

Versatile, mild, and selective reduction of various carbonyl groups using an electron-deficient boron catalyst

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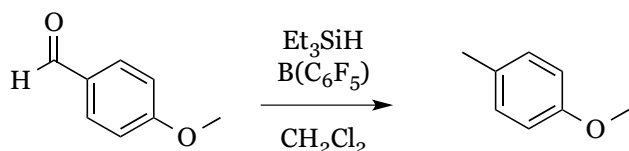
1. General Methods

Reagent chemicals were obtained from commercial sources and used without further purification. Flash chromatography was performed with columns of 40–63 Å silica gel, 230–400 mesh (Silicycle, Québec City, Canada). Thin-layer chromatography (TLC) was performed on plates of EMD 250-µm silica 60-F₂₅₄. The phrase “concentrated under reduced pressure” refers to the removal of solvents and other volatile materials using a rotary evaporator while maintaining the water-bath temperature below 40 °C. Residual solvent was removed from samples at high vacuum (<0.1 torr). The term “high vacuum” refers to vacuum achieved by mechanical a belt-drive oil pump. All NMR spectra were acquired at ambient temperature with a Bruker Ultra Shield Plus 400, and were referenced to TMS or a residual protic solvent.

Electrospray ionization (ESI) mass spectrometry for small-molecule characterization was performed with a Micromass LCT at the Mass Spectrometry Facility in the Department of Chemistry at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. {NIH 1S100D020022-1}

2. Experimental Procedures and Characterization Data

4-Methoxytoluene

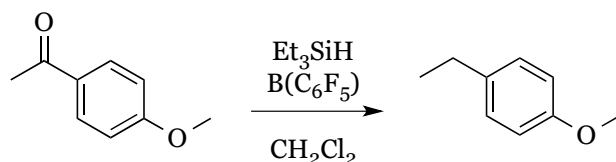


p-Anisaldehyde (0.055 g, 0.409 mmol) was dissolved in dichloromethane (4.1 mL) in a scintillation vial. Triethylsilane (0.19 mL, 1.227 mmol) was then added followed by tris(pentafluorophenyl)borane (0.021 g, 0.0409 mmol). The reaction was allowed to stir for 8 hours before being concentrated under reduced pressure and purified by flash chromatography to yield 4-Methoxytoluene (0.039 g, 79%).

¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 7.01 (d, *J* = 8.3 Hz, 2H), 6.74 (d, *J* = 8.3 Hz, 1H), 3.78 (s, 3H), 2.27 (s, 3H).

*Checked against Sigma-Aldrich: <http://www.sigmaaldrich.com/spectra/fnmr/FNMR001412.PDF>

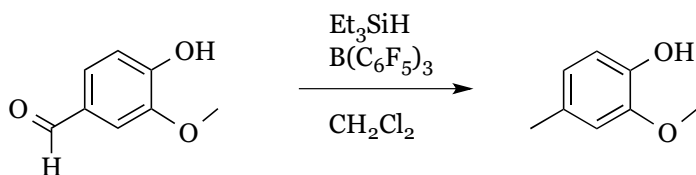
4-Ethylanisole



p-Methoxyacetophenone (0.061 g, 0.409 mmol) was dissolved in dichloromethane (4.1 mL) in a scintillation vial. Triethylsilane (0.19 mL, 1.227 mmol) was then added followed by tris(pentafluorophenyl)borane (0.021 g, 0.0409 mmol). The reaction was allowed to stir for 8 hours before being concentrated under reduced pressure and purified by flash chromatography to yield 4-Ethylanisole (0.042 g, 75%).

$^1\text{H NMR}$ (400 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 7.12 (d, $J = 8.6$ Hz, 2H), 6.83 (d, $J = 8.6$ Hz, 2H), 3.79 (s, 3H), 2.59 (q, $J = 7.6$ Hz, 2H), 1.21 (t, $J = 7.6$ Hz, 3H). *Checked against: Wang, B., Sun, H., Sun, Z., *Eur. J. Org. Chem.* **2009**, 22, 3688-3692.

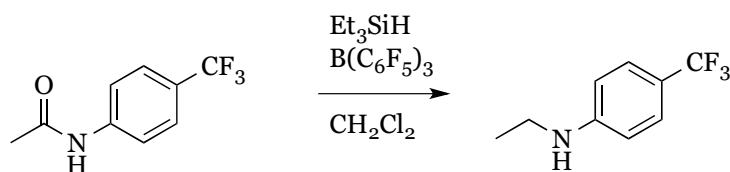
2-Methoxy-4-methylphenol



Vanillin (0.062 g, 0.409 mmol) was dissolved in dichloromethane (4.1 mL) in a scintillation vial. Triethylsilane (0.13 mL, 0.818 mmol) was then added followed by tris(pentafluorophenyl)borane (0.021 g, 0.0409 mmol). The reaction was allowed to stir for 8 hours before being concentrated under reduced pressure and purified by flash chromatography to yield 2-Methoxy-4-methylphenol (0.044 g, 78%).

$^1\text{H NMR}$ (400 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 6.81 (d, $J = 7.8$ Hz, 1H), 6.70 – 6.61 (m, 3H), 5.42 (s, 1H), 3.87 (s, 3H), 2.29 (s, 3H). *Checked against Sigma-Aldrich: <http://www.sigmaaldrich.com/spectra/fnmr/FNMR006218.PDF>

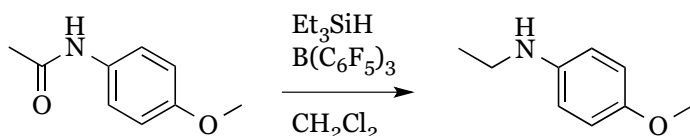
4-Trifluoromethyl-N-ethylaniline



4-Trifluoromethylacetanilide (0.083 g, 0.409 mmol) was dissolved in dichloromethane (4.1 mL) in a scintillation vial. Triethylsilane (0.2 mL, 1.227 mmol) was then added followed by tris(pentafluorophenyl)borane (0.021 g, 0.0409 mmol). The reaction was allowed to stir for 8 hours before being concentrated under reduced pressure and purified by flash chromatography to yield 4-Trifluoromethyl-N-ethylaniline (0.070 g, 91%).

$^1\text{H NMR}$ (400 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 7.39 (d, $J = 8.1$ Hz, 2H), 6.58 (d, $J = 8.1$ Hz, 2H), 3.89 (bs, 1H), 3.25 – 3.12 (m, 2H), 1.27 (t, $J = 7.2$ Hz, 3H). $^{13}\text{C NMR}$ (101 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 150.7, 126.6 (q, $J = 3.9$ Hz), 125.0 (q, $J = 270.4$ Hz), 118.5 (q, $J = 32.6$ Hz), 111.7, 38.0, 14.6. *Corrected $^{13}\text{C-NMR}$ spectral data from incorrect data in: Sajiki, H. *Org. Lett.* **2004**, 6, 4977-4980. Authors might not have realized that F is a spin active nucleus

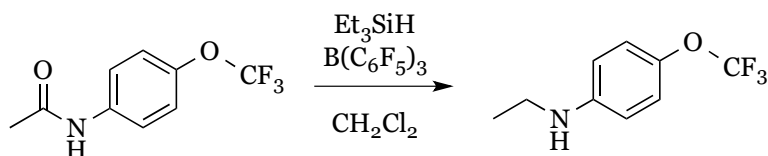
4-Methoxy-N-ethylaniline



4-Methoxy-N-Acetylaniline (0.067 g, 0.409 mmol) was dissolved in dichloromethane (4.1 mL) in a scintillation vial. Triethylsilane (0.20 mL, 1.227 mmol) was then added followed by tris(pentafluorophenyl)borane (1.050 g, 0.204 mmol). The reaction was allowed to stir for 8 hours before being concentrated under reduced pressure and purified by flash chromatography to yield 4-Methoxy-N-ethylaniline (0.051 g, 82%).

$^1\text{H NMR}$ (400 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 6.79 (d, $J = 8.9$ Hz), 6.63 (d, $J = 8.9$ Hz), 3.76, 3.12 (q, $J = 7.1$ Hz), 1.23 (t, $J = 7.1$ Hz). $^{13}\text{C NMR}$ (101 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 153.0, 140.9, 115.2, 115.0, 55.9, 40.38, 14.6. *Checked against: Nacario, R., Kotakonda, S., Fouchard, D. M. D., Tillekeratne, L. M. V., Hudson, R. A. *Org. Lett.* **2005**, *7*, 471-474.

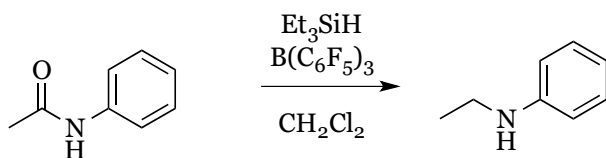
4-Trifluoromethoxy-N-ethylaniline



4-(Trifluoromethoxy)-N-Acetylaniline (0.086 g, 0.409 mmol) was dissolved in dichloromethane (4.1 mL) in a scintillation vial. Triethylsilane (0.20 mL, 1.227 mmol) was then added followed by tris(pentafluorophenyl)borane (0.021 g, 0.0409 mmol). The reaction was allowed to stir for 8 hours before being concentrated under reduced pressure and purified by flash chromatography to yield 4-Trifluoromethoxy-N-ethylaniline (0.054 g, 87%).

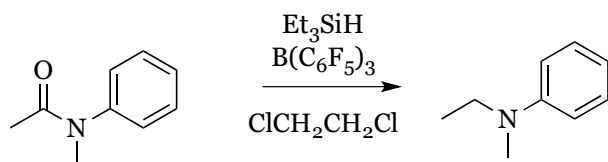
$^1\text{H NMR}$ (400 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 7.03 (d, $J = 9.0$ Hz, 2H), 6.55 (d, $J = 9.0$ Hz, 2H), 3.61 (bs, 1H), 3.17 – 3.09 (m, 2H), 1.26 (t, $J = 7.1$ Hz, 3H). $^{13}\text{C NMR}$ (101 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 147.2, 140.2, 122.4, 120.7 (q, $J = 255.6$ Hz), 112.8, 38.6, 14.8.

N-Ethylaniline



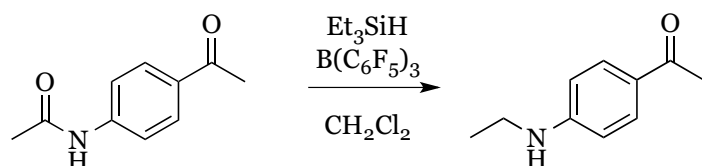
Acetanilide (0.055 g, 0.409 mmol) was dissolved in dichloromethane (4.1 mL) in a scintillation vial. Triethylsilane (0.20 mL, 1.227 mmol) was then added followed by tris(pentafluorophenyl)borane (0.021 g, 0.0409 mmol). The reaction was allowed to stir for 8 hours before being concentrated under reduced pressure and purified by flash chromatography to yield N-Ethylaniline (0.046 g, 94%).

$^1\text{H NMR}$ (400 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 7.18 (t, $J = 7.5$ Hz, 2H), 6.70 (t, $J = 7.5$ Hz, 1H), 6.61 (d, $J = 7.5$ Hz, 2H), 3.61 (bs, 1H), 3.55 (bs, 1H), 3.16 (q, $J = 7.2$ Hz, 2H), 1.26 (t, $J = 7.2$ Hz, 3H). $^{13}\text{C NMR}$ (101 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 129.2, 117.2, 112.7, 38.5, 14.9. **HRMS** (ESI) m/z 122.0963 [calc'd for $\text{C}_8\text{H}_{11}\text{N}$ ($\text{M}+\text{H}^+$) 122.0964].

N-Methyl-N-ethylaniline

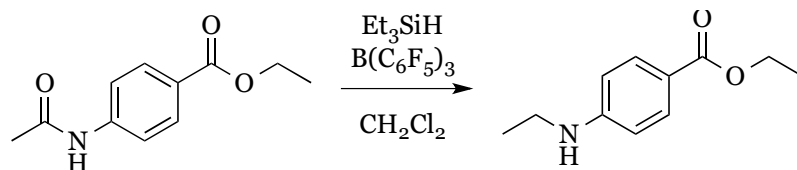
N-Methylacetanilide (0.061 g, 0.409 mmol) was dissolved in dichloroethane (4.1 mL) in a scintillation vial. Triethylsilane (0.33 mL, 2.045 mmol) was then added followed by tris(pentafluorophenyl)borane (0.021 g, 0.0409 mmol). The reaction was allowed to stir at 60°C for 8 hours before being concentrated under reduced pressure and purified by flash chromatography to yield N-Methyl-N-ethylaniline (0.041 g, 74%).

¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 7.23 (dd, *J* = 9.1, 7.6 Hz, 2H), 6.79 – 6.59 (m, 3H), 3.40 (q, *J* = 7.1 Hz, 2H), 2.90 (s, 3H), 1.12 (t, *J* = 7.1 Hz, 2H). **¹³C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl₃)** δ 149.1, 129.2, 116.0, 112.4, 46.8, 37.5, 11.2. **HRMS (ESI)** *m/z* 136.1120 [calc'd for C₉H₁₃N (M+H⁺) 136.1121].

4-Ethylaminoacetophenone

4-(Acetamido)acetophenone (0.072 g, 0.409 mmol) was dissolved in dichloromethane (4.1 mL) in a scintillation vial. Triethylsilane (0.20 mL, 1.227 mmol) was then added followed by tris(pentafluorophenyl)borane (0.021 g, 0.0409 mmol). The reaction was allowed to stir for 8 hours before being concentrated under reduced pressure and purified by flash chromatography to yield 4-(Ethylamino)acetophenone (0.058 g, 88%).

¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 7.39 (d, *J* = 8.4 Hz, 2H), 7.14 (d, *J* = 8.3 Hz, 2H), 2.61 (q, *J* = 7.6 Hz, 2H), 2.16 (s, 3H), 1.21 (t, *J* = 7.6 Hz, 3H). **¹³C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl₃)** δ 168.1, 140.4, 135.5, 128.3, 120.1, 28.3, 24.5, 15.6. **HRMS (ESI)** *m/z* 164.1070 [calc'd for C₁₀H₁₃NO (M+H⁺) 164.1070].

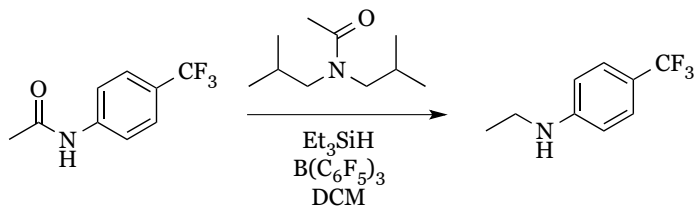
Ethyl-4-ethylaminobenzoate

Ethyl-4-(acetamido)benzoate (0.085 g, 0.409 mmol) was dissolved in dichloromethane (4.1 mL) in a scintillation vial. Triethylsilane (0.20 mL, 1.227 mmol) was then added followed by tris(pentafluorophenyl)borane (0.021 g,

0.0409 mmol). The reaction was allowed to stir for 8 hours before being concentrated under reduced pressure and purified by flash chromatography to yield Ethyl-4-(ethylamino)benzoate (0.069 g, 87%).

¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 7.87 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 2H), 6.54 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 2H), 4.31 (q, *J* = 7.1 Hz, 2H), 3.22 (q, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 2H), 1.36 (t, *J* = 7.1 Hz, 3H), 1.28 (t, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 3H). **¹³C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl₃)** δ 166.9, 151.9, 131.4, 118.5, 111.3, 60.2, 37.9, 14.6, 14.5. **HRMS (ESI)** *m/z* 194.1176 [calc'd for C₁₁H₁₅NO₂ (M+H⁺) 194.1176].

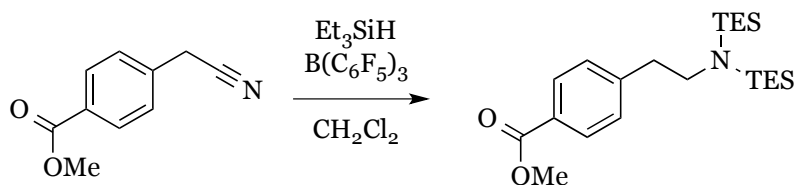
Inhibitory Study:



4-Trifluoromethylacetanilide (0.083 g, 0.409 mmol) and N-acetyl-diisobutylamine (0.070 g, 0.409 mmol) were dissolved in dichloromethane (4.1 mL) in a scintillation vial. Triethylsilane (0.67 mL, 4.09 mmol) was then added followed by tris(pentafluorophenyl)borane (0.315 g, 0.614 mmol). The reaction was allowed to stir for 8 hours before being concentrated under reduced pressure and purified by flash chromatography to yield 4-Trifluoromethyl-N-ethylaniline (0.037 g, 48%). Without the molar excess of borane, no product formation was observed.

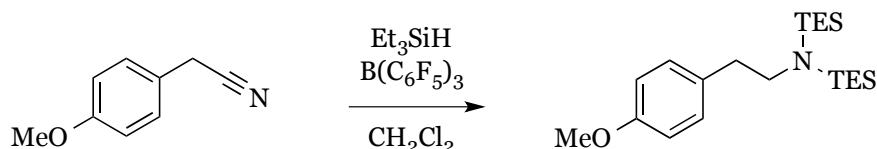
Characterization Data: See Above

2-(4'-Methoxycarbonyl)-N,N-bis(triethylsilyl)phenethylamine



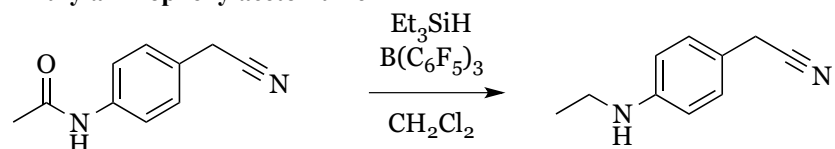
Methyl 4-(cyanomethyl) benzoate (0.071 g, 0.409 mmol) was dissolved in dichloromethane (4.1 mL) in a scintillation vial. Triethylsilane (0.19 mL, 1.227 mmol) was then added followed by tris(pentafluorophenyl)borane (0.021 g, 0.0409 mmol). The reaction was allowed to stir for 8 hours before being concentrated under reduced pressure and purified by flash chromatography to yield 2-(4'-Methoxy)-N,N-bis(triethylsilyl)phenethylamine (0.139 g, 84%).

¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 7.96 (d, *J* = 8.2 Hz, 2H), 7.21 (d, *J* = 8.2 Hz, 2H), 3.90 (s, 3H), 3.05 – 2.85 (m, 2H), 2.78 – 2.64 (m, 2H), 0.98 (t, *J* = 7.9 Hz, 18H), 0.68 (q, *J* = 7.9 Hz, 12H). **¹³C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl₃)** δ 167.1, 145.7, 129.8, 128.5, 128.0, 52.0, 47.6, 42.5, 7.6, 5.7. **HRMS (ESI)** *m/z* 408.2745 [calc'd for C₂₂H₄₁NO₂Si₂ (M+H⁺) 408.2749]

2-(4'-Methoxy)-N,N-bis(triethylsilyl)phenethylamine

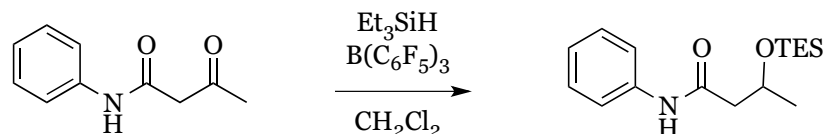
4-Methoxyphenylacetonitrile (0.060 g, 0.409 mmol) was dissolved in dichloromethane (4.1 mL) in a scintillation vial. Triethylsilane (0.19 mL, 1.227 mmol) was then added followed by tris(pentafluorophenyl)borane (0.021 g, 0.0409 mmol). The reaction was allowed to stir for 8 hours before being concentrated under reduced pressure and purified by flash chromatography to yield 2-(4'-Methoxy)-N,N-bis(triethylsilyl)phenethylamine (0.128 g, 83%).

¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 7.08 (d, *J* = 8.6 Hz, 2H), 6.83 (d, *J* = 8.6 Hz, 2H), 3.79 (s, 3H), 2.97 – 2.82 (m, 2H), 2.65 – 2.54 (m, 2H), 0.97 (t, *J* = 7.9 Hz, 18H), 0.67 (q, *J* = 7.9 Hz, 12H). ¹³C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 157.9, 132.4, 129.4, 113.8, 55.2, 48.2, 41.4, 7.6, 5.7. HRMS (ESI) *m/z* 380.2793 [calc'd for C₂₁H₄₁NOSi₂ (M+H⁺) 380.2799]

4-Ethylaminophenylacetonitrile

4-Acetamidylphenylacetonitrile (0.071 g, 0.409 mmol) was dissolved in dichloromethane (4.1 mL) in a scintillation vial. Triethylsilane (0.19 mL, 1.227 mmol) was then added followed by tris(pentafluorophenyl)borane (0.021 g, 0.0409 mmol). The reaction was allowed to stir for 8 hours before being concentrated under reduced pressure and purified by flash chromatography to yield 4-Ethylaminophenylacetonitrile (0.060 g, 92%).

¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 7.10 (d, *J* = 8.6 Hz, 2H), 6.58 (d, *J* = 8.6 Hz, 2H), 3.63 (s, 3H), 3.15 (q, *J* = 7.1 Hz, 2H), 1.26 (t, *J* = 7.1 Hz, 3H). ¹³C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 148.13, 128.89, 118.69, 117.76, 113.02, 38.43, 22.81, 14.79. HRMS (ESI) *m/z* 161.1072 [calc'd for C₁₀H₁₂N₂ (M+H⁺) 161.1073].

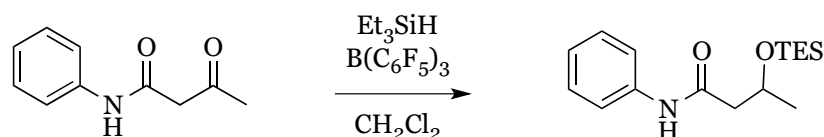
Acetoacetanilide Triethylsilylether (Mixture of E/Z Amide Conformations)

Acetoacetanilide (0.072 g, 0.409 mmol) was dissolved in dichloromethane (4.1 mL) in a scintillation vial. Triethylsilane (0.20 mL, 1.227 mmol) was then added followed by tris(pentafluorophenyl)borane (0.021 g, 0.0409 mmol). The reaction was allowed to stir for 8 hours before being concentrated under reduced pressure and purified by flash chromatography to yield acetoacetanilide triethylsilylether (0.118 g, 89%).

¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 8.71 (s, 0.4H), 8.38 (s, 0.6H), 7.53 – 7.45 (m, 2H), 7.35 – 7.24 (m, 2H), 7.16 – 7.03 (m, 1H), 4.34 – 4.16 (m, 1H), 2.69 – 2.31 (m, 2H), 1.29 (d, *J* = 6.3 Hz, 1.2H), 1.24 (d, *J* = 6.3 Hz, 1.8H), 0.98 (t, *J* =

7.9 Hz, 3.6H), 0.93 (t, $J = 7.9$ Hz, 2.4H), 0.66 (q, $J = 7.9$ Hz, 2.4H), 0.52 (q, $J = 7.9$ Hz, 1.6H). ^{13}C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 170.9, 170.0, 137.9, 137.6, 129.0, 128.96, 124.5, 124.2, 120.2, 119.8, 66.0, 65.0, 46.6, 44.9, 23.0, 23.0, 6.8, 6.4, 4.8, 4.8. HRMS (ESI) m/z 294.1880 [calc'd for $\text{C}_{16}\text{H}_{27}\text{NO}_2\text{Si}$ ($\text{M}+\text{H}^+$) 294.1884]

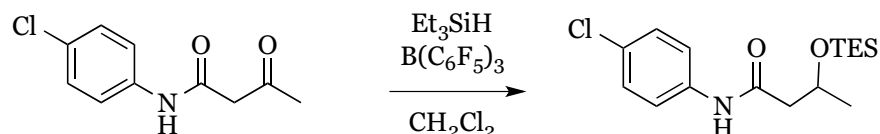
Acetoacetanilide Triethylsilylether (Mixture of E/Z Amide Conformations)



Acetoacetanilide (0.072 g, 0.409 mmol) was dissolved in dichloromethane (4.1 mL) in a scintillation vial. Triethylsilane (0.20 mL, 1.227 mmol) was then added followed by tris(pentafluorophenyl)borane (0.021 g, 0.0409 mmol). The reaction was allowed to stir for 8 hours before being concentrated under reduced pressure and purified by flash chromatography to yield acetoacetanilide triethylsilylether (0.118 g, 89%).

^1H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 8.71 (s, 0.4H), 8.38 (s, 0.6H), 7.53 – 7.45 (m, 2H), 7.35 – 7.24 (m, 2H), 7.16 – 7.03 (m, 1H), 4.34 – 4.16 (m, 1H), 2.69 – 2.31 (m, 2H), 1.29 (d, $J = 6.3$ Hz, 1.2H), 1.24 (d, $J = 6.3$ Hz, 1.8H), 0.98 (t, $J = 7.9$ Hz, 3.6H), 0.93 (t, $J = 7.9$ Hz, 2.4H), 0.66 (q, $J = 7.9$ Hz, 2.4H), 0.52 (q, $J = 7.9$ Hz, 1.6H). ^{13}C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 170.9, 170.0, 137.9, 137.6, 129.0, 128.96, 124.5, 124.2, 120.2, 119.8, 66.0, 65.0, 46.6, 44.9, 23.0, 23.0, 6.8, 6.4, 4.8, 4.8. HRMS (ESI) m/z 294.1880 [calc'd for $\text{C}_{16}\text{H}_{27}\text{NO}_2\text{Si}$ ($\text{M}+\text{H}^+$) 294.1884]

p-Chloro-Acetoacetanilide Triethylsilylether



p-Chloroacetoacetanilide (0.086 g, 0.409 mmol) was dissolved in dichloromethane (4.1 mL) in a scintillation vial. Triethylsilane (0.20 mL, 1.227 mmol) was then added followed by tris(pentafluorophenyl)borane (0.021 g, 0.0409 mmol). The reaction was allowed to stir for 8 hours before being concentrated under reduced pressure and purified by flash chromatography to yield *p*-chloroacetoacetanilide triethylsilylether (0.120 g, 90%).

^1H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 8.61 (bs, 1H), 7.46 (d, $J = 8.8$ Hz, 2H), 7.27 (d, $J = 8.8$ Hz, 2H), 4.35 – 4.23 (m, 1H), 2.65 (dd, $J = 14.9, 3.8$ Hz, 1H), 2.40 (dd, $J = 14.9, 5.6$ Hz, 1H), 1.30 (d, $J = 6.3$ Hz, 3H), 0.98 (t, $J = 7.9$ Hz, 8H), 0.66 (q, $J = 7.9$ Hz, 6H). ^{13}C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 169.6, 136.7, 129.0, 128.8, 120.8, 66.0, 46.7, 23.0, 6.8, 4.8. HRMS (ESI) m/z 328.1490 [calc'd for $\text{C}_{16}\text{H}_{26}\text{NO}_2\text{ClSi}$ ($\text{M}+\text{H}^+$) 328.1494]

3. ^1H -NMR and ^{13}C -NMR Spectra