

Supporting Information

Copper-Mediated Oxidative *N*-Cyanation Reaction Using CuCN

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1. General Considerations

All chemicals were used as received without further purification unless stated otherwise. ^1H NMR and ^{13}C NMR spectra were recorded at ambient temperature on a 300, 400 or 500 MHz spectrometer (75, 100 or 125 MHz for ^{13}C). NMR experiments are reported in δ units, parts per million (ppm), and were referenced to CDCl_3 (δ 7.26 or 77.0 ppm) as the internal standard. The coupling constants J are given in Hz. Column chromatography was performed using EM Silica gel 60 (300-400 meshes) or neutral aluminum oxide (200-300 meshes).

2. Experimental Procedures

(a) General Procedure for 0.3 mmol Scale

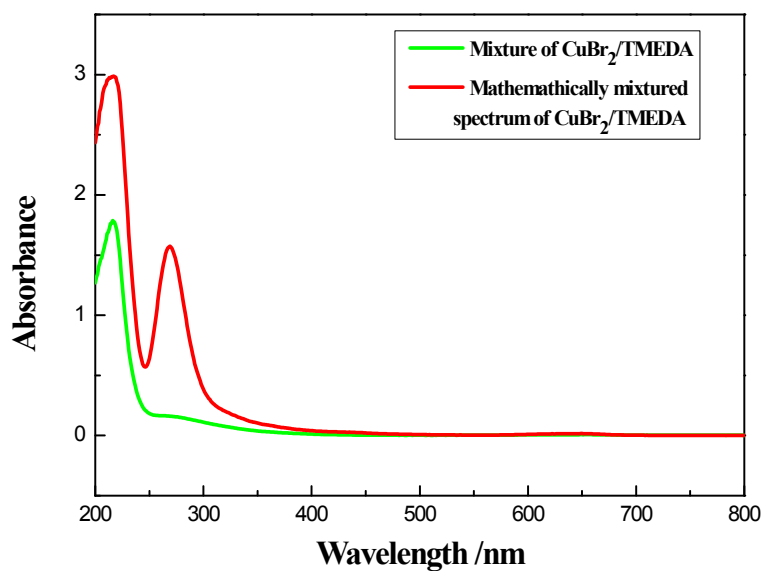
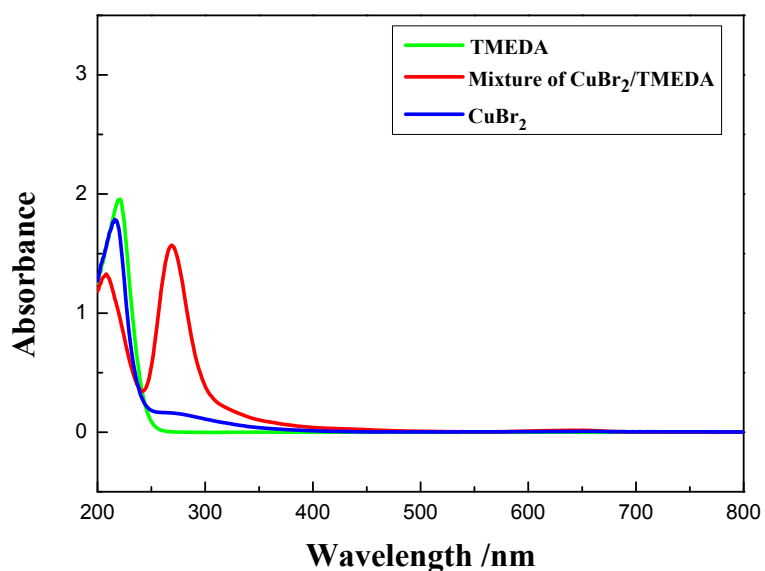
Under O_2 , a 20 mL of Schlenk tube equipped with a stir bar was charged with *sec*-amine (0.3 mmol), CuCN (0.6 mmol, 53.7 mg), CuBr_2 (0.05 mol, 11.2 mg), TMEDA (0.6 mmol, 89 μL), Na_2SO_4 (0.6 mmol, 85.2 mg) and CH_3CN (3 mL). The tube was sealed with a Teflon lined cap. The reaction mixture was stirred at 50 $^\circ\text{C}$ for 12 h in oil bath. After the completion of the reaction (monitored by TLC), the solvent was concentrated in vacuum and the residue was purified by flash column chromatography on silica gel or Al_2O_3 with petroleum ether-ethyl acetate as the eluent to give the desired product.

(b) Procedure for 20 mmol Scale

A 250 mL round-bottom flask equipped with a stir-bar was charged with *N*-methylbenzylamine (20 mmol, 2.42 g), CuCN (40 mmol, 3.50 g), CuBr_2 (1 mmol, 223 mg), TMEDA (40 mmol, 2.33 g), Na_2SO_4 (40 mmol, 2.84 g) and CH_3CN (125 mL). A balloon filled with oxygen gas was connected to the reaction flask. The reaction mixture was stirred at 50 $^\circ\text{C}$ for 12 h in oil bath. After the completion of the reaction (monitored by TLC), the solvent was concentrated in vacuum and the residue was purified by flash column chromatography on silica gel with petroleum ether-ethyl acetate as the eluent to give the desired product.

3. Research of Mechanism

(a) Test of UV



UV-Vis Analysis:

All absorbance measurements were carried out on an UVmini-1240 spectrophotometer equipped with a quartz cell. The concentration of CuBr₂ and TMEDA were 0.0015 mg/mL and 0.015 mg/mL, respectively.

The above UV-Vis results imply that TMEDA acts as a ligand.

(b) Consumption of O₂

Consumption of O₂ in Blank Experiment:

Under O₂, a Schlenk tube equipped with a stir bar was charged with CuCN (0.4 mmol), CuBr₂ (0.03 mol), TMEDA (0.4 mmol), Na₂SO₄ (0.4 mmol) and CH₃CN (3 mL). The reaction mixture was stirred at 50 °C for 12 h in oil bath. Then, consumption of O₂ was tested, and the amount of O₂ was 2.3 mL.

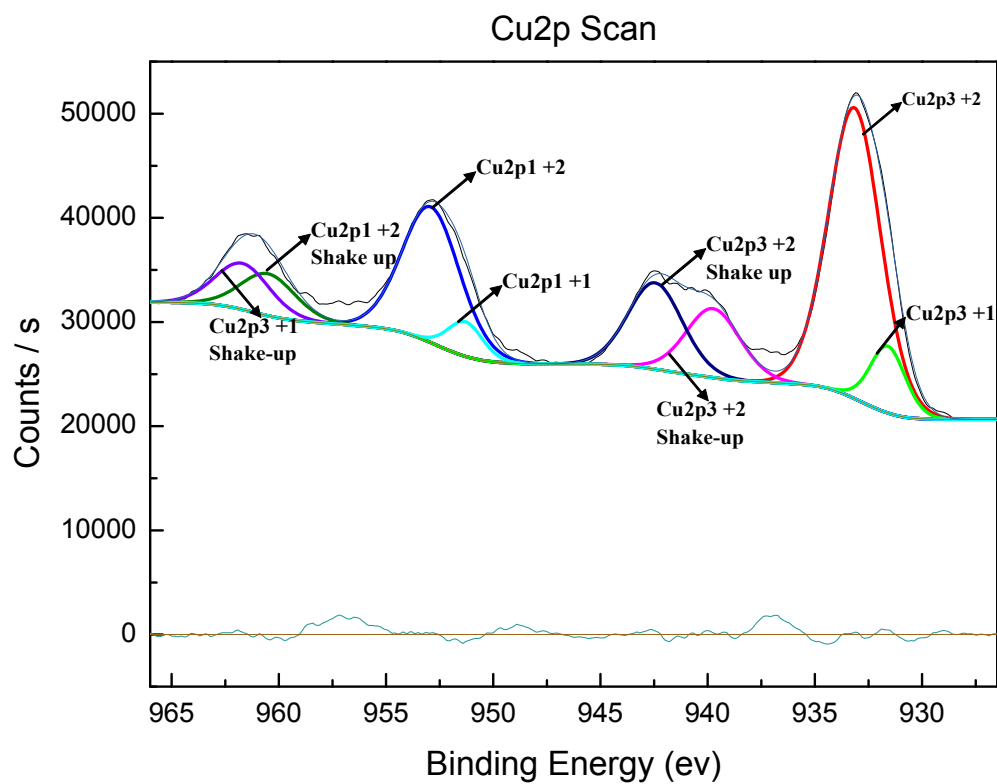
Consumption of O₂ in Cyanation Reaction:

Under O₂, a Schlenk tube equipped with a stir bar was charged with *N*-methylbenzylamine (0.2 mmol), CuCN (0.4 mmol), CuBr₂ (0.03 mol), TMEDA (0.4 mmol), Na₂SO₄ (0.4 mmol) and CH₃CN (3 mL). The reaction mixture was stirred at 50 °C for 12 h in oil bath. Then, consumption of O₂ was tested and found to be 4.1 mL. The test temperature is 8 °C.

The consumed O₂ for the oxidative coupling is 1.8 mL. After calculation, the consumed O₂ was 0.078 mmol and the *N*-cyanation product was 0.166 mmol. Thus, the ratio of the consumed O₂ and the *N*-cyanation product was found to be nearly 1:2.

(c) XPS Study

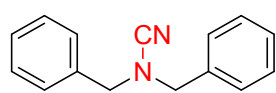
X-ray photoelectron spectroscopy (XPS) was carried for the determination of Cu oxidation state.



The above XPS results indicated that almost Cu (I) was converted to Cu (II).

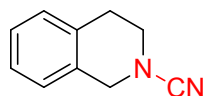
4. Characterization Data for the Products

N,N-Dibenzylcyanamide (3a): ^[1]



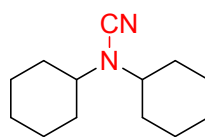
White solid; m.p.: 51-53 °C. ¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 300 MHz) δ 4.12 (s, 4H), 7.30-7.34 (m, 4H), 7.36-7.43 (m, 6H); ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃, 75 MHz) δ 54.1, 118.3, 128.6, 128.6, 128.8, 134.2. IR(prism): 3049, 3041, 3018, 2930, 2881, 2210, 1616, 1586, 1500, 1460, 1080, 733, 689.

3,4-Dihydro-2(1H)-isoquinolinecarbonitrile (3b):



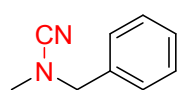
White solid; m.p.: 68-70 °C. ¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 300 MHz) δ 2.96 (t, *J* = 5.8 Hz, 2H), 3.48 (t, *J* = 5.9 Hz, 2H), 4.41 (s, 2H), 7.03-7.06 (m, 1H), 7.12-7.22 (m, 3H); ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃, 125 MHz) δ 27.4, 46.5, 49.8, 117.8, 125.8, 126.5, 127.0, 129.0, 130.6, 132.4. MS (EI): 158 (M⁺); HRMS (ESI) *m/z* calcd for C₁₀H₁₁N₂ (M+H)⁺ 159.0917, found 159.0913. IR(prism): 3092, 3041, 2941, 2902, 2861, 2215, 1610, 1592, 1502.

Dicyclohexylcyanamide (3c):



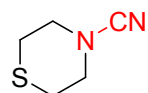
Yellowish liquid. ¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 300 MHz) δ 1.08-1.29 (m, 6H), 1.37-1.48 (m, 4H), 1.58-1.61 (m, 2H), 1.77-1.90 (m, 8H), 2.70-2.78 (m, 2H); ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃, 125 MHz) δ 25.0, 25.1, 31.7, 58.0, 115.4. MS (EI): 206 (M⁺); HRMS (ESI) *m/z* calcd for C₁₂H₂₃N₂ (M+H)⁺ 207.1856, found 207.1858. IR(neat): 2951, 2856, 2192, 1460.

Benzylmethylcyanamide (3d):



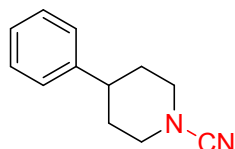
Colorless liquid. ¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 300 MHz) δ 2.68 (s, 3H), 4.06 (s, 2H), 7.23-7.31 (m, 5H); ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃, 125 MHz) δ 37.6, 56.9, 118.6, 128.2, 128.4, 128.7, 134.2. MS (EI): 146 (M⁺); HRMS (ESI) *m/z* calcd for C₉H₁₁N₂ (M+H)⁺ 147.0917, found 147.0908. IR(neat): 3041, 3016, 2948, 2908, 2223, 1610, 1460.

Thiomorpholine-4-carbonitrile (3e):



White solid; m.p.: 41-43 °C. ¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 500 MHz) δ 2.70 (t, *J* = 5.1 Hz, 4H), 3.46 (t, *J* = 5.1 Hz, 4H); ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃, 100 MHz) δ 26.1, 50.8, 117.4. MS (EI): 128 (M⁺); HRMS (ESI) *m/z* calcd for C₅H₉N₂S (M+H)⁺ 129.0481, found 129.0478. IR(prism): 2958, 2921, 2849, 2209, 1460.

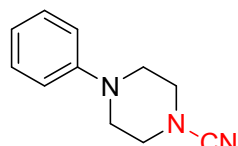
4-Phenylpiperidine-1-carbonitrile (3f):



White solid; m.p.: 69-71 °C. ¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 300 MHz) δ 1.74-

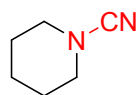
1.76 (m, 4H), 2.48-2.53 (m, 1H), 3.04-3.06 (m, 2H), 3.40-3.44 (m, 2H), 7.09-7.26 (m, 5H); ^{13}C NMR (CDCl_3 , 75 MHz) δ 31.7, 40.9, 49.8, 118.1, 126.4, 126.5, 128.4, 144.4. MS (EI): 186 (M^+); HRMS (ESI) m/z calcd for $\text{C}_{12}\text{H}_{15}\text{N}_2$ ($\text{M}+\text{H}$) $^+$ 187.1230, found 187.1222. IR(prism): 3058, 3041, 2947, 2932, 2853, 2209, 1605, 1483, 1455.

4-Phenylpiperazine-1-carbonitrile (3g):



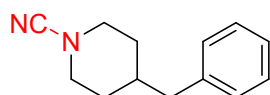
Yellowish liquid. ^1H NMR (CDCl_3 , 400MHz) δ 3.23 (t, J = 4.5 Hz, 4H), 3.39 (t, J = 4.5 Hz, 4H), 6.90-6.94 (m, 3H), 7.27-7.31 (m, 2H); ^{13}C NMR (CDCl_3 , 125 MHz) δ 48.7, 49.0, 117.0, 117.4, 121.1, 129.2, 150.6. MS (EI): 187 (M^+); HRMS (ESI) m/z calcd for $\text{C}_{11}\text{H}_{14}\text{N}_3$ ($\text{M}+\text{H}$) $^+$ 188.1182, found 188.1183. IR(neat): 3073 3042, 2966, 2907, 2825, 2209, 1597, 1586, 1498, 1452.

Piperidine-1-carbonitrile (3h):



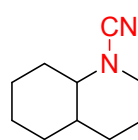
Colorless liquid. ^1H NMR (CDCl_3 , 400 MHz) δ 1.56-1.58 (m, 2H), 1.61-1.66 (m, 4H), 3.15-3.18 (m, 4H); ^{13}C NMR (CDCl_3 , 125 MHz) δ 23.0, 24.5, 50.1, 118.6. MS (EI): 110 (M^+); HRMS (ESI) m/z calcd for $\text{C}_6\text{H}_{11}\text{N}_2$ ($\text{M}+\text{H}$) $^+$ 111.0917, found 111.0914. IR(neat): 2917, 2848, 2209, 1453.

4-Benzylpiperidine-1-carbonitrile (3i):



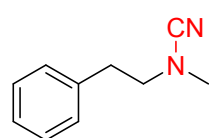
Colorless liquid. ^1H NMR (CDCl_3 , 300 MHz) δ 1.20-1.37 (m, 2H), 1.49-1.62 (m, 3H), 2.48-2.51 (m, 2H), 2.84-2.93 (m, 2H), 3.30-3.36 (m, 2H), 7.05-7.08 (m, 2H), 7.12-7.26 (m, 3H); ^{13}C NMR (CDCl_3 , 100 MHz) δ 30.8, 36.8, 42.8, 49.7, 118.5, 126.2, 128.4, 129.0, 139.3. MS (EI): 200 (M^+); HRMS (ESI) m/z calcd for $\text{C}_{13}\text{H}_{17}\text{N}_2$ ($\text{M}+\text{H}$) $^+$ 201.1386, found 201.1382. IR(neat): 3088, 3058, 3031, 2947, 2914, 2848, 2217, 1602, 1503, 1458.

Octahydroquinoline-1(2H)-carbonitrile (3j):



Colorless liquid. ^1H NMR (CDCl_3 , 400 MHz) δ 0.87-1.06 (m, 2H), 1.15-1.40 (m, 4H), 1.56-1.66 (m, 5H), 1.78-1.81 (m, 1H), 1.98-2.01 (m, 1H), 2.38-2.39 (m, 1H), 2.96-2.99 (m, 1H), 3.36-3.39 (m, 1H); ^{13}C NMR (CDCl_3 , 125 MHz) δ 24.5, 24.8, 25.2, 29.9, 30.8, 31.8, 40.7, 51.0, 62.1, 116.5. MS (EI): 164 (M^+); HRMS (ESI) m/z calcd for $\text{C}_{10}\text{H}_{17}\text{N}_2$ ($\text{M}+\text{H}$) $^+$ 165.1386, found 165.1380. IR(neat): 2941, 2862, 2213, 1460, 1122.

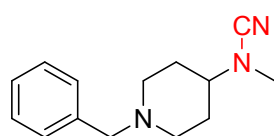
N-methyl-N-phenethylcyanamide (3k):



Colorless liquid. ^1H NMR (CDCl_3 , 300 MHz) δ 2.82 (s, 3H), 2.93-2.98 (m, 2H), 3.20-3.25 (m, 2H), 7.22-7.36 (m, 5H); ^{13}C NMR (CDCl_3 , 100 MHz) δ 33.8, 39.1, 54.3, 118.2, 126.8, 128.6, 128.6,

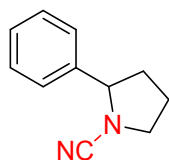
137.4. MS (EI): 160 (M^+); HRMS (ESI) m/z calcd for $C_{10}H_{13}N_2$ ($M+H$) $^+$ 161.1073, found 161.1063. IR(neat): 3088, 3068, 3036, 2932, 2858, 2209, 1593, 1503, 1456.

***N*-(1-Benzylpiperidin-4-yl)-*N*-methylcyanamide (3l):**



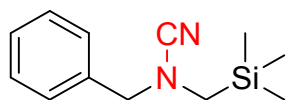
Colorless liquid. 1H NMR ($CDCl_3$, 500 MHz) δ 1.68-1.76 (m, 2H), 1.88-1.90 (m, 2H), 1.99-2.04 (m, 2H), 2.74-2.75 (m, 1H), 2.84 (s, 3H), 2.89-2.92 (m, 2H), 3.49 (s, 2H), 7.23-7.26 (m, 1H), 7.28-7.32 (m, 4H); ^{13}C NMR ($CDCl_3$, 125 MHz) δ 29.5, 36.6, 51.8, 58.2, 62.5, 117.3, 127.0, 128.2, 128.8, 138.1. MS (EI): 229 (M^+); HRMS (ESI) m/z calcd for $C_{14}H_{20}N_3$ ($M+H$) $^+$ 230.1652, found 230.1656. IR(neat): 3090, 3068, 3036, 2932, 2863, 2210, 1062.

2-Phenylpyrrolidine-1-carbonitrile (3m):



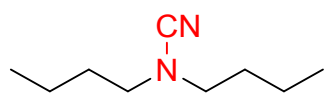
Colorless liquid. 1H NMR ($CDCl_3$, 500 MHz) δ 1.82-1.89 (m, 1H), 1.94-2.07 (m, 2H), 2.29-2.36 (m, 1H), 3.56-3.60 (m, 1H), 3.68-3.72 (m, 1H), 4.64-4.67 (m, 1H), 7.28-7.32 (m, 3H), 7.35-7.38 (m, 2H); ^{13}C NMR ($CDCl_3$, 125 MHz) δ 24.7, 35.5, 51.4, 65.8, 116.9, 126.2, 128.1, 128.7, 139.6. MS (EI): 172 (M^+); HRMS (ESI) m/z calcd for $C_{11}H_{12}N_2Na$ ($M+Na$) $^+$ 195.0893, found 195.0879. IR(neat): 3058, 3045, 2982, 2961, 2883, 2218, 1608, 1496, 1453.

***N*-Benzyl-*N*-((trimethylsilyl)methyl)cyanamide (3n):**



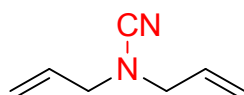
Colorless liquid. 1H NMR ($CDCl_3$, 300 MHz) δ 0.15 (s, 9H), 2.36 (s, 2H), 4.16 (s, 2H), 7.30-7.42 (m, 5H); ^{13}C NMR ($CDCl_3$, 75 MHz) δ -2.3, 40.9, 59.4, 119.4, 128.4, 128.4, 128.8, 134.8. MS (EI): 218 (M^+); HRMS (ESI) m/z calcd for $C_{12}H_{19}N_2Si$ ($M+H$) $^+$ 219.1312, found 219.1294. IR(neat): 3089, 3067, 3042, 2956, 2903, 2209, 1697, 1613, 1502, 1458, 1370, 1253.

***N,N*-Dibutylcyanamide (3o):**



Colorless liquid. 1H NMR ($CDCl_3$, 300 MHz) δ 0.91-0.96 (m, 6H), 1.32-1.44 (m, 4H), 1.56-1.66 (m, 4H), 2.94-2.99 (m, 4H); ^{13}C NMR ($CDCl_3$, 125 MHz) δ 13.6, 19.6, 29.6, 51.2, 117.9. MS (EI): 154 (M^+); HRMS (ESI) m/z calcd for $C_9H_{19}N_2$ ($M+H$) $^+$ 155.1543, found 155.1532. IR(neat): 2958, 2932, 2869, 2209, 1360.

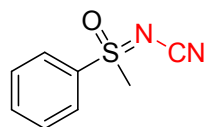
***N,N*-Diallylcyanamide (3p):**



Colorless liquid. 1H NMR ($CDCl_3$, 300 MHz) δ 3.59-3.61 (m, 4H), 5.27-5.33 (m, 4H), 5.76-5.87 (m, 2H); ^{13}C NMR ($CDCl_3$,

125 MHz) δ 53.3, 117.5, 120.5, 130.8. MS (EI): 122 (M^+); HRMS (ESI) m/z calcd for $C_7H_{11}N_2$ ($M+H$) $^+$ 123.0917, found 123.0907. IR(neat): 3012, 2923, 2851, 2216, 1451.

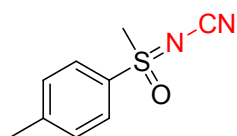
***N*-(Cyano) methyl phenyl sulfoximine (4a):** ^[2]



1188, 1143.

White solid; m.p.: 69-72 °C. 1H NMR ($CDCl_3$, 500 MHz) δ 3.34 (s, 3H), 7.66-7.69 (m, 2H), 7.77-7.78 (m, 1H), 7.80-7.99 (m, 2H); ^{13}C NMR ($CDCl_3$, 125 MHz) δ 44.7, 111.8, 127.8, 130.2, 135.4, 135.9. IR(prism): 3193, 3012, 2919, 2853, 2197, 1625, 1470, 1378, 1253,

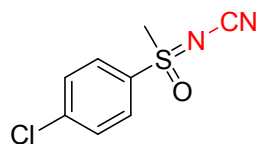
***N*-(Cyano) methyl 4-methylphenyl sulfoximine (4b):**



1583, 1492, 1376.

White solid; m.p.: 84-86 °C. 1H NMR ($CDCl_3$, 300 MHz) δ 2.48 (s, 3H), 3.31 (s, 3H), 7.44-7.47 (m, 2H), 7.83-7.86 (m, 2H); ^{13}C NMR ($CDCl_3$, 125 MHz) δ 21.6, 44.8, 112.0, 127.8, 130.8, 132.7, 146.9. MS (EI): 194 (M^+); HRMS (ESI) m/z calcd for $C_9H_{11}N_2OS$ ($M+H$) $^+$ 195.0587, found 195.0579. IR(prism): 3022, 2993, 2923, 2173,

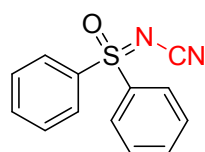
***N*-(Cyano) methyl 4-chlorophenyl sulfoximine (4c):**



1390, 1250, 1197, 820, 780.

White solid; m.p.: 108-110 °C. 1H NMR ($CDCl_3$, 300 MHz) δ 3.35 (s, 3H), 7.63-7.68 (m, 2H), 7.91-7.96 (m, 2H); ^{13}C NMR ($CDCl_3$, 125 MHz) δ 44.8, 111.4, 129.4, 130.6, 134.3, 142.6. MS (EI): 214 (M^+); HRMS (ESI) m/z calcd for $C_8H_8ClN_2OS$ ($M+H$) $^+$ 215.0040, found 215.0035. IR(prism): 3096, 3022, 2923, 2197, 1572, 1480,

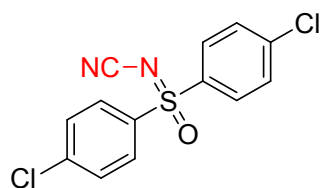
***N*-(Cyano) diphenyl sulfoximine (4d):** ^[2]



3084, 3060, 3026, 3005, 2197, 1578, 1477, 1245.

White solid; m.p.: 108-110 °C. 1H NMR ($CDCl_3$, 500 MHz) δ 7.56-7.59 (m, 4H), 7.65-7.68 (m, 2H), 7.97-7.98 (m, 4H); ^{13}C NMR ($CDCl_3$, 75 MHz) δ 111.9, 127.7, 129.9, 134.7, 137.0. IR(prism):

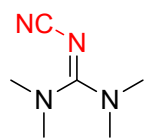
***N*-(Cyano)-4,4'-Dichlorodiphenyl sulfoximine (4e):**



3067, 3047, 3026, 2203, 1578, 1472, 1258, 1196, 1082, 824, 761.

White solid; m.p.: 137-139 °C. 1H NMR ($CDCl_3$, 300 MHz) δ 7.56-7.59 (m, 4H), 7.90-7.93 (m, 4H); ^{13}C NMR ($CDCl_3$, 75 MHz) δ 111.2, 129.3, 130.5, 135.2, 142.1. MS (EI): 310 (M^+); HRMS (ESI) m/z calcd for $C_{13}H_8Cl_2N_2OSNa$ ($M+Na$) $^+$ 332.9627, found 332.9613. IR(prism): 3086,

2-Cyano-1,1,3,3-tetramethylguanidine (4f):

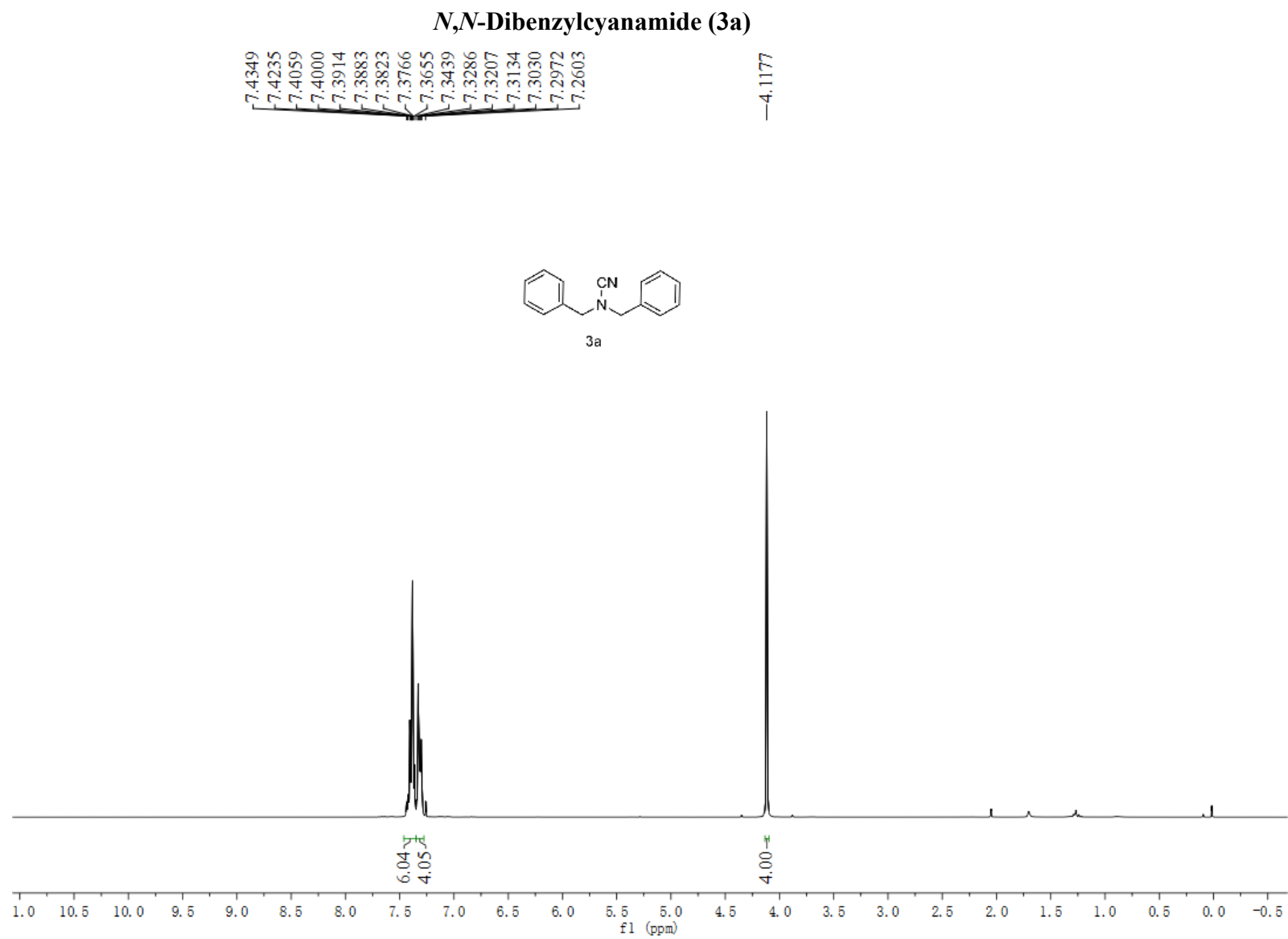


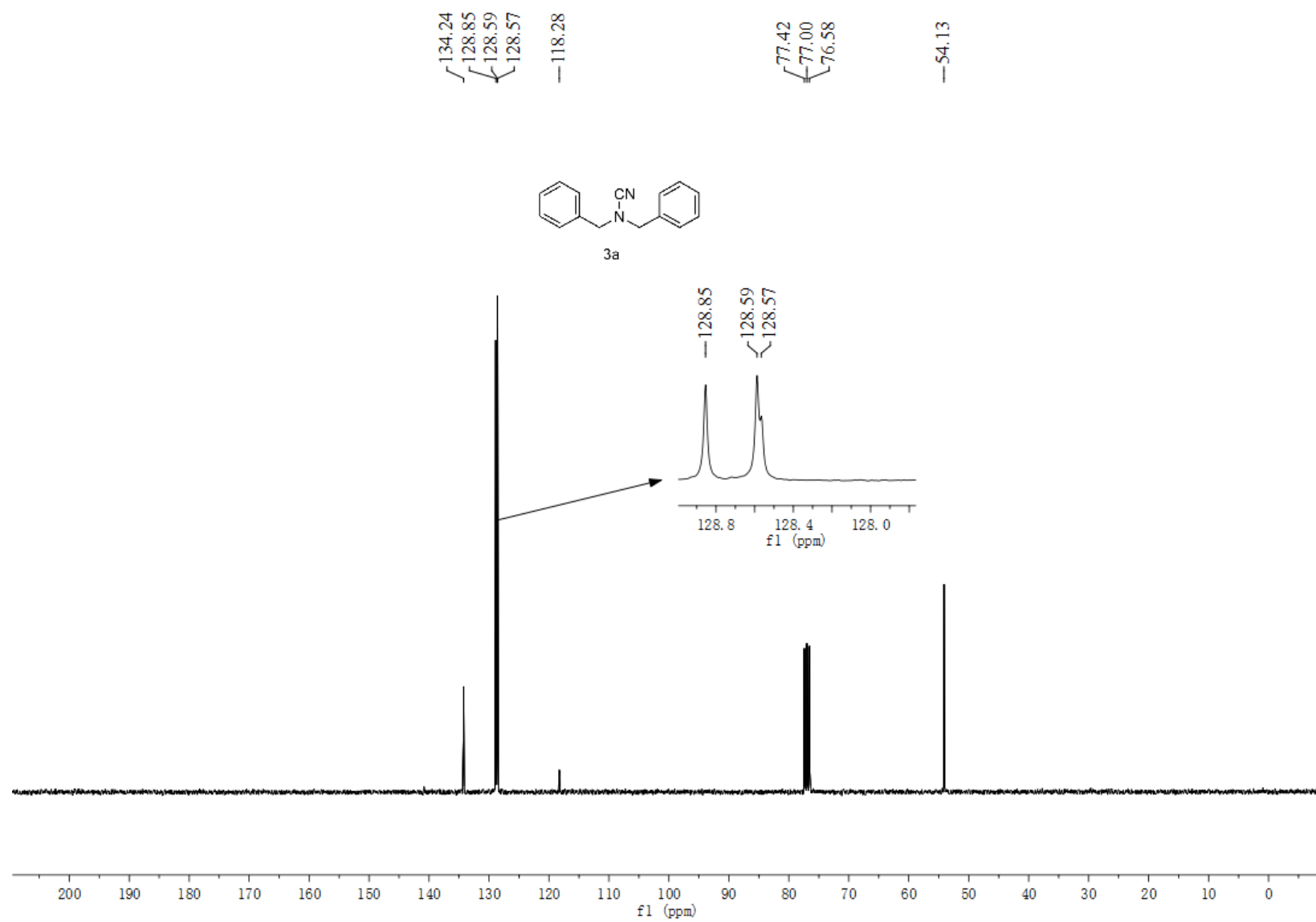
Yellowish liquid. ^1H NMR (CDCl_3 , 300 MHz) δ 2.93 (s, 12H); ^{13}C NMR (CDCl_3 , 125 MHz) δ 39.9, 117.6, 166.0. MS (EI): 140 (M^+); HRMS (ESI) m/z calcd for $\text{C}_6\text{H}_{13}\text{N}_4$ ($\text{M}+\text{H}$) $^+$ 141.1135, found 141.1136. IR(neat): 3087, 3042, 2963, 2891, 2186, 1450, 1259.

5. References

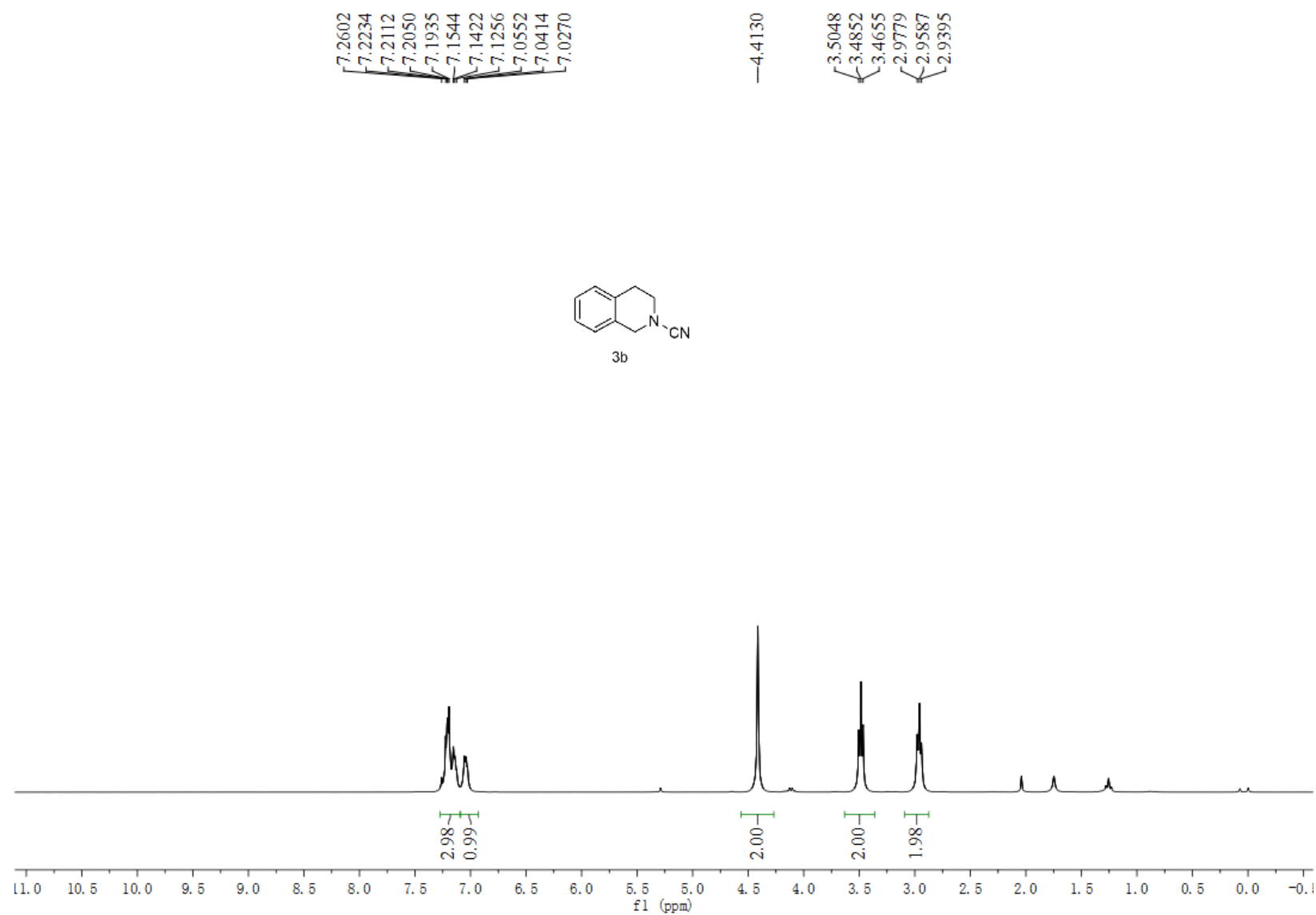
- 1 C. Zhu, J.-B. Xia and C. Chen, *Org. Lett.*, 2014, **16**, 247.
- 2 O. G. Mancheño, O. Bistri, and C. Bolm, *Org. Lett.*, 2007, **9**, 3809.

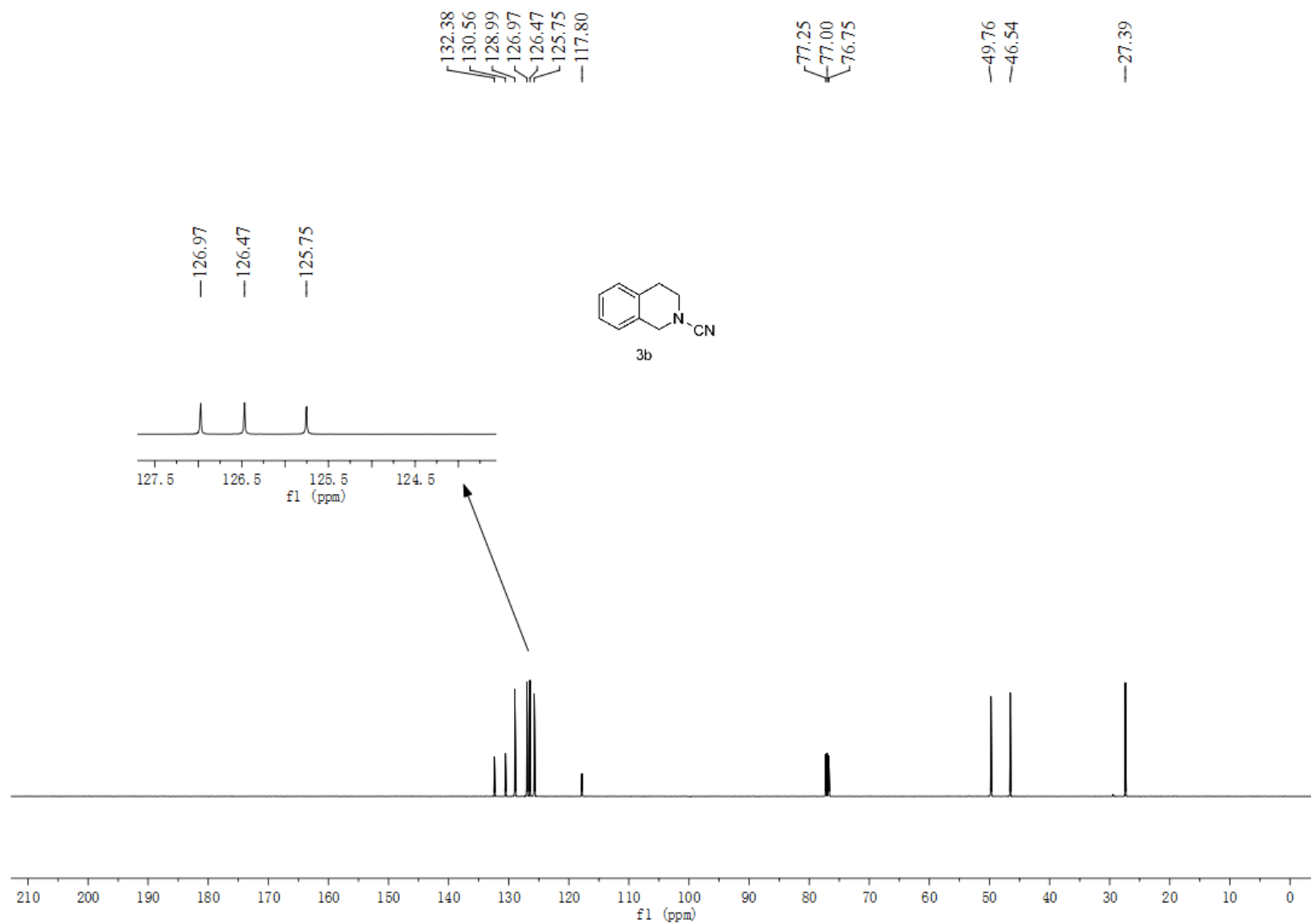
6. Copies of the ^1H NMR and ^{13}C NMR spectra



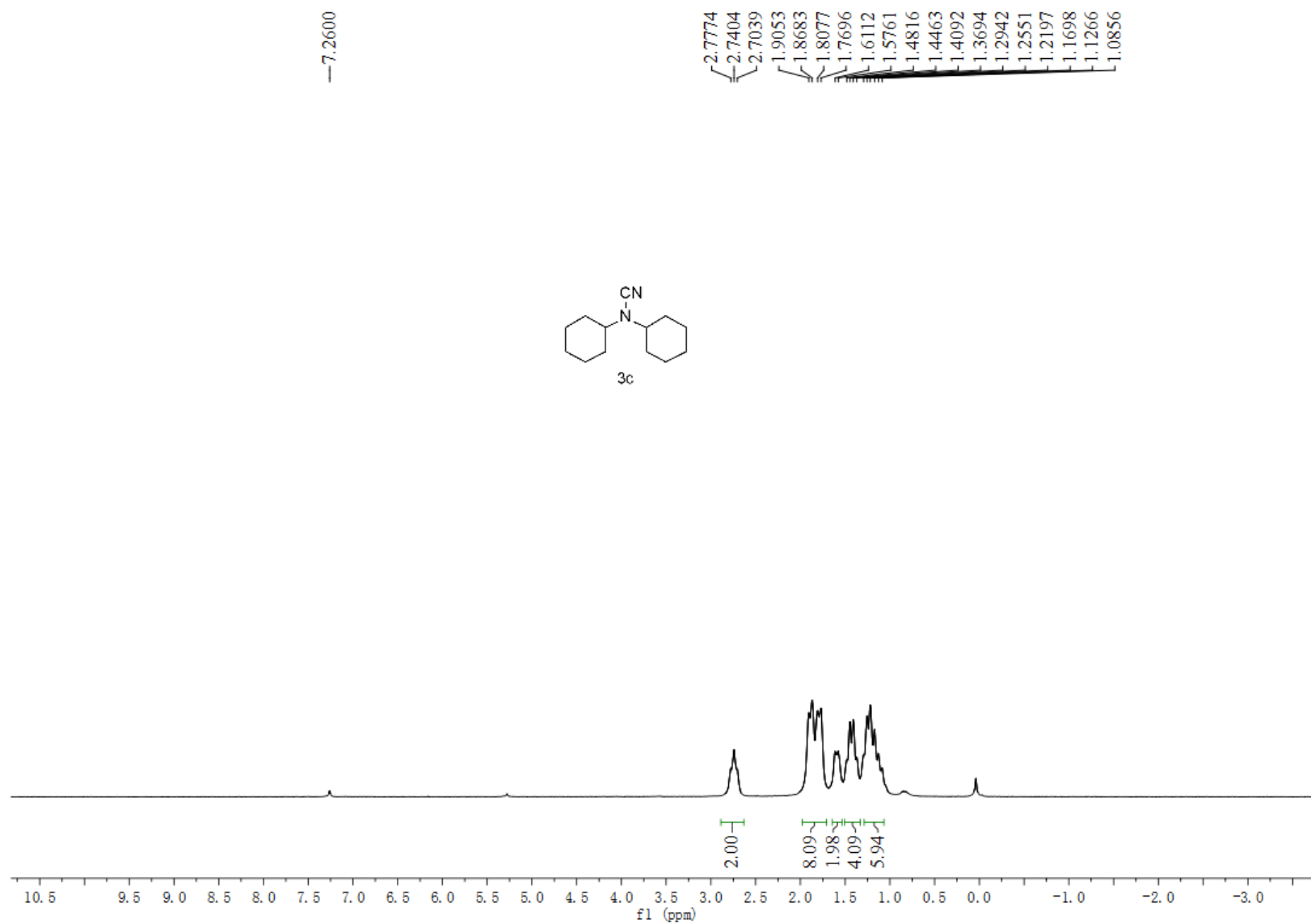
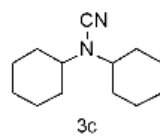


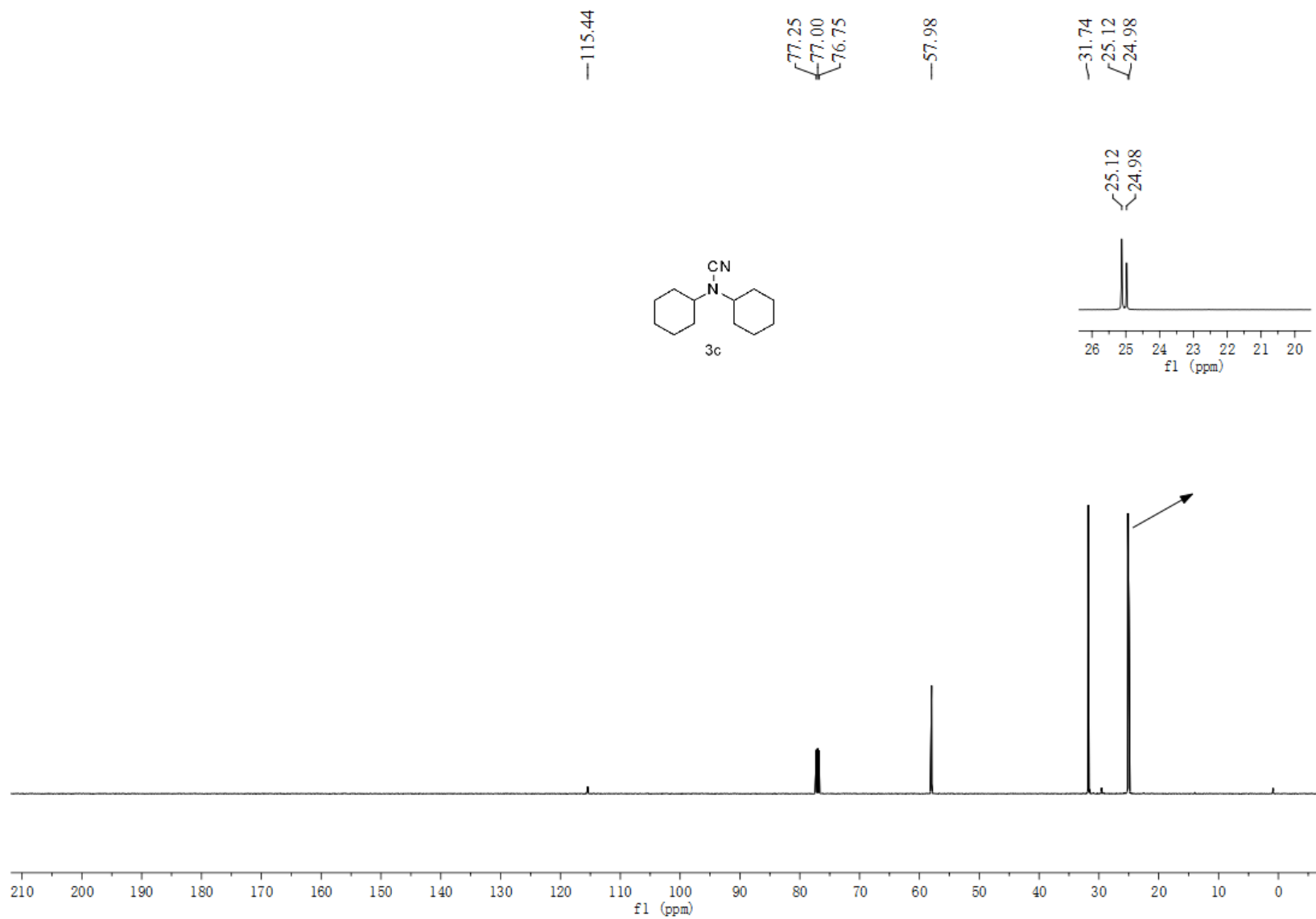
3,4-Dihydro-2(1H)-isoquinolinecarbonitrile (3b)





Dicyclohexylcyanamide (3c)



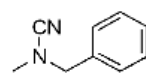


Benzylmethylcyanamide (3d)

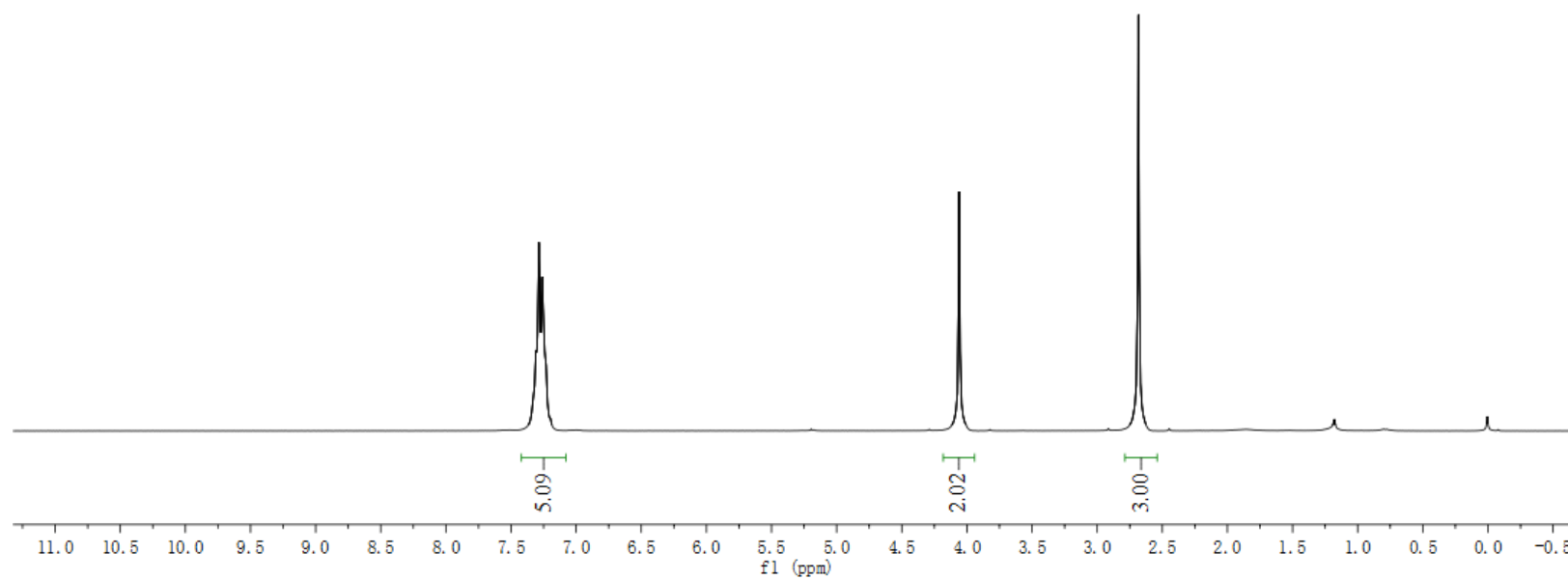
7.3098
7.2855
7.2596
7.2345

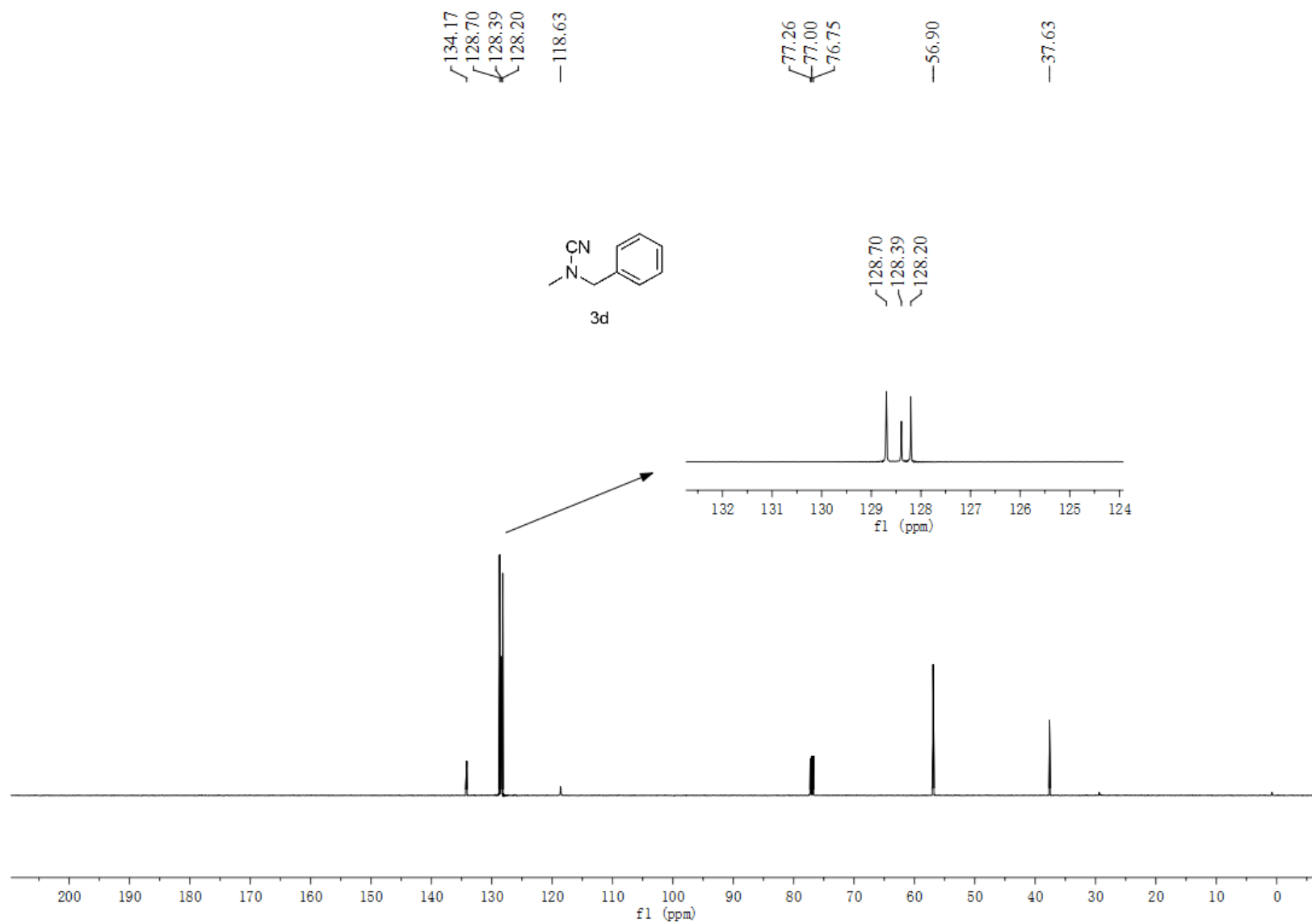
4.0591

2.6826

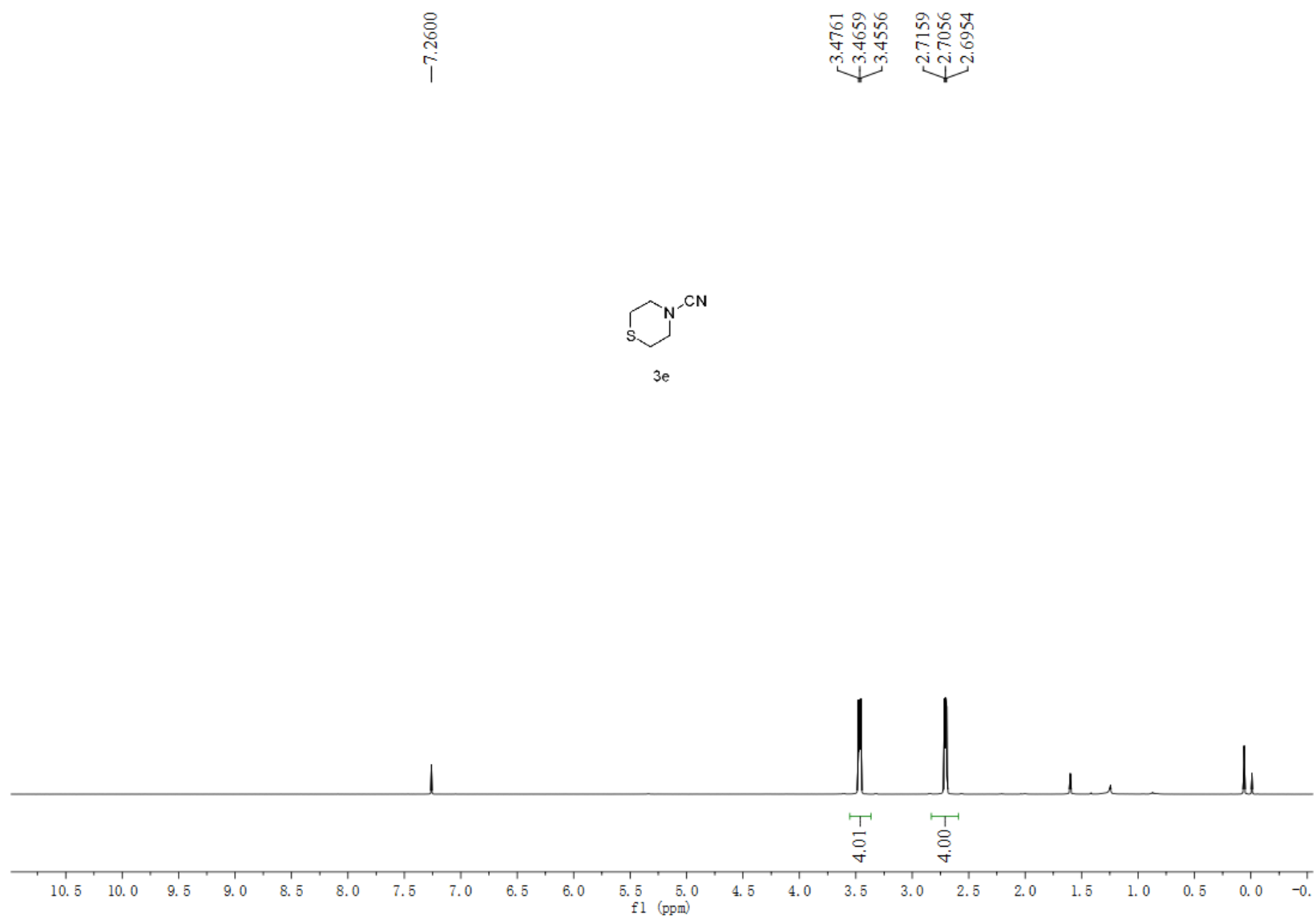


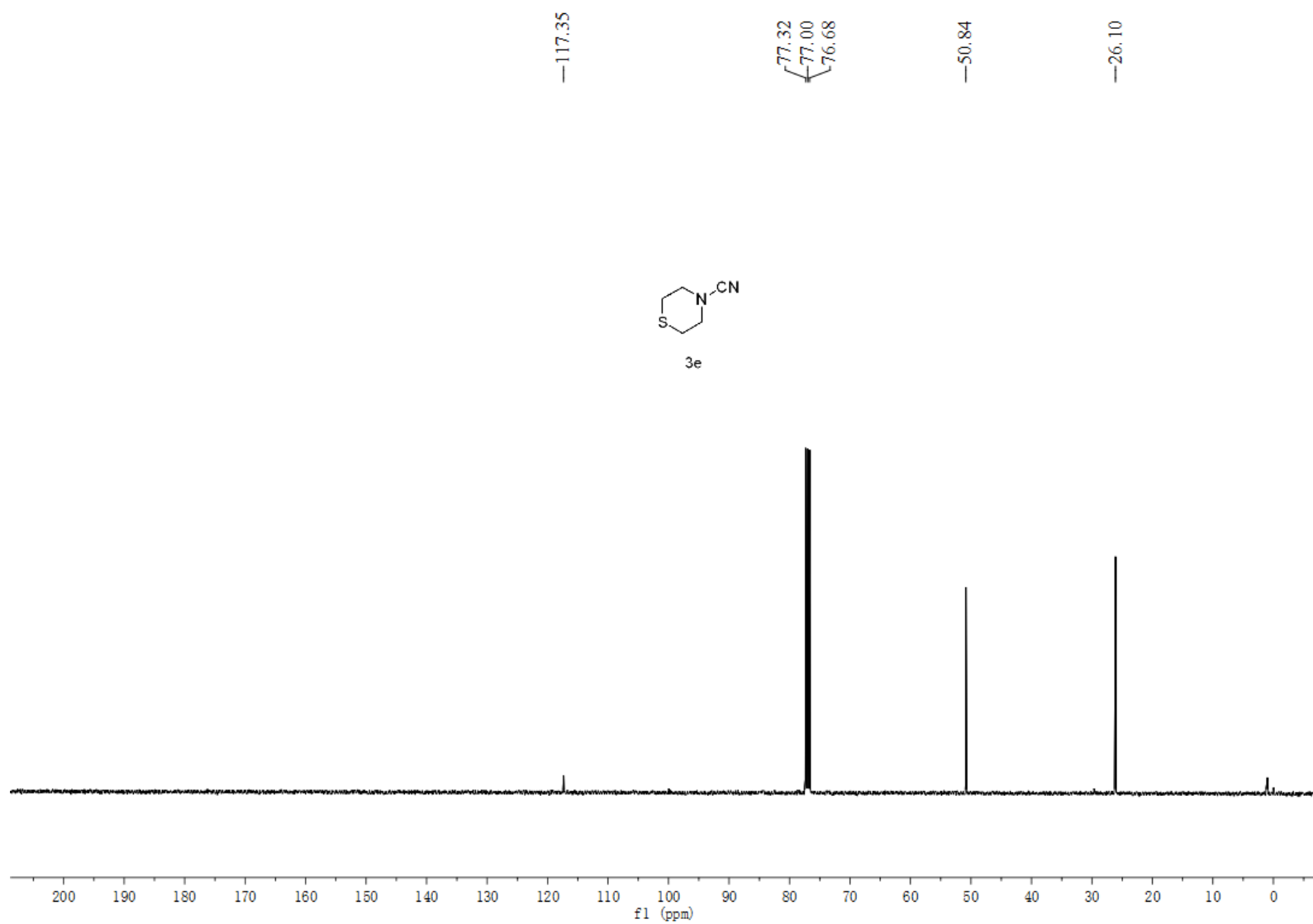
3d





Thiomorpholine-4-carbonitrile (**3e**)

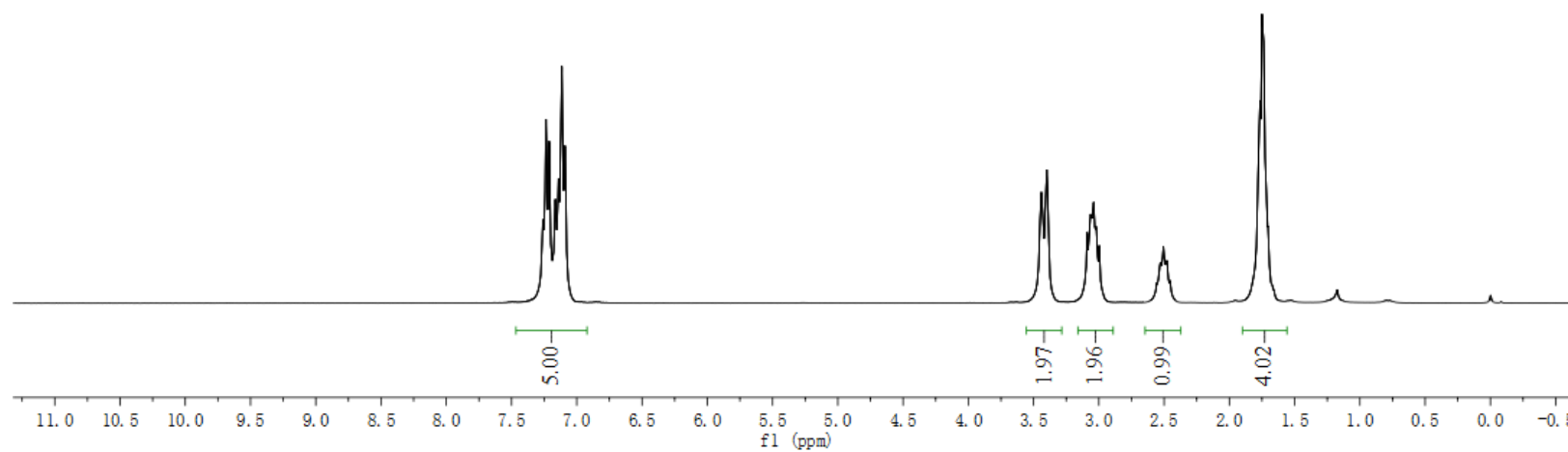
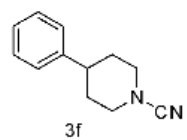


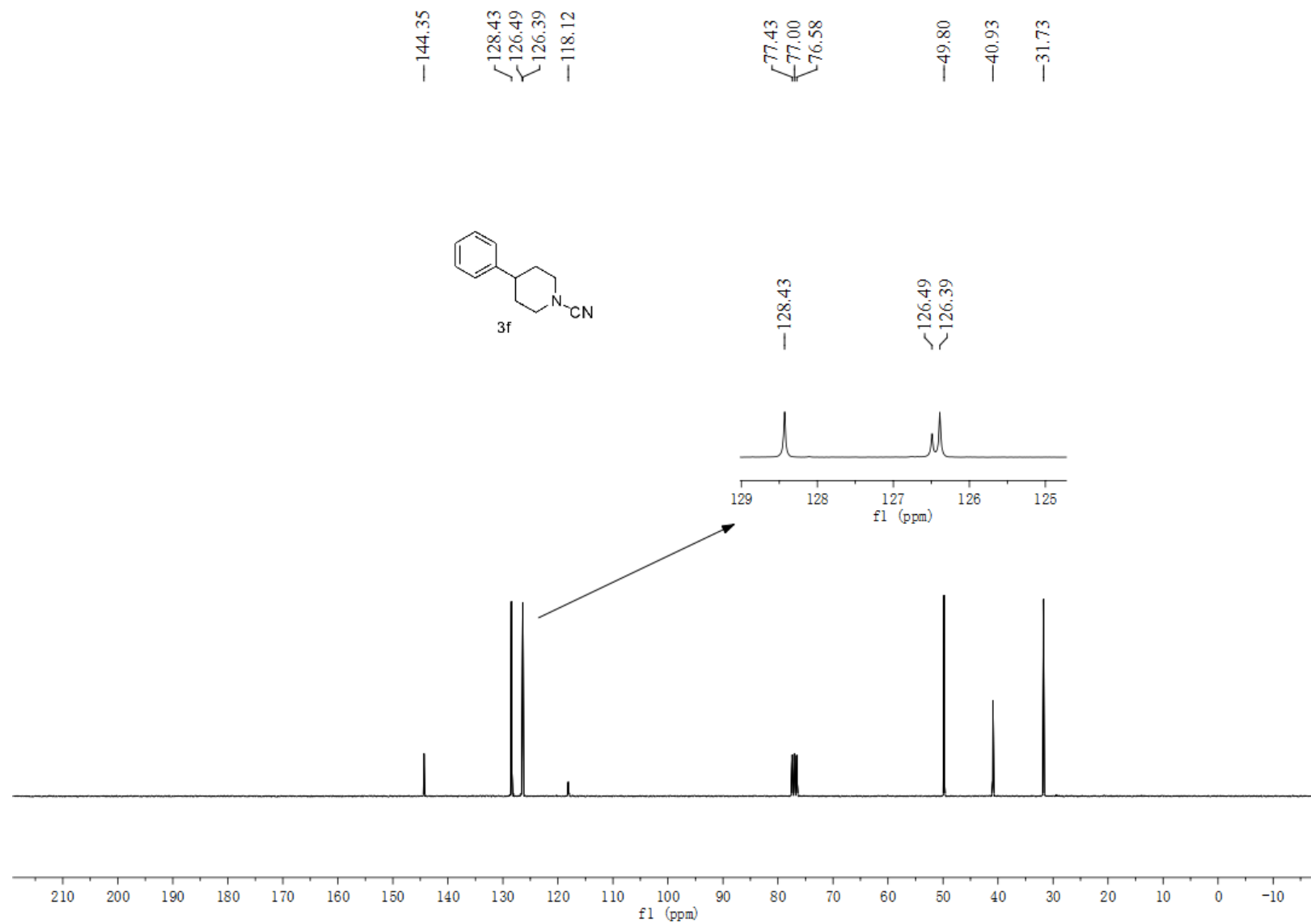


4-Phenylpiperidine-1-carbonitrile (3f)

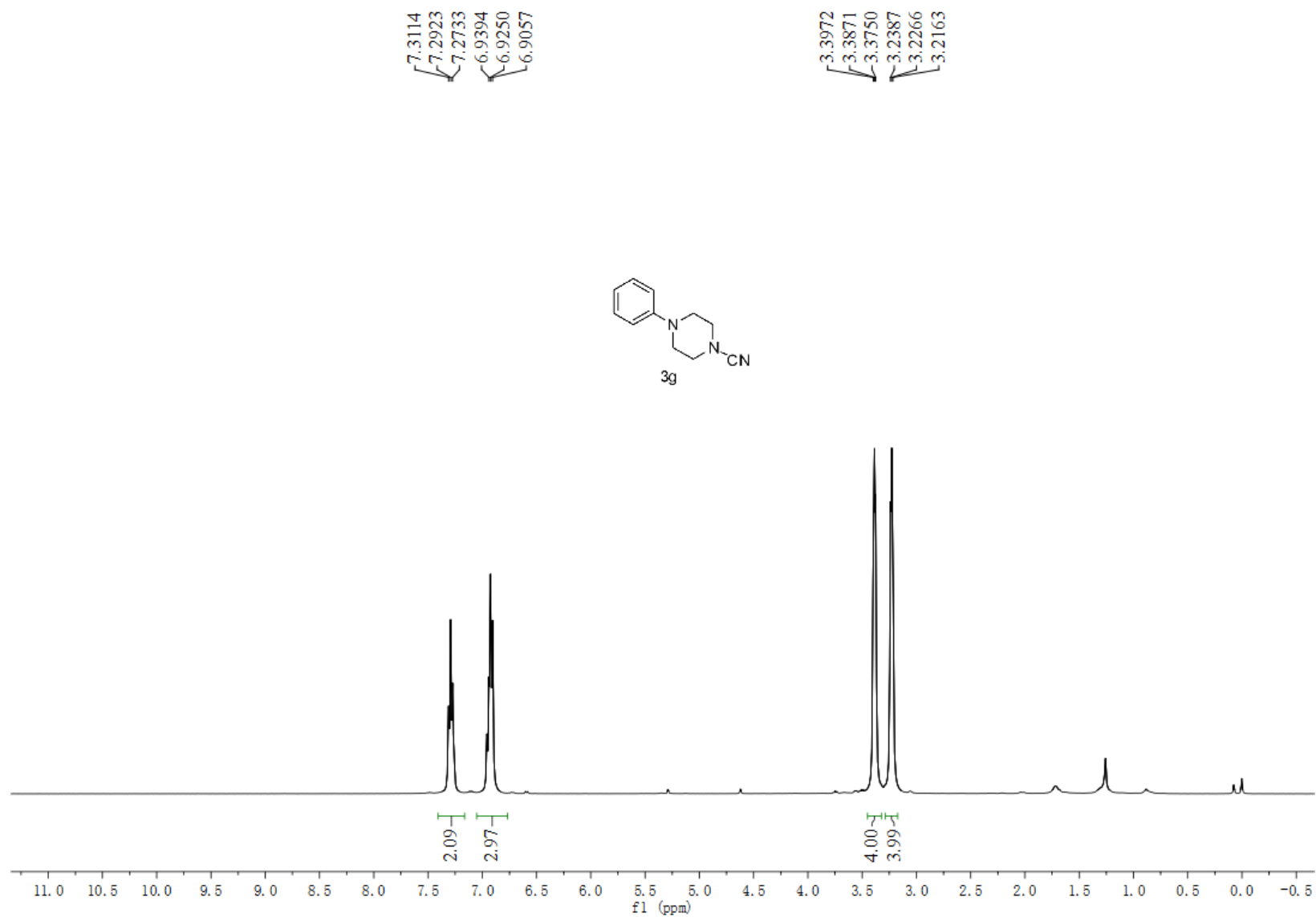
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7.2119
7.1645
7.1403
7.1147
7.0907

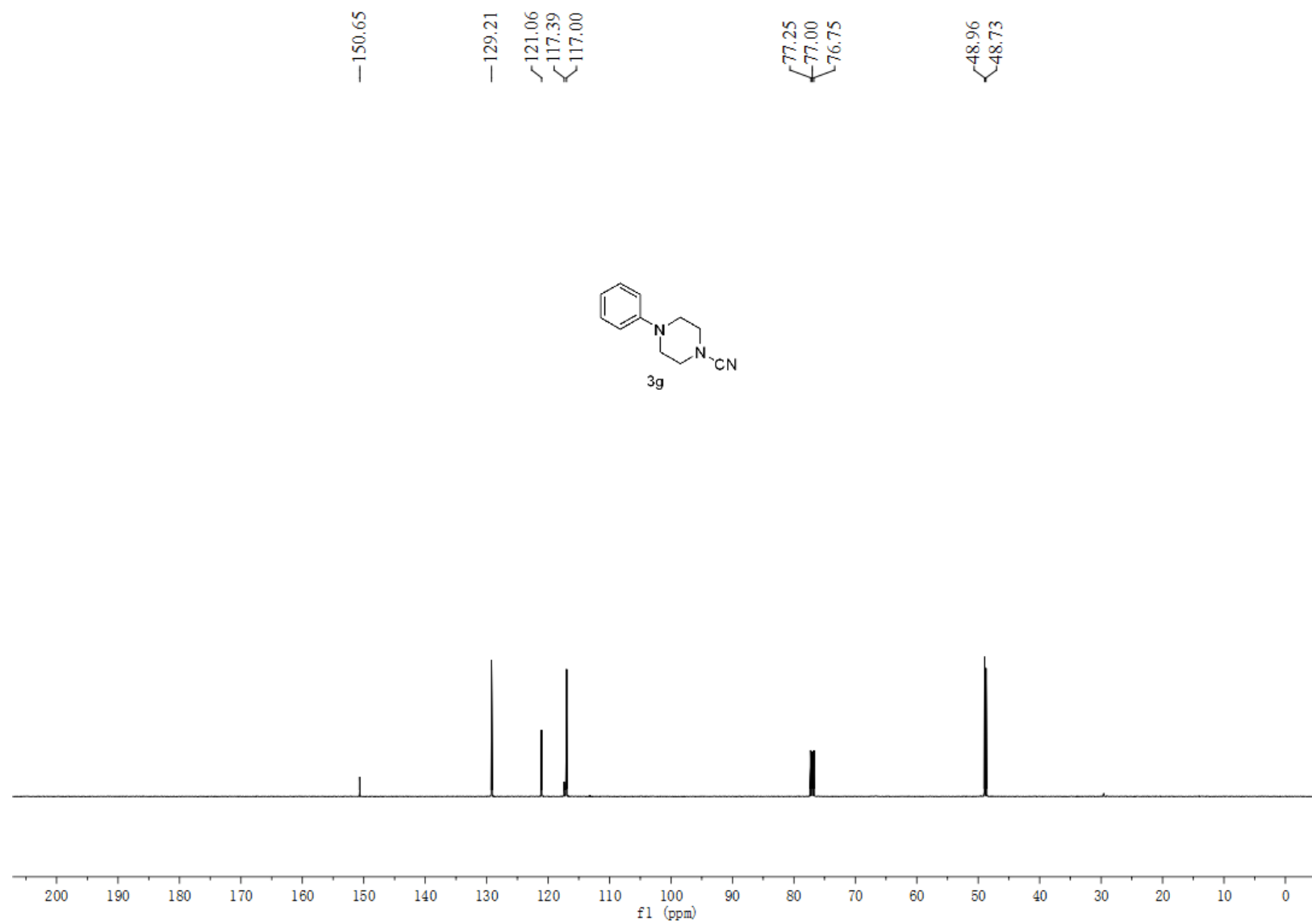
3.4408
3.3991
3.0630
3.0462
3.0396
2.5287
2.5055
2.4801
1.7650
1.7498
1.7395



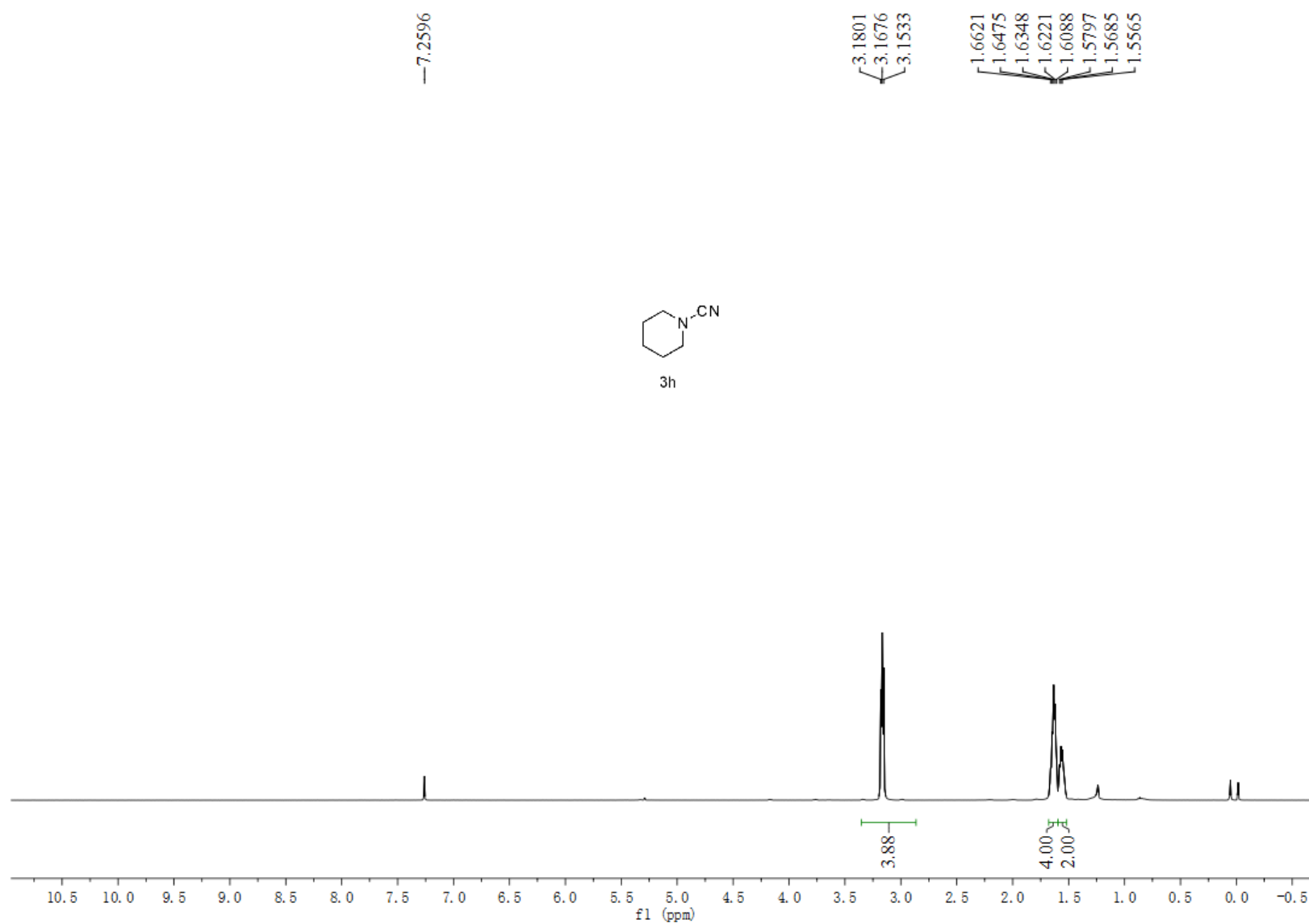


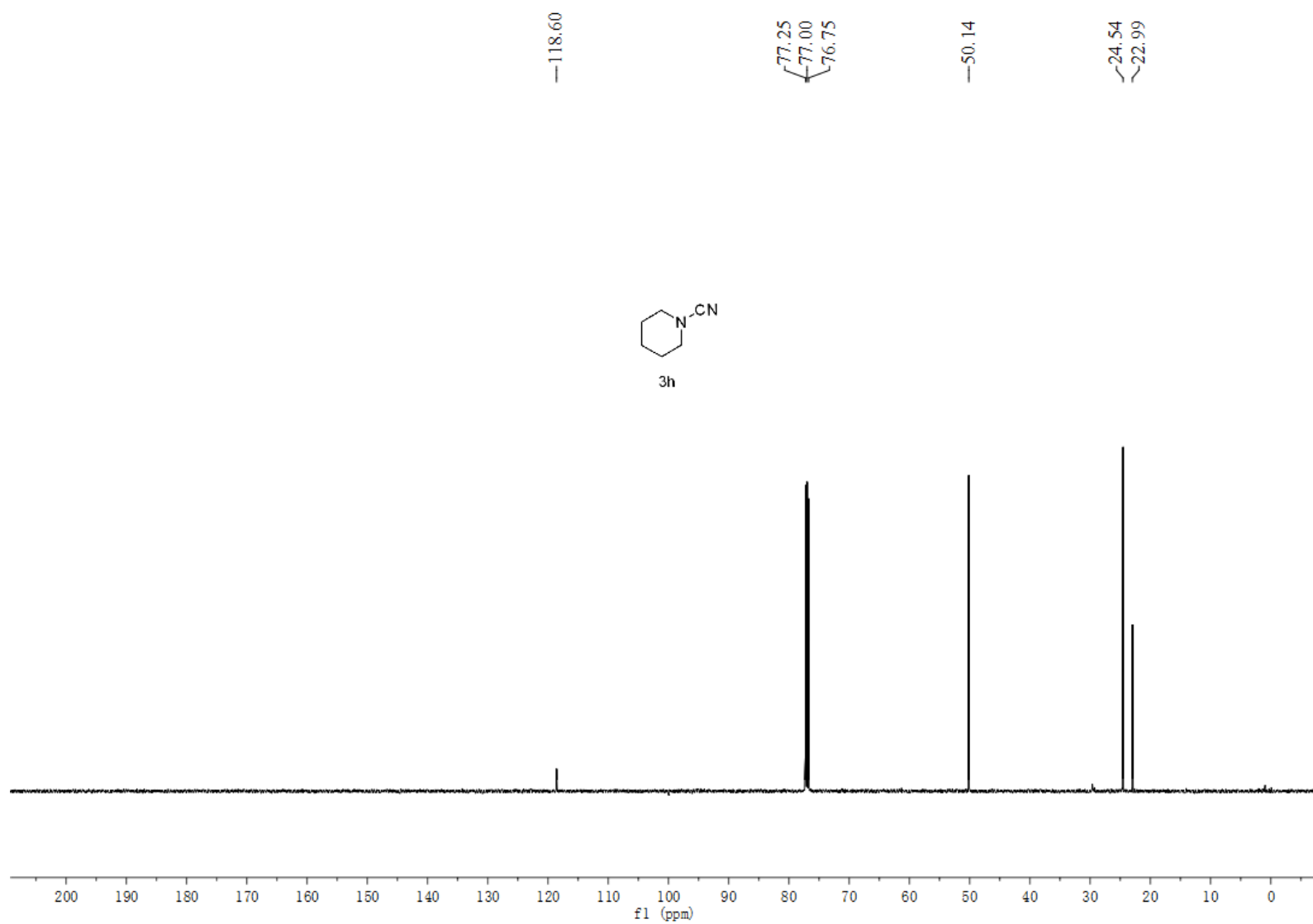
4-Phenylpiperazine-1-carbonitrile (3g)



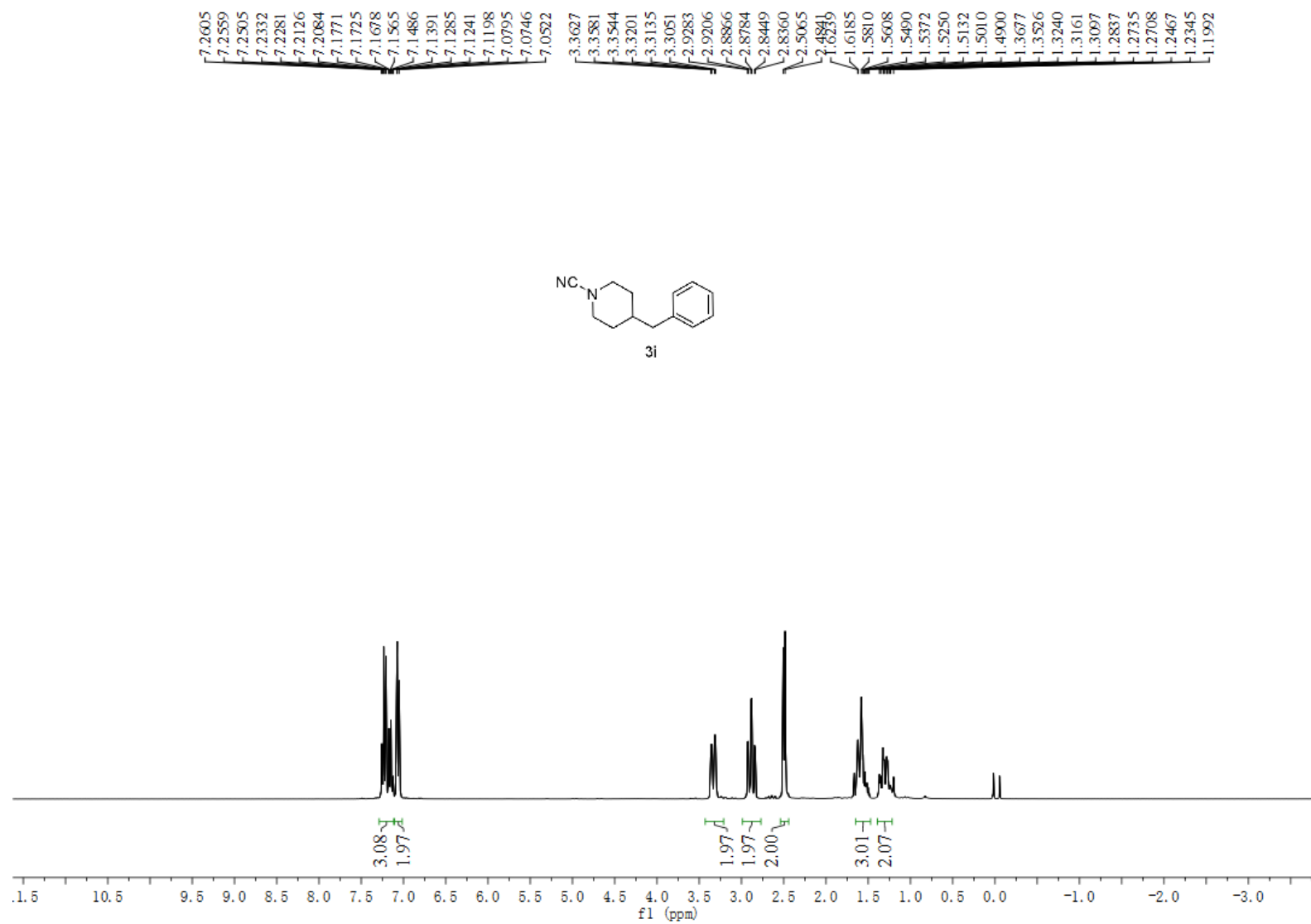


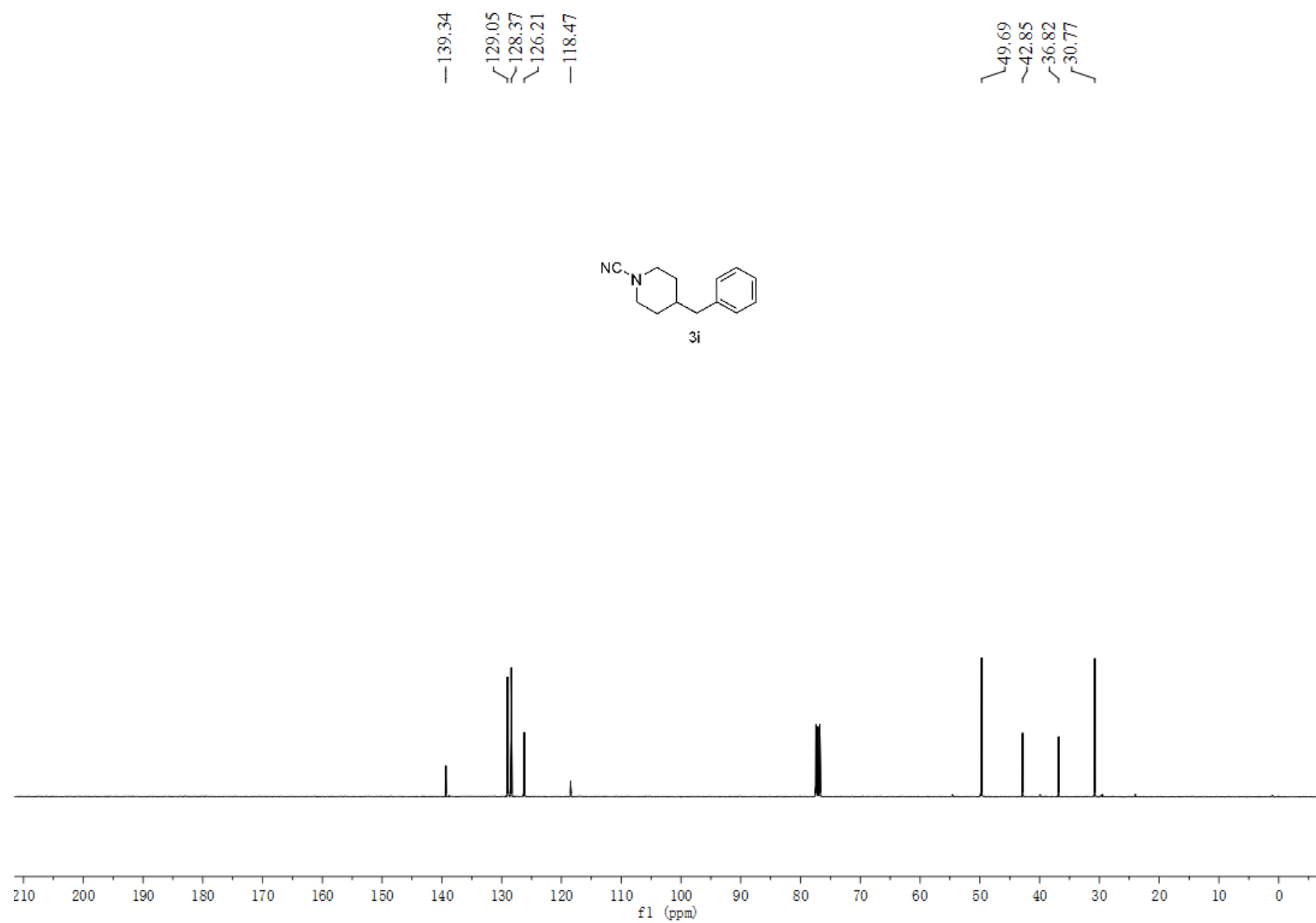
Piperidine-1-carbonitrile (3h)



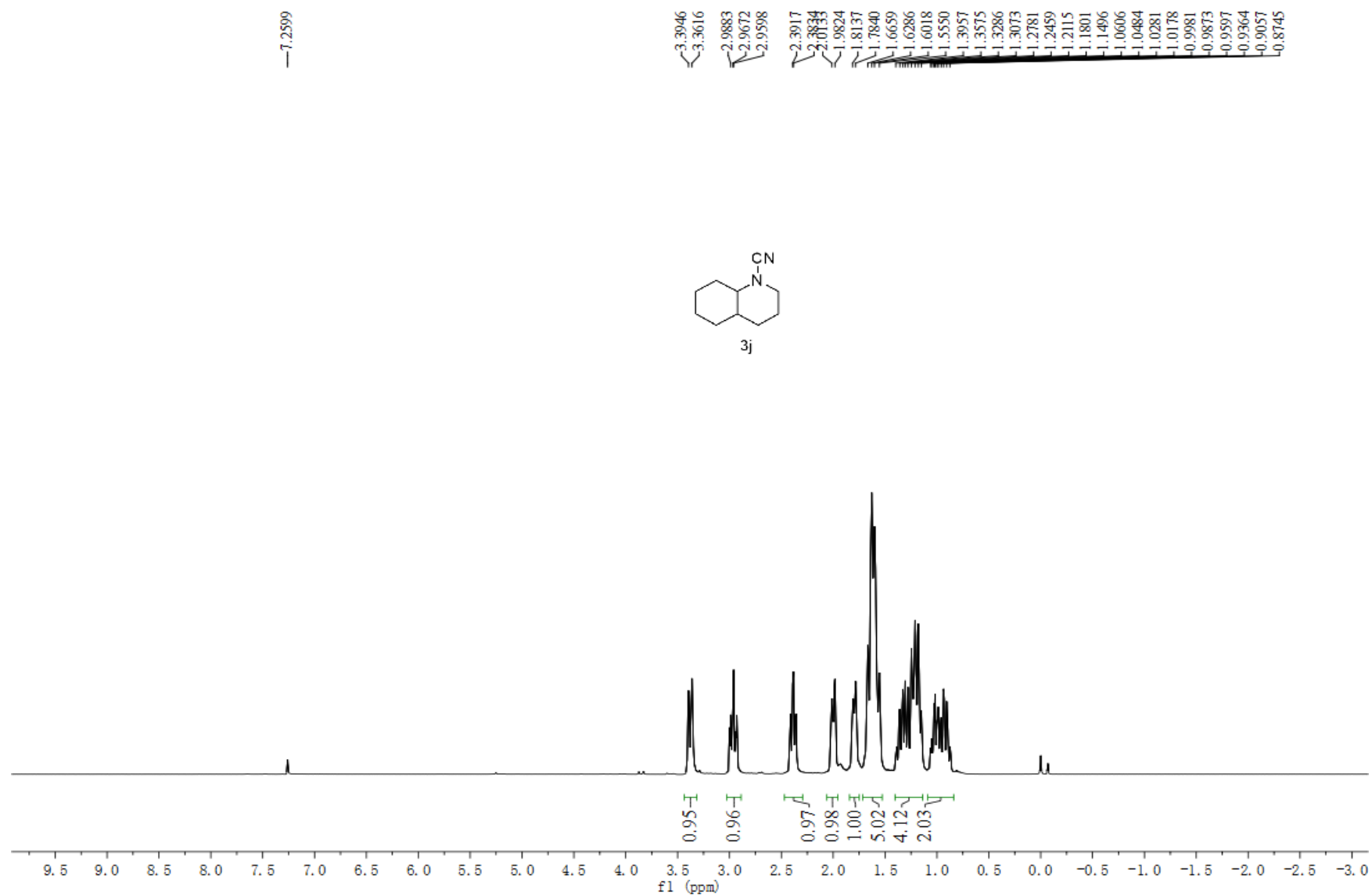
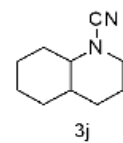


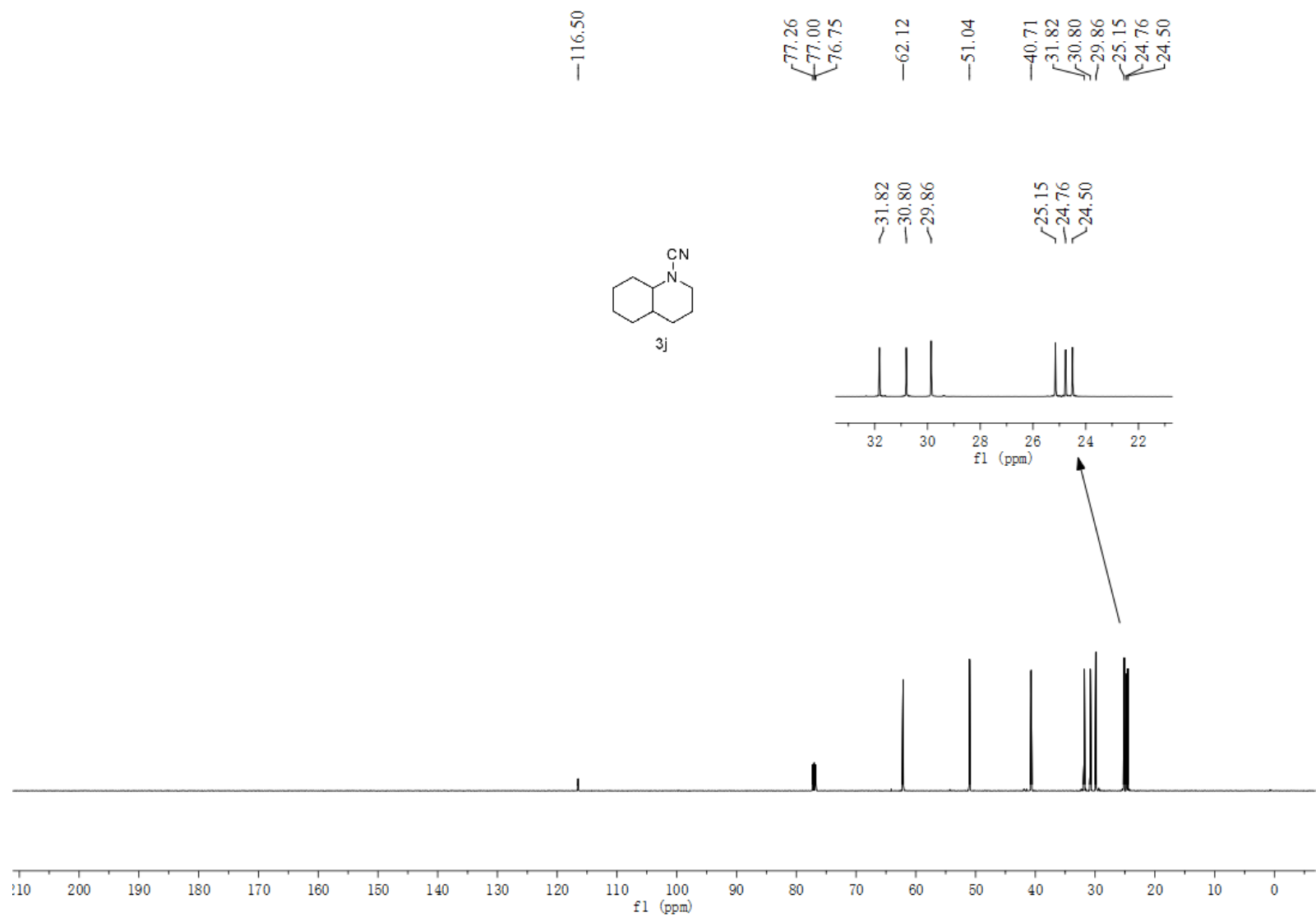
4-Benzylpiperidine-1-carbonitrile (3i)



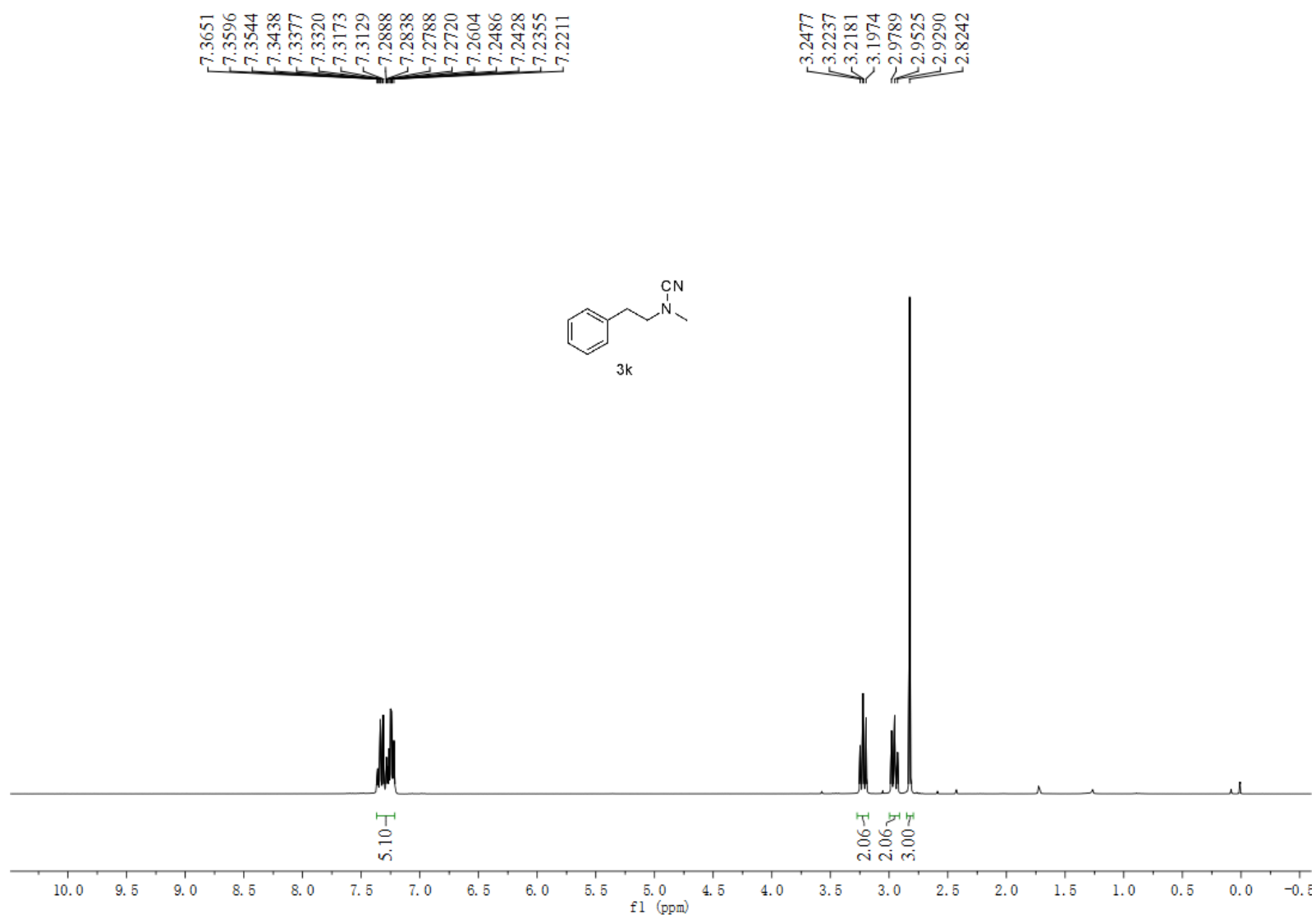


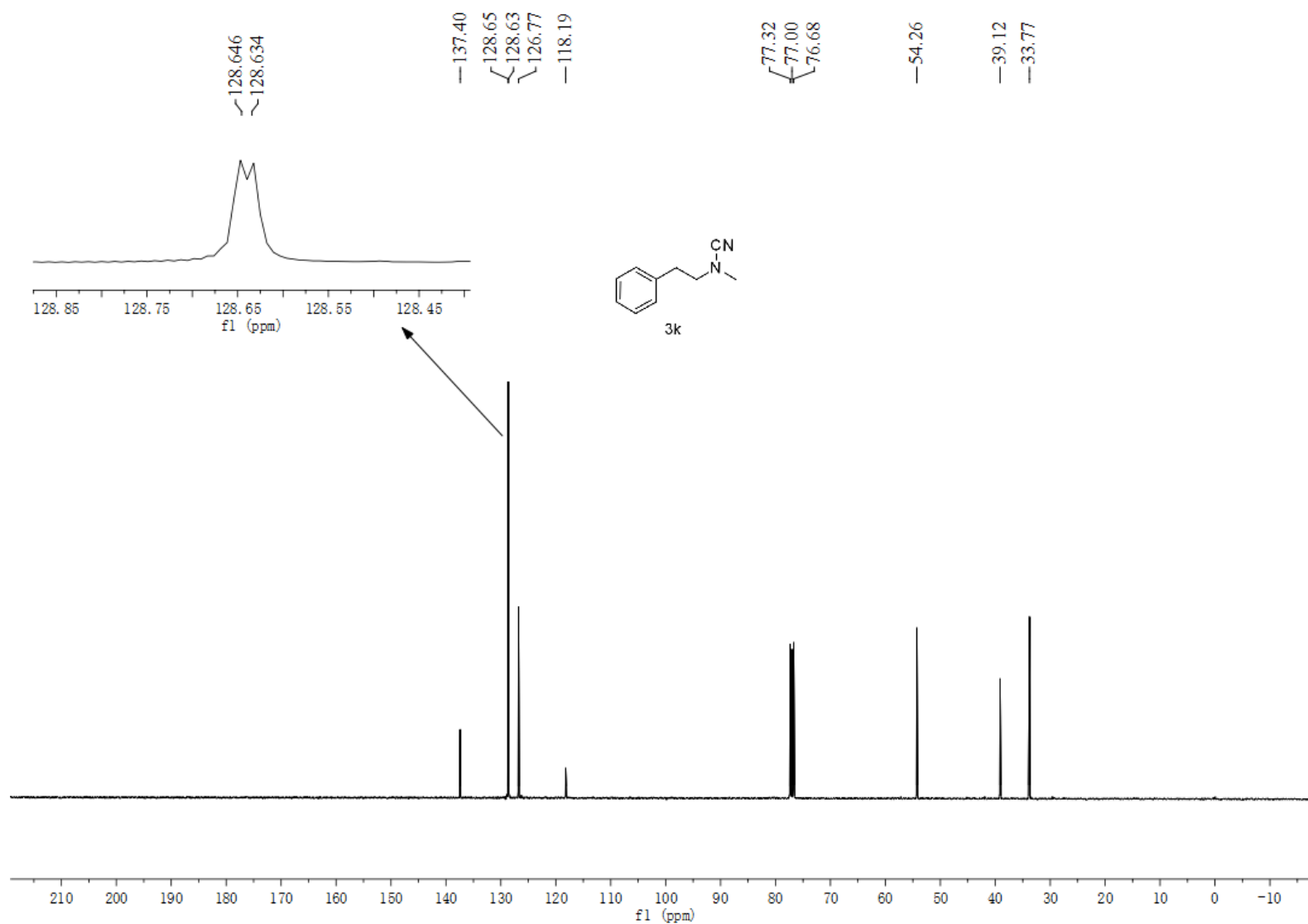
Octahydroquinoline-1(2H)-carbonitrile (3j)



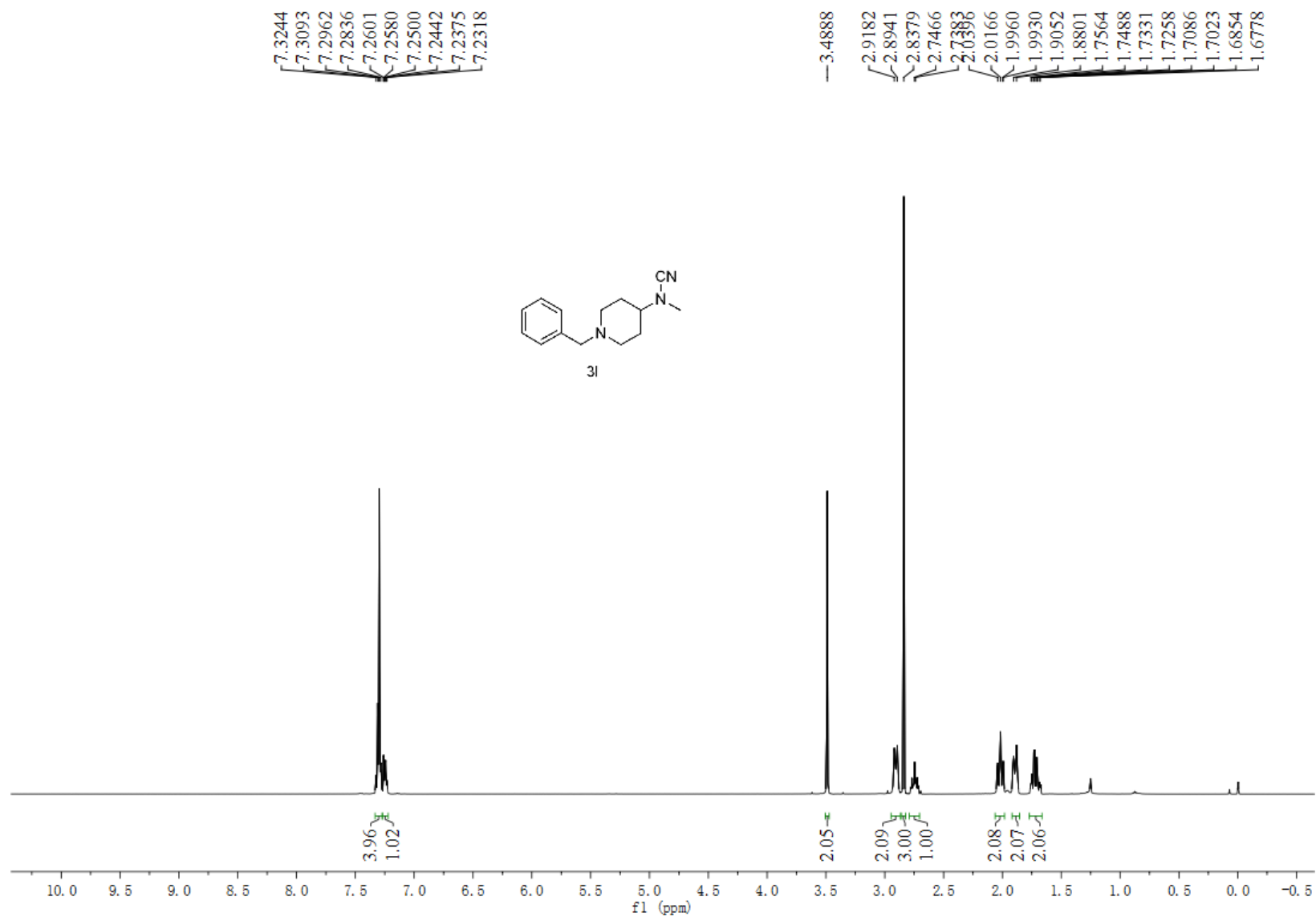


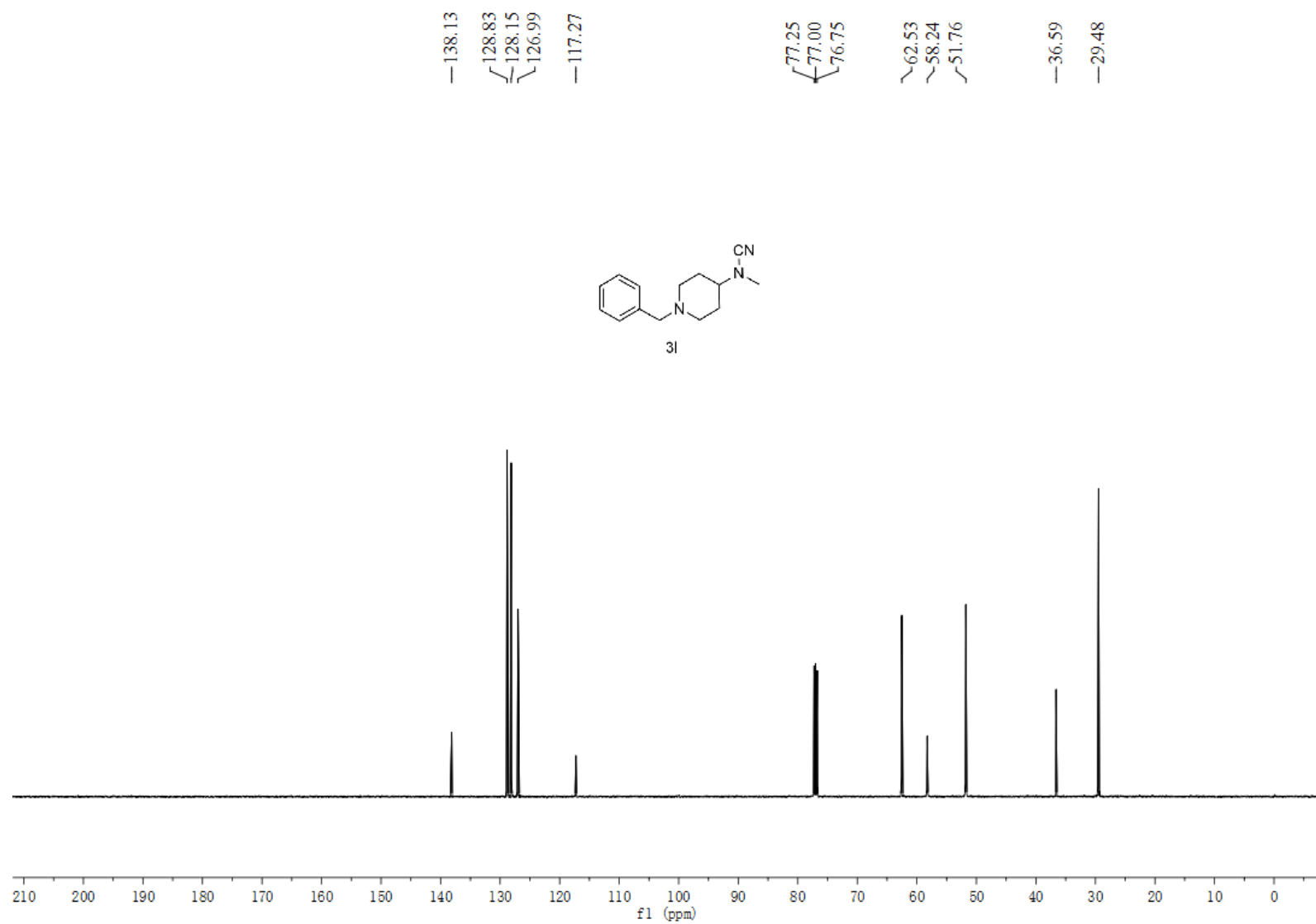
***N*-Methyl-*N*-phenethylcyanamide (3k)**



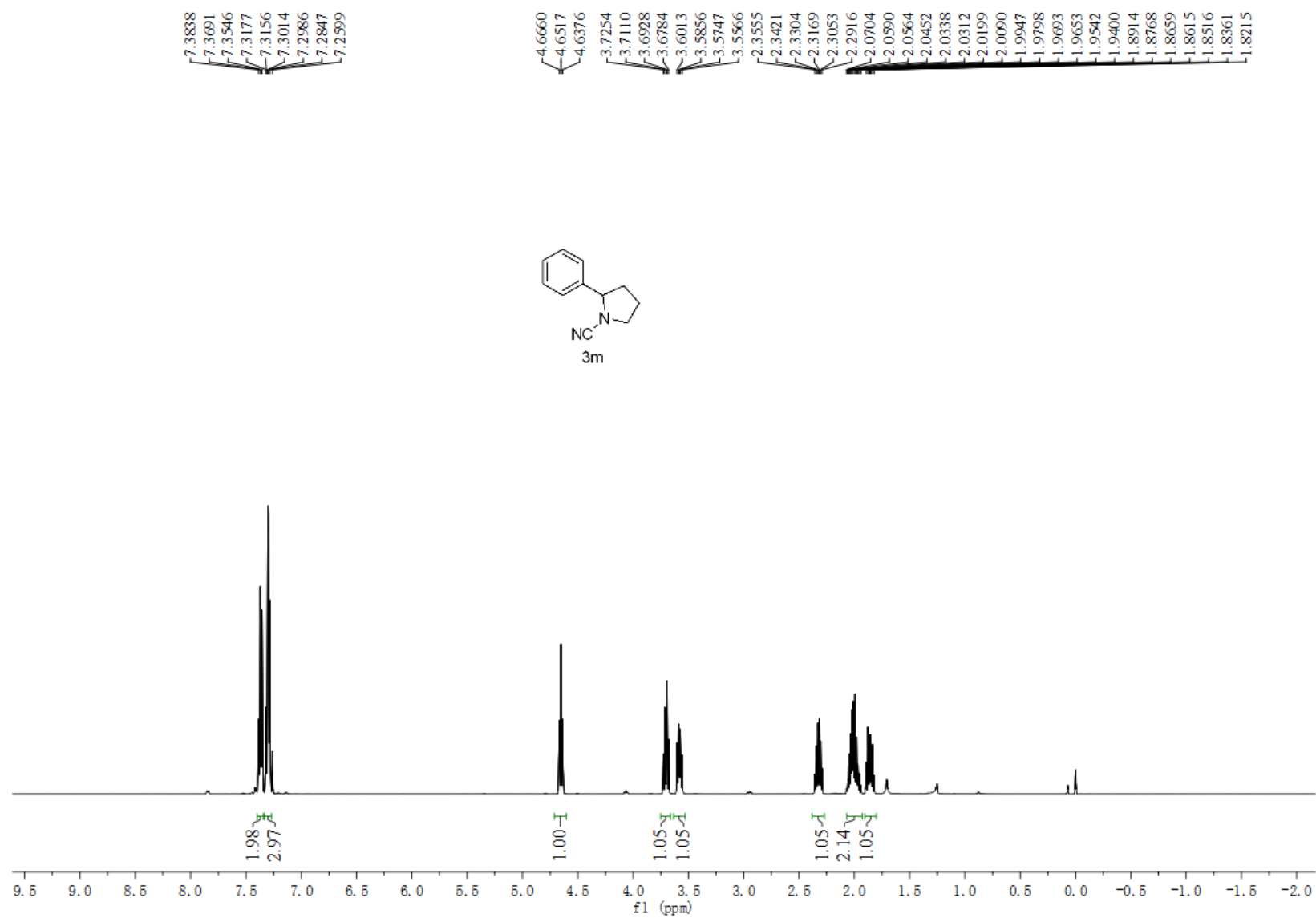


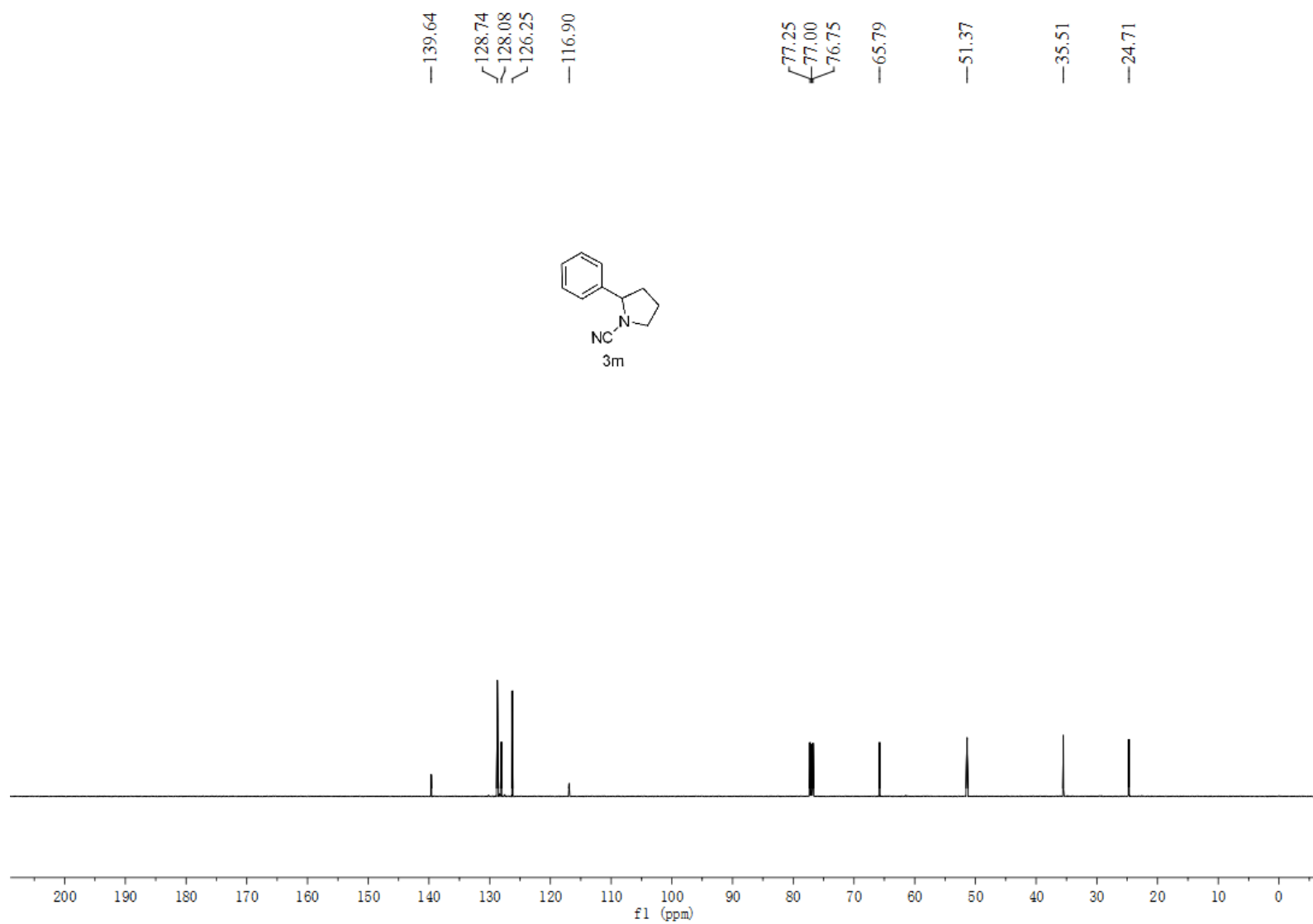
***N*-(1-Benzylpiperidin-4-yl)-*N*-methylcyanamide (3l)**



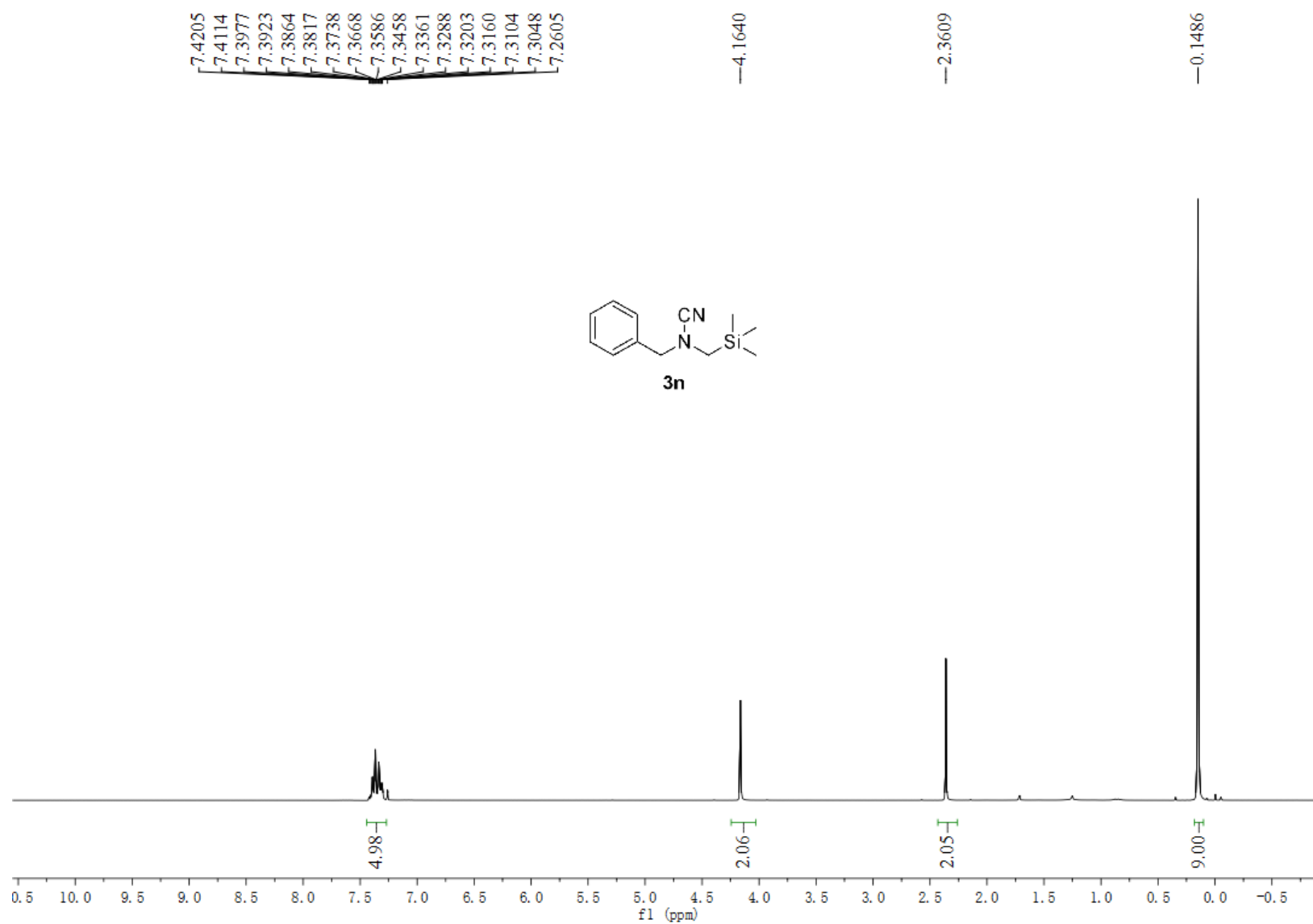


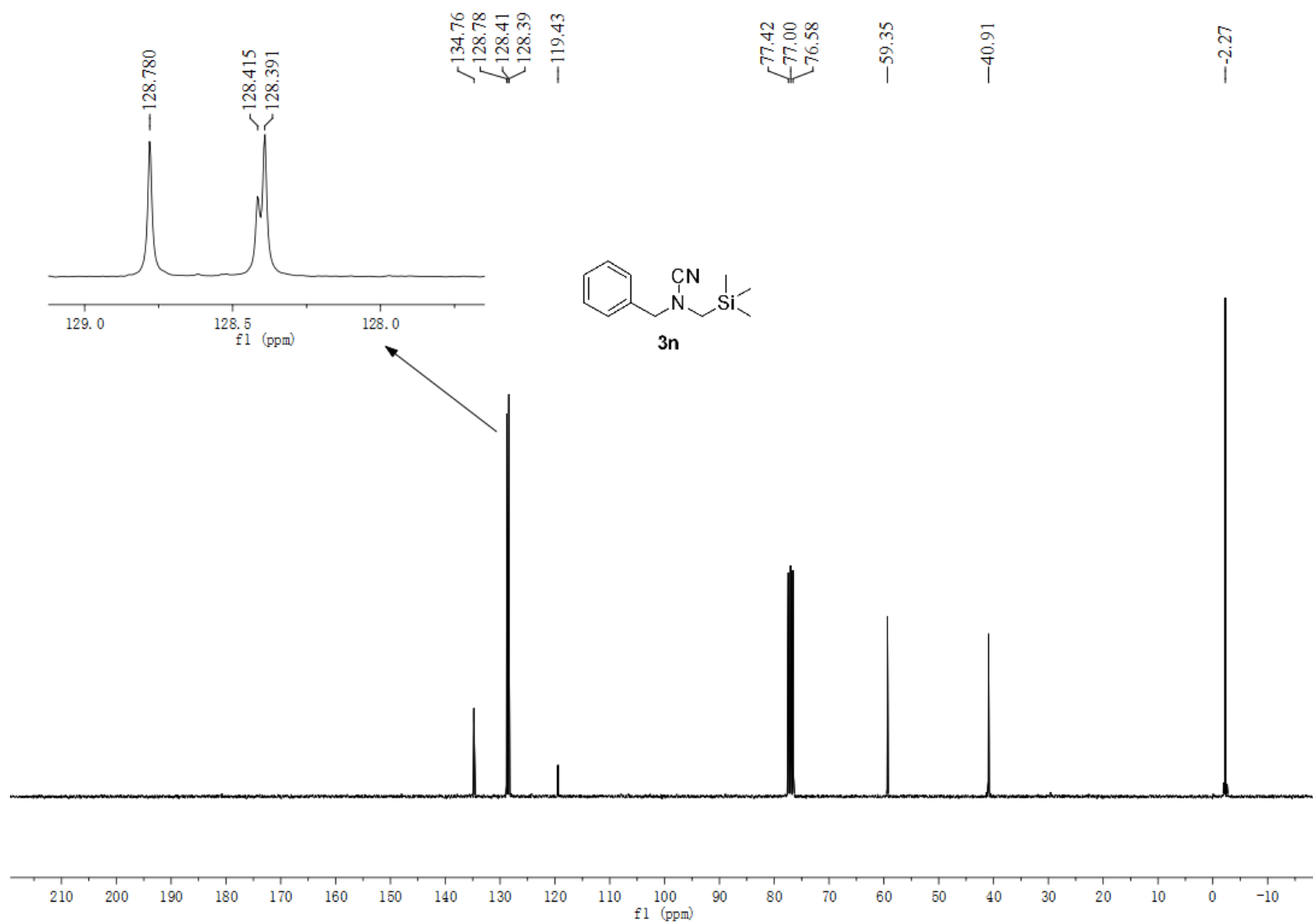
2-Phenylpyrrolidine-1-carbonitrile (3m)



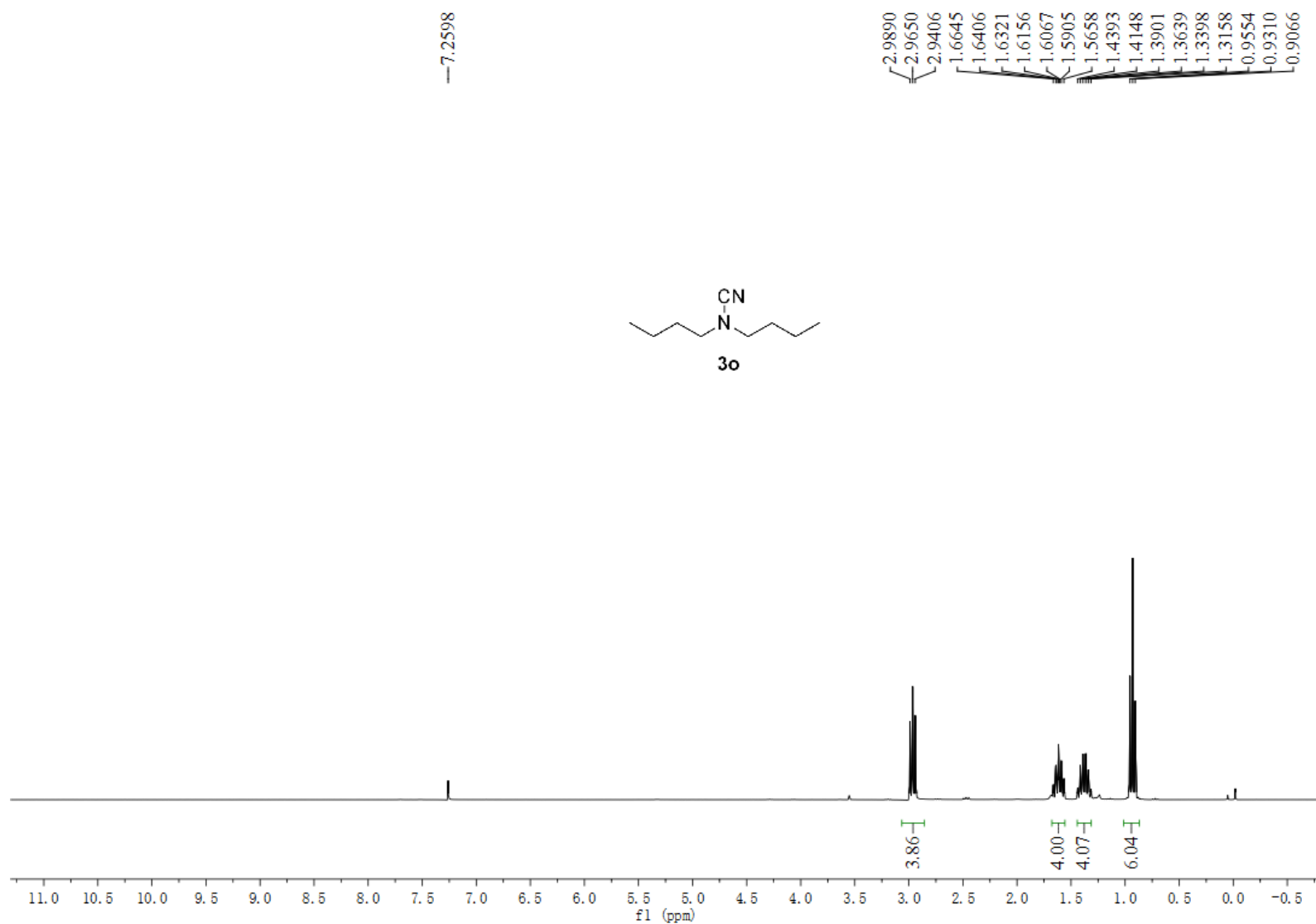
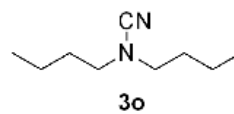


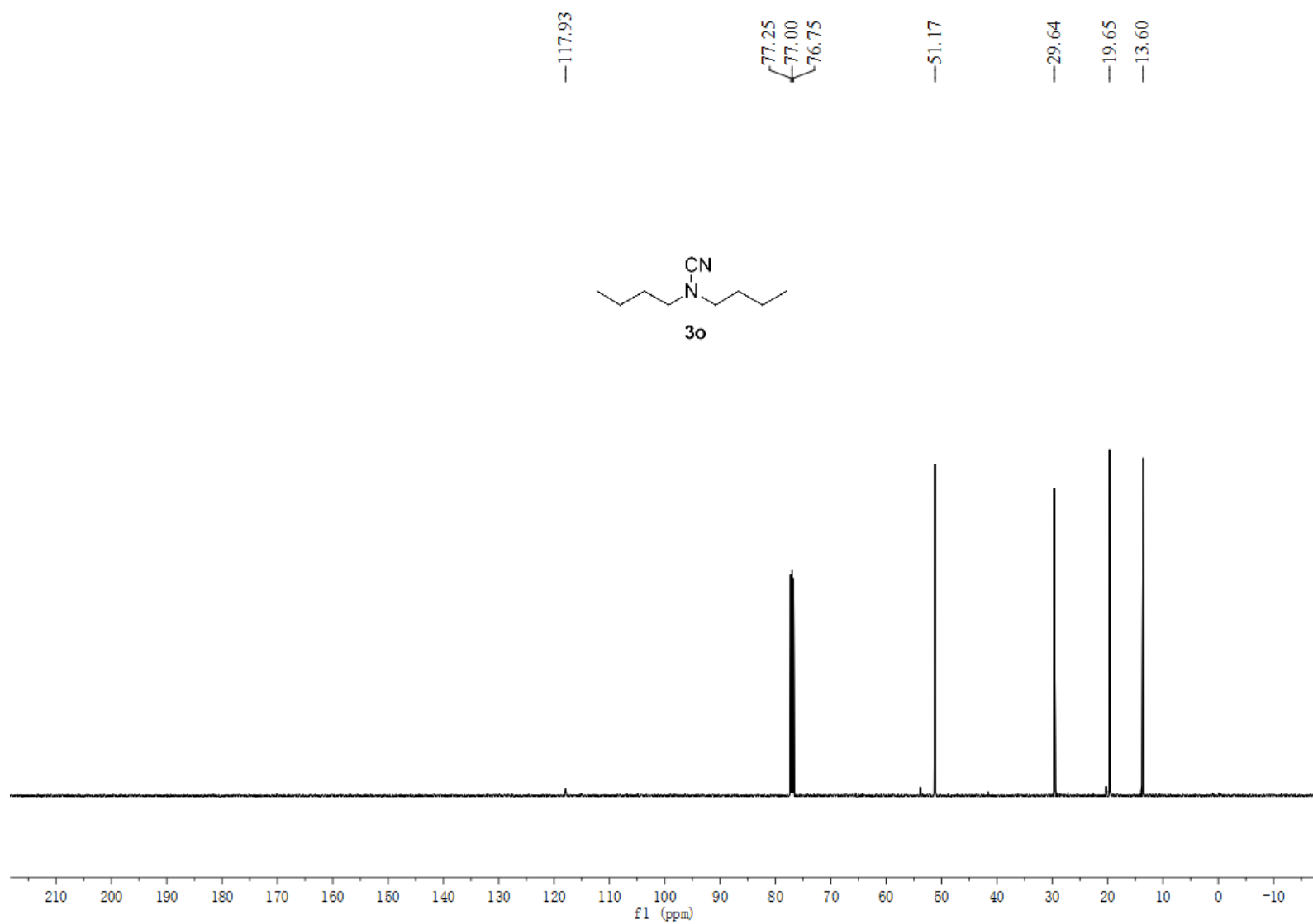
***N*-Benzyl-*N*-((trimethylsilyl)methyl)cyanamide (3n)**





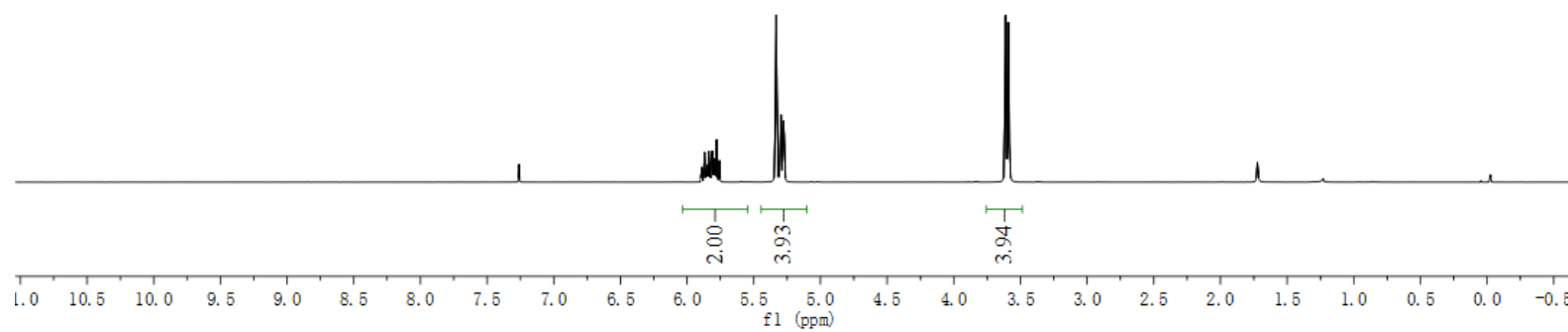
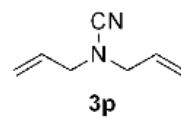
***N,N*-Dibutylcyanamide (3o)**

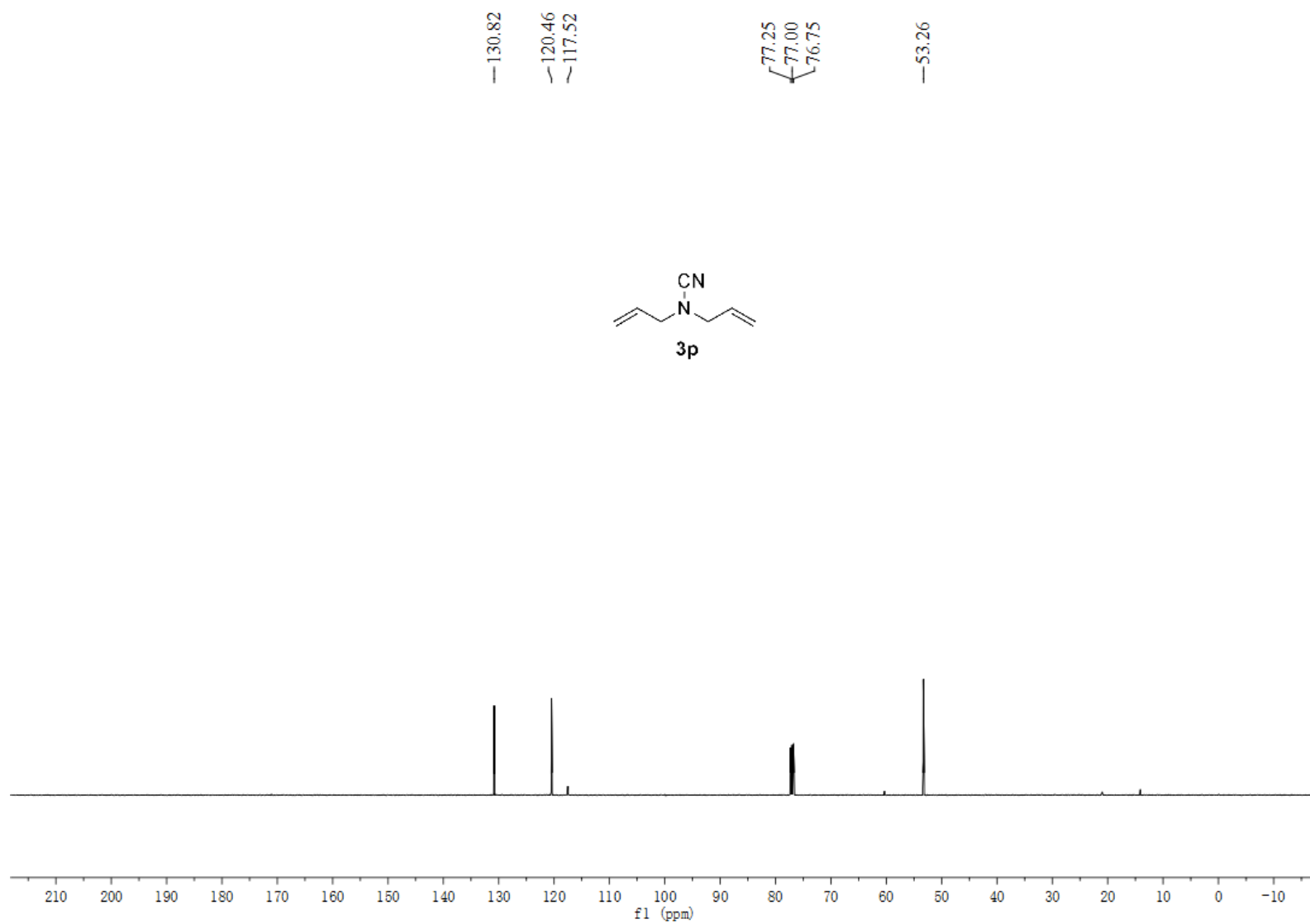
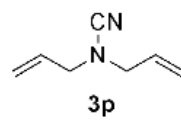




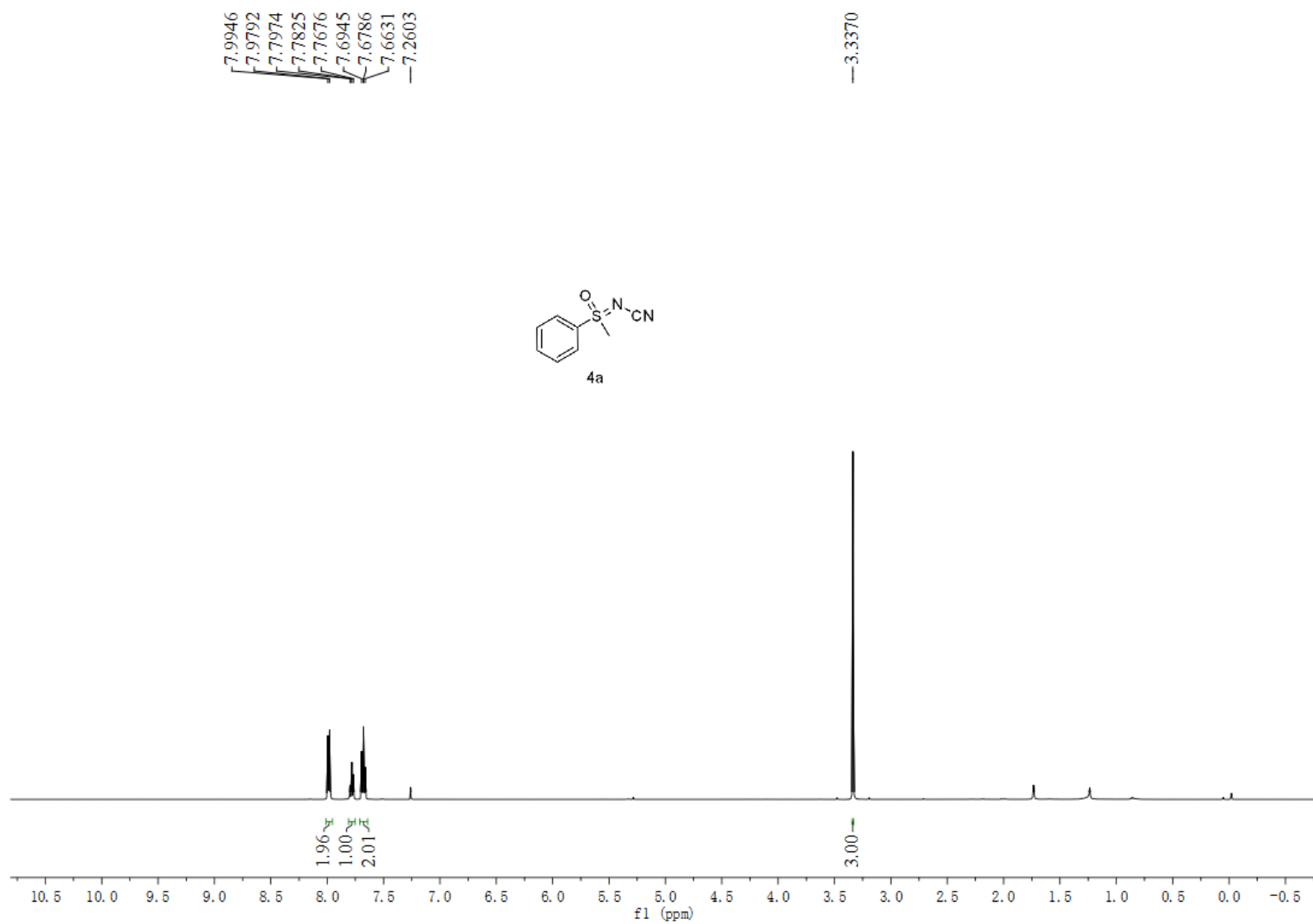
***N,N*-Diallylcyanamide (3o)**

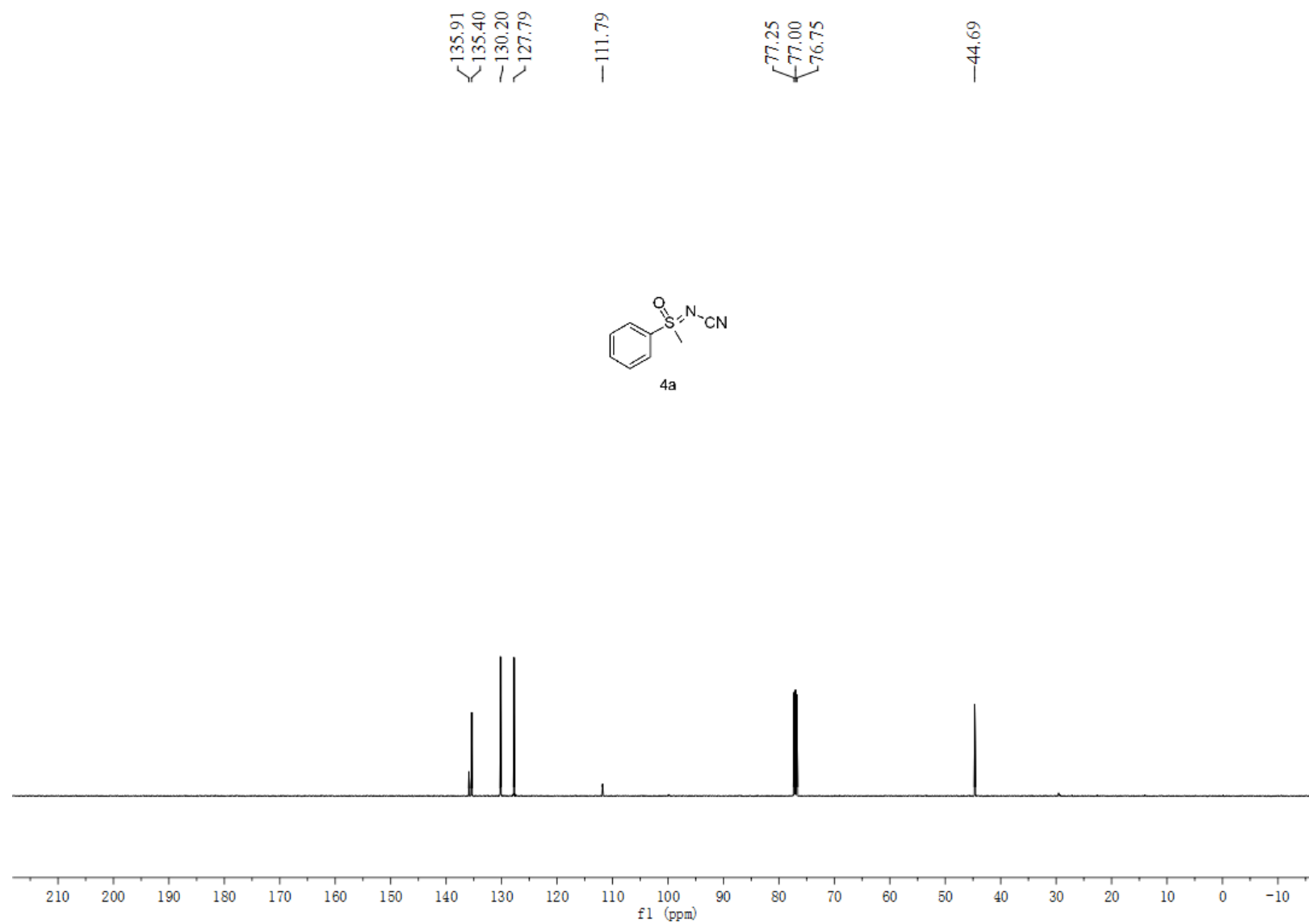
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3.5894



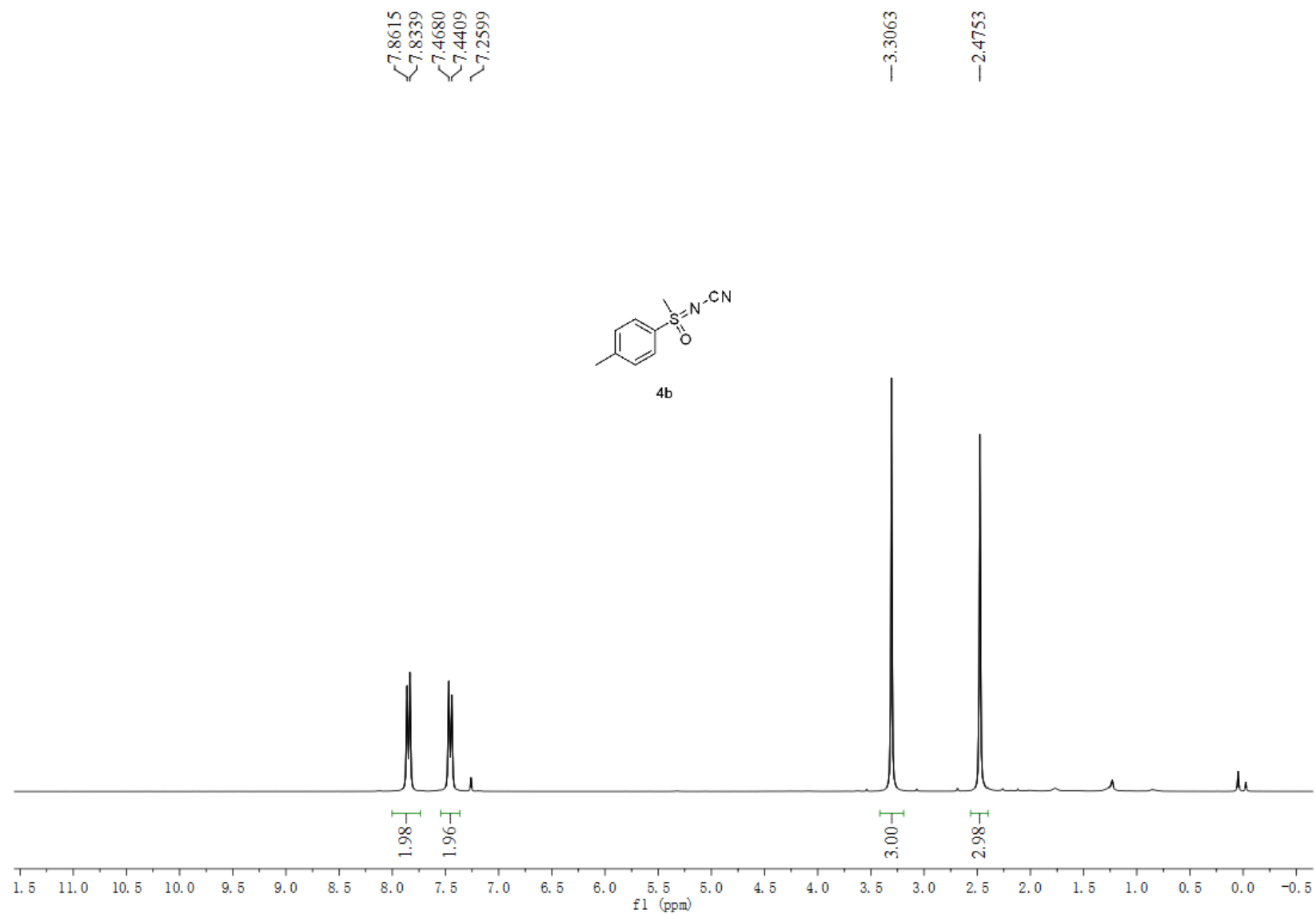


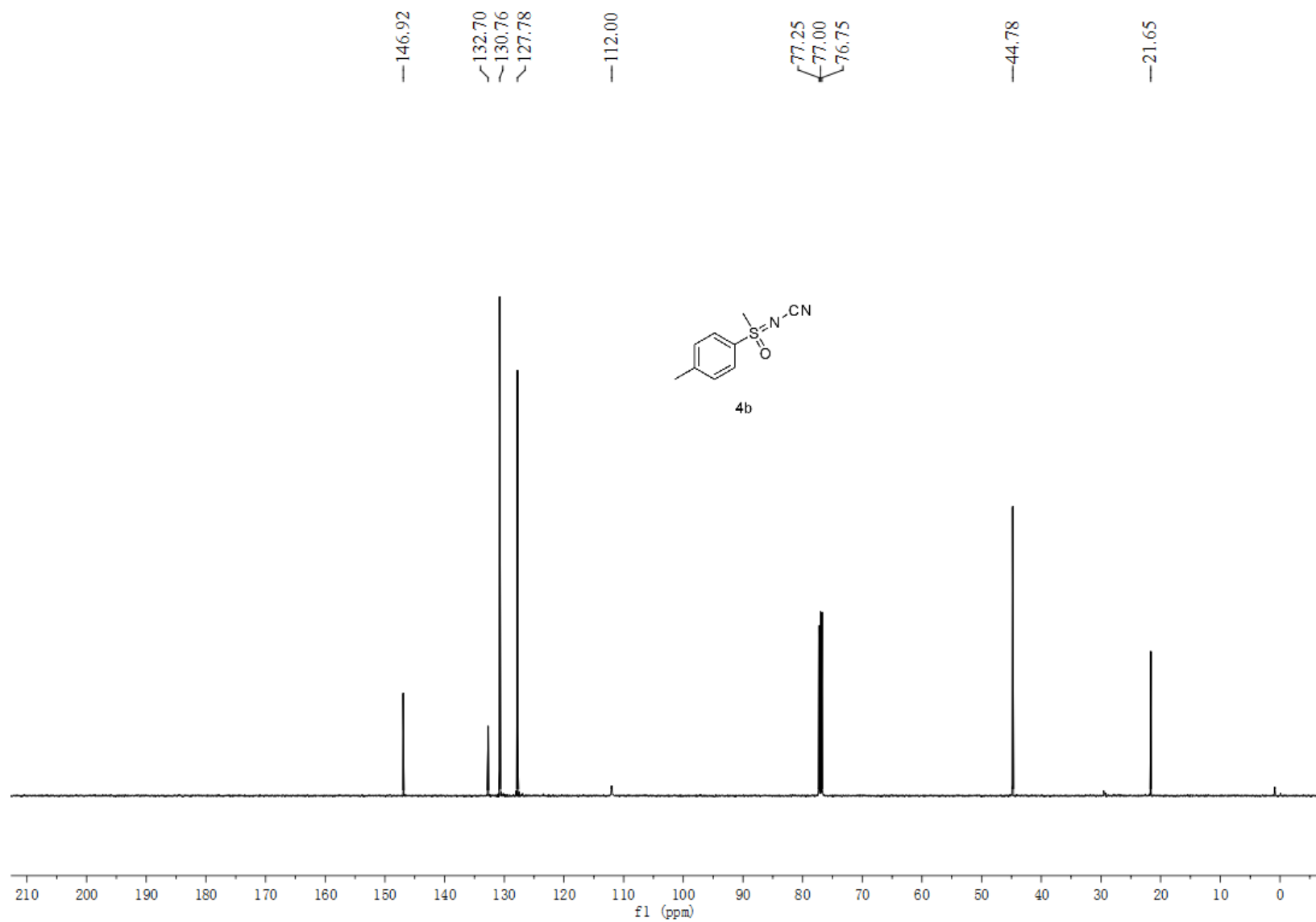
***N*-(Cyano) methyl phenyl sulfoximine (4a)**



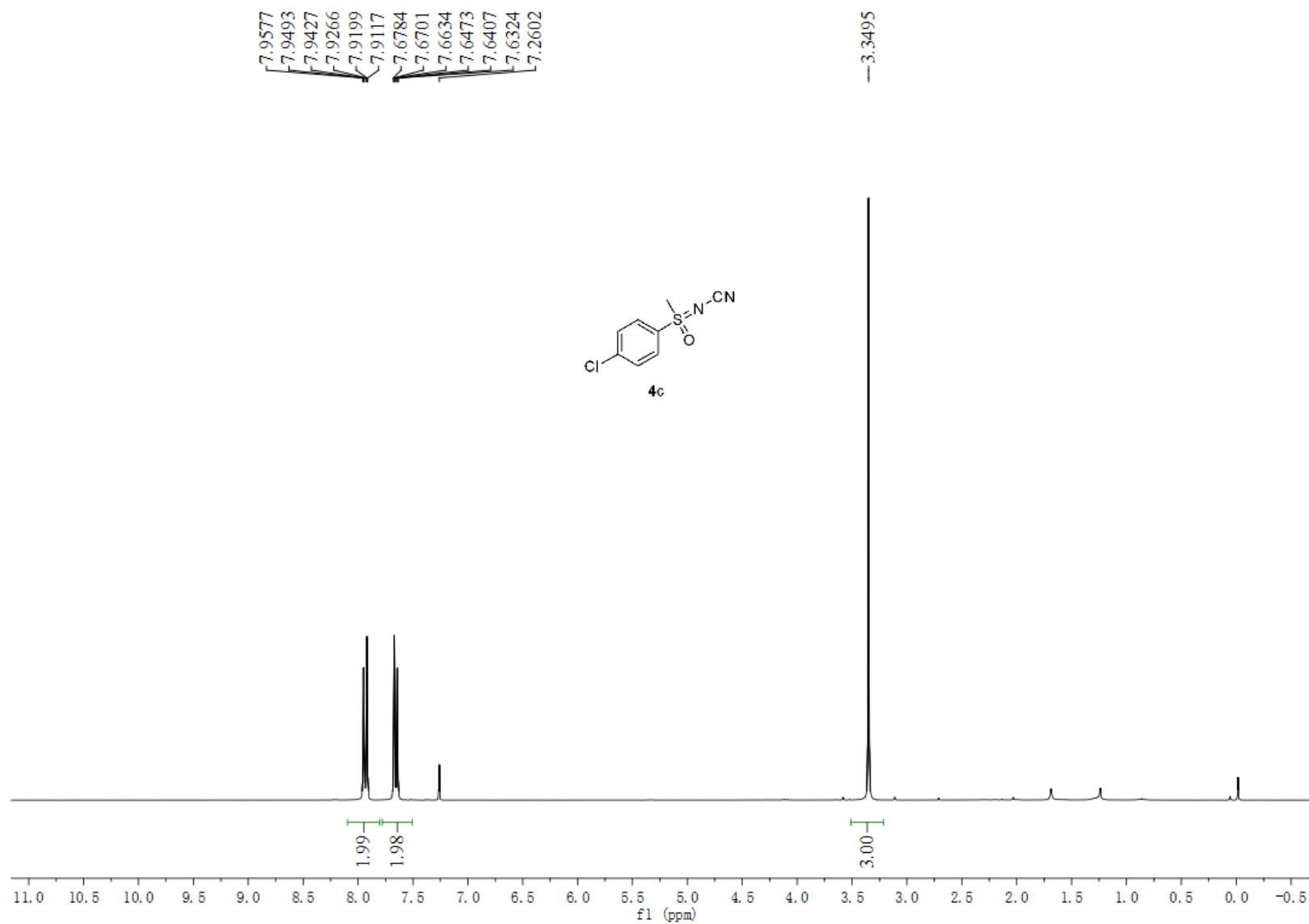


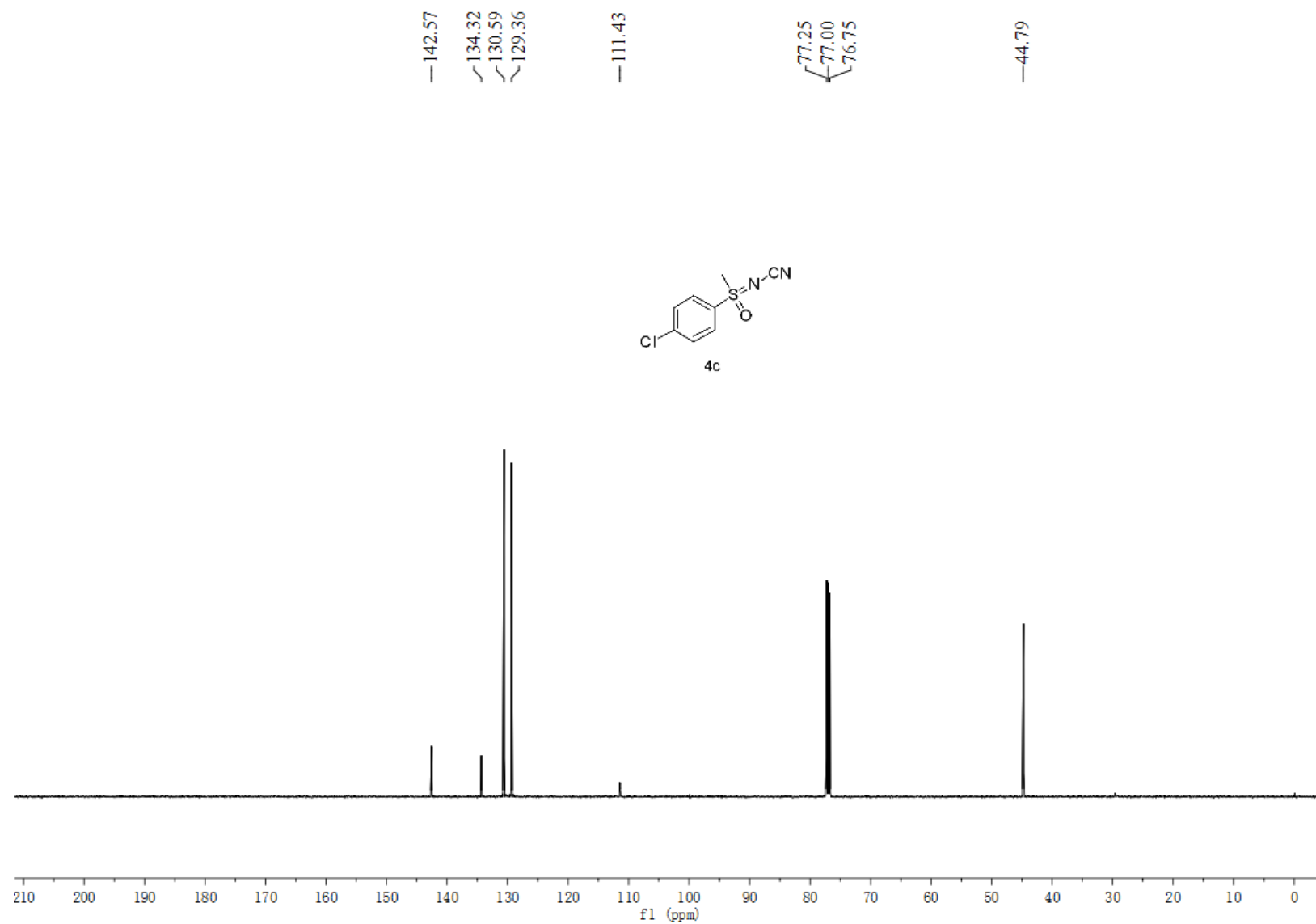
***N*-(Cyano) methyl 4-methylphenyl sulfoximine (4b)**





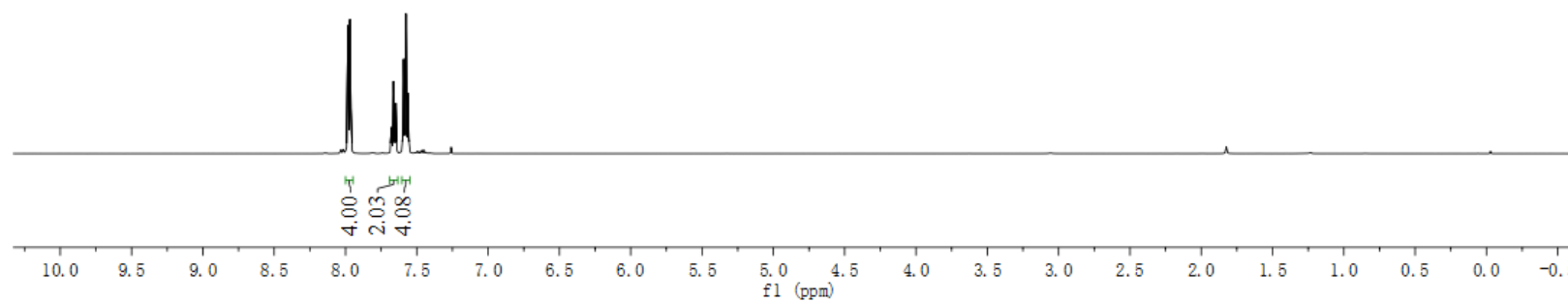
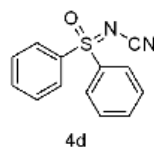
***N*-(Cyano) methyl 4-chlorophenyl sulfoximine (4c)**

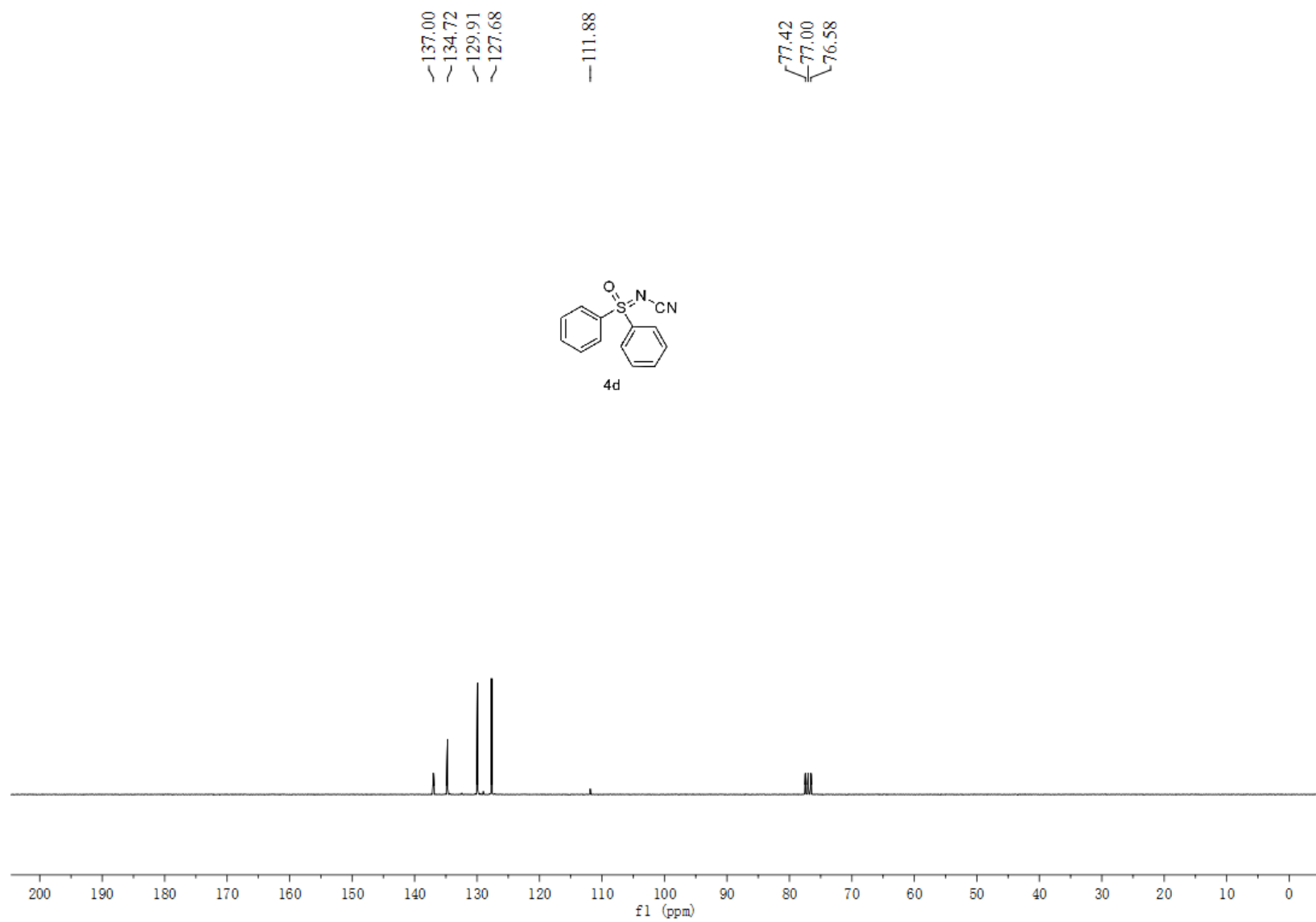




***N*-(Cyano) diphenyl sulfoximine (4d)**

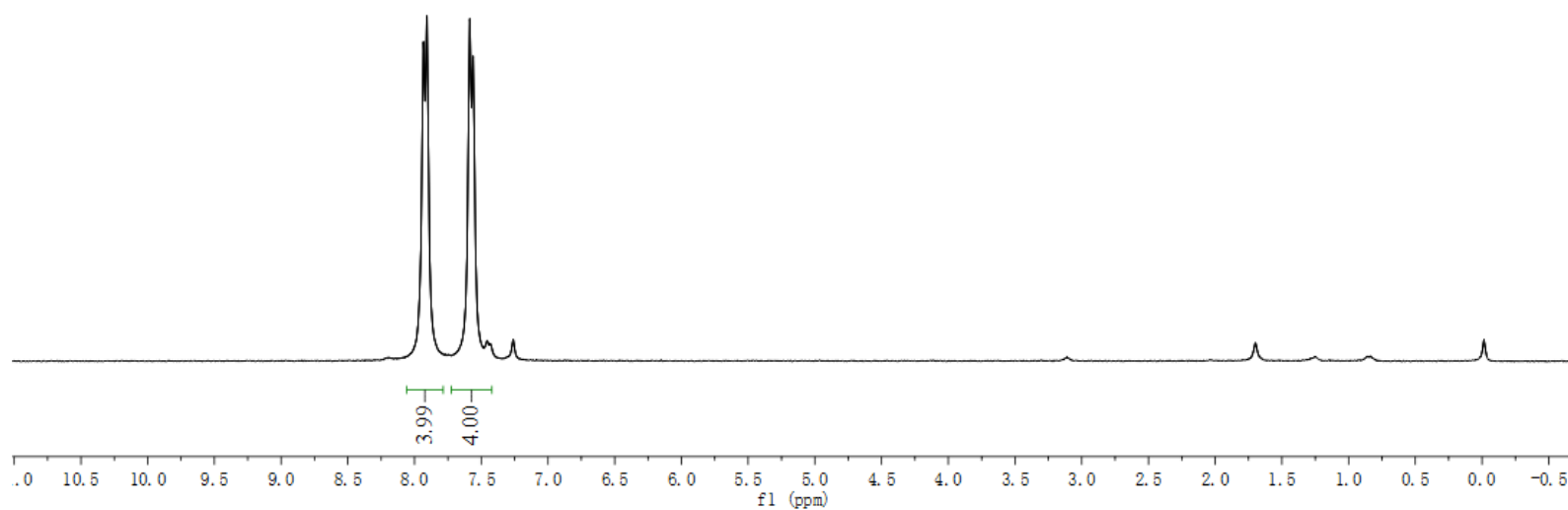
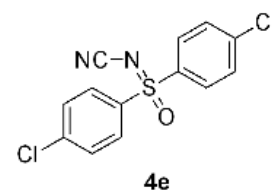
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7.6777
7.6628
7.6480
7.5925
7.5765
7.5613
7.2596

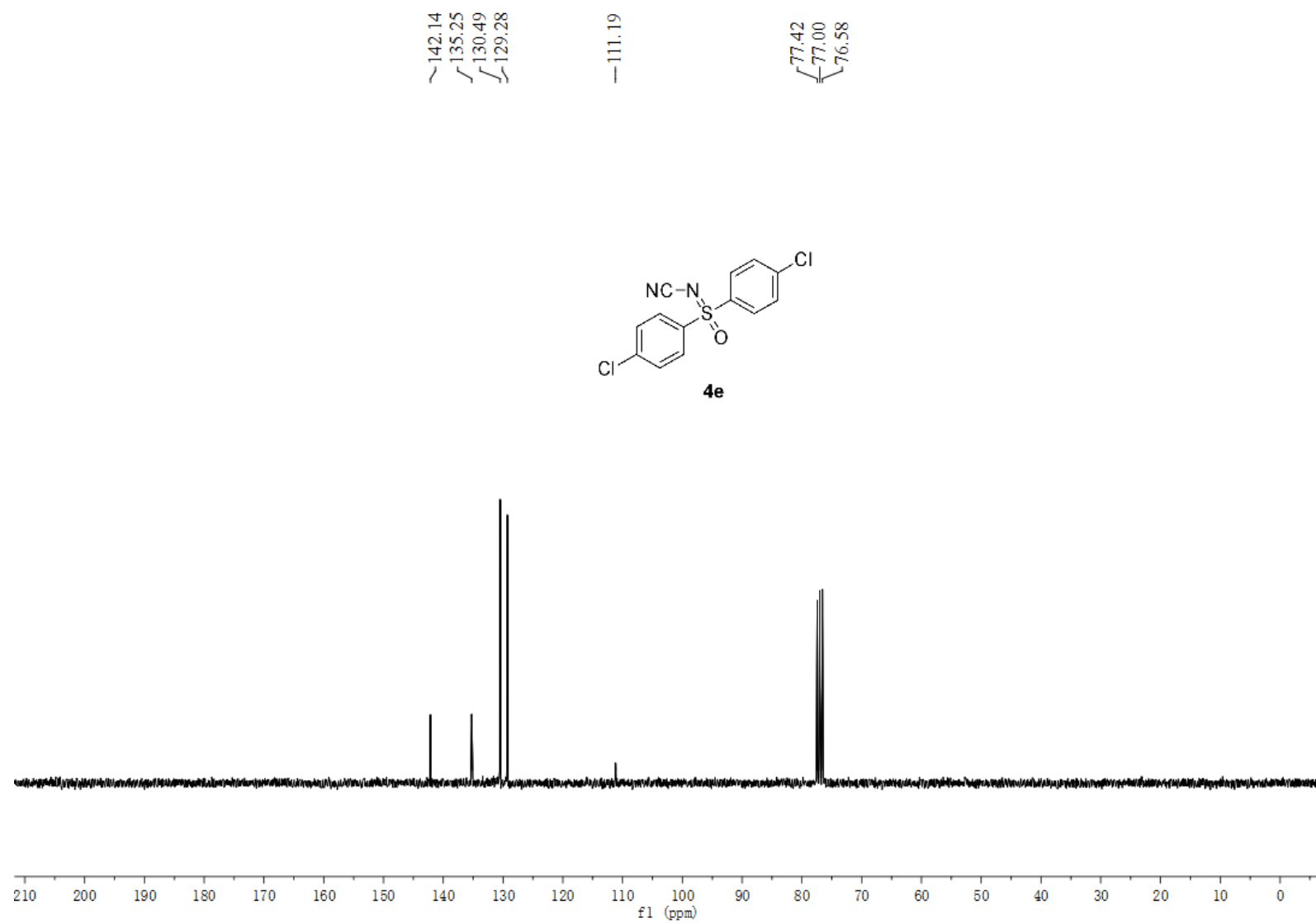




N-(Cyano)-4,4'-Dichlorodiphenyl sulfoximine (4e)

7.9329
7.9068
7.5868
7.5610
7.2600





2-Cyano-1,1,3,3-tetramethylguanidine (4f)

