NMR spectra (Supporting Information). The solutions of EtOM were prepared by dissolving the respective alkali metal in anhydrous ethanol under N$_2$ and stored in the refrigerator. The concentrations of EtOM stock solutions were measured by titration with mono potassium phthalate. 18-Crown-6-ether was recrystallized from acetonitrile and dried under vacuum. The anhydrous ethanol was further dried over magnesium and distilled under N$_2$ just before use.

**Kinetics.** Kinetic study was performed using a UV-Vis spectrophotometer equipped with a constant-temperature circulating bath. The reactions were followed by monitoring the disappearance of the substrate. Reactions were followed generally for 9-10 half-lives and $k_{obsd}$ values were calculated using the equation, $lnA_t = -k_{obsd}$t + c.

**Acknowledgments.** This research was supported by the Basic Science Research Program through the National Research Foundation of Korea (NRF) funded by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (2012-R1A1B3001637, I. H. Um) and from Priority Research Centers Program through the National Research Foundation of Korea (NRF) funded by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (2012-041653, J. I. Lee).

**Supporting Information.** $^1$H and $^{13}$C NMR spectra for 2-pyridyl thionobenzoate 5b.

**References**

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