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Chlorination of trichlorosilane/ chlorodimethylsilane using metal chlorides: experimental and mechanistic investigations

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Removal of carbonaceous impurities from trichlorosilane (SiHCl_3) reduces the carbon content of solar grade polysilicon produced with the improved Siemens method. The separation of chlorodimethylsilane ($(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{SiHCl}$) from SiHCl_3 by distillation remains challenging due to the small difference in their boiling points. Herein, the chlorination of $(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{SiHCl}/\text{SiHCl}_3$ with metal chlorides (WCl_6 , MoCl_5) were studied. The aim was to convert $(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{SiHCl}$ into $(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{SiCl}_2$, increase the relative volatility of $(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{SiHCl}$ and SiHCl_3 and facilitate the distillation. The optimum reaction conditions were 60 °C, 60 min and $n(\text{WCl}_6$ or $\text{MoCl}_5)$: $n(\text{SiHCl}_3$ or $(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{SiHCl}) = 0.7$ at 0.8 MPa. Under these conditions, and when WCl_6 and MoCl_5 were used as the chlorine sources, the extents of $(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{SiHCl}$ conversion were 22.7 and 18.5 times higher than those of SiHCl_3 , respectively. In addition, a mechanistic study showed that the difference between the reactions of SiHCl_3 and $(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{SiHCl}$ resulted from the different energy barriers for the reactions of the SiCl_3 and $(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{SiCl}\cdot$ radicals with WCl_x or MoCl_x , and the barrier for the SiCl_3 reaction was higher than that for the $(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{SiCl}\cdot$ reaction.

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1. Introduction

Solar energy is a renewable and clean energy that will play an important role in solving the energy crisis.^{1–3} Therefore, polysilicon has rapidly developed as a raw material for solar photovoltaic cells. It is important to limit the impurities contained in solar-grade polysilicon to obtain higher photoelectric conversion efficiencies.

The standard for solar-grade polysilicon requires the carbon atom concentration to be less than 5×10^{18} atoms per cm^3 .⁴ Currently, the main process used in producing polysilicon is the improved Siemens method.^{1,5} Since the final polysilicon product is obtained by reacting SiHCl_3 with H_2 in a bell jar furnace,⁵ carbon impurities in SiHCl_3 should be strictly limited. Therefore, the removal of carbonaceous impurities in SiHCl_3 is a key step in the improved Siemens method.

The carbonaceous impurities in SiHCl_3 were mainly methylchlorosilanes $[(\text{CH}_3)_n\text{SiCl}_{4-n}]$, $n = 1–3$.⁶ Moreover, the boiling points of $\text{CH}_3\text{SiHCl}_2$ (41.9 °C) and $(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{SiHCl}$ (34.7 °C) are close to the boiling point of SiHCl_3 (32.0 °C).⁷ Azeotropes are easily formed during SiHCl_3 purification *via* distillation. Thus, purifying SiHCl_3 by distillation is difficult. One possible method is to convert $\text{CH}_3\text{SiHCl}_2$ and $(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{SiHCl}$ into

methylchlorosilanes with high boiling points and high chlorine contents by chlorination. This would result in higher relative volatility and make distillation easier.

Typical chlorine sources for the chlorination reactions of $\text{CH}_3\text{SiHCl}_2$ are chlorine gas,⁸ chlorinated hydrocarbons^{6,9} and chlorosilane.^{4,10,11} Wan *et al.*⁸ proposed photochlorination of $\text{CH}_3\text{SiHCl}_2$ with Cl_2 in a continuous microchannel reactor. The results showed that the removal rate of $\text{CH}_3\text{SiHCl}_2$ was as high as 99.67% under the optimal reaction conditions. But this method is currently in the laboratory research stage. In addition, Zhang and Huang⁹ reported catalytic chlorination of $\text{CH}_3\text{SiHCl}_2$ with carbon tetrachloride (CCl_4) over a $\text{Pd}/\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3$ catalyst. However, the introduction of new carbon impurities cannot be avoided, and the high price of Pd limits its utilization in industry. Additionally, silicon tetrachloride, a byproduct of polysilicon production *via* a modified Siemens process, can also be used as a chlorine source for chlorination of $\text{CH}_3\text{SiHCl}_2$.⁴ However, silicon powder is easily formed, blocking the pores of the activated carbon catalyst during this process. Therefore, the catalytic performance and stability of the activated carbon catalyst are poor.

Chlorination of $(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{SiHCl}$ with LiCl as the chloride source and $\text{B}(\text{C}_6\text{F}_5)_3$ as the catalyst was reported to occur in a mixture of ethyl ether and toluene.¹² Obviously, many researchers are studying chlorination reactions of $\text{CH}_3\text{SiHCl}_2$. However, the boiling point of $(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{SiHCl}$ is closer to that of SiHCl_3 , which makes separation more difficult. Furthermore, SiHCl_3 and $(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{SiHCl}$ may be chlorinated at the same time. Therefore, it

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is important to study the competitive relationship between the SiHCl₃ and (CH₃)₂SiHCl during chlorination reactions.

Metal chlorides are also used as catalysts in chlorination reactions. For instance, (a) chlorination of methylphenyldichlorosilane to chlorinated methylphenyldichlorosilanes with gaseous chlorine has been catalysed by FeCl₃, SbCl₅, SnCl₄ and AlCl₃;¹³ (b) chlorination of 1,3-dithiolanes and 1,3-dithianes with CH₂Cl₂ has been catalysed by WCl₆;¹⁴ and (c) chlorination of allyl groups in terpenic olefins (β-pinene and carvone) with NaClO has been catalysed by MoCl₅, AlCl₃, FeCl₃ and FeCl₂.^{15,16} Metal chlorides can be used not only as catalysts but also directly as chlorine sources in reactions, such as in the photochemical chlorination of methane mediated by FeCl₃.¹⁷ In addition, the boiling points of WCl₆ (346.7 °C) and MoCl₅ (268.0 °C) are very high and they are easily removed by distillation.

Therefore, this work will focus on the thermal chlorination reaction of SiHCl₃ and (CH₃)₂SiHCl by using WCl₆ and MoCl₅ as chlorine donors. The effects of the metal chloride type, molar ratio of reactants, reaction temperature and reaction time were investigated in detail. Finally, a reaction mechanism was proposed and explored in detail with density functional theory calculations.

2. Experiments and calculations

2.1 Materials used

Analytical standard dimethylchlorosilane ((CH₃)₂SiHCl, 99.0%) and trichlorosilane (SiHCl₃, 99.0%) were purchased from Sigma-Aldrich. Silicon tetrachloride (SiCl₄, 99.0%) was kindly supplied by Xinjiang Daqo New Energy Co. Additionally, dichlorodimethylsilane ((CH₃)₂SiCl₂, 99.0%), chloromethylchloromethylsilane ((CH₂Cl)CH₃SiCl₂, 99.0%), tungsten hexachloride (WCl₆, 99.5%) and molybdenum pentachloride (MoCl₅, 99.6%) were purchased from Adamas.

2.2 Experimental setup

The specific experimental operations were as follows: first, to prepare stock solutions, SiHCl₃ or (CH₃)₂SiHCl was dissolved in SiCl₄ at a concentration of 0.5 mol L⁻¹. In addition, a given amount of WCl₆ or MoCl₅ and 10 mL of stock solution were added to a 36.5 mL batch reactor. WCl₆ and MoCl₅ were easily soluble in SiCl₄ and formed homogeneous reaction systems, and the molar ratios of reactants [*n*(WCl₆/MoCl₅):*n*(SiHCl₃/(CH₃)₂SiHCl)] were 0.3, 0.7 and 1.2. Next, a nitrogen stream was introduced into the reactor three times to replace the air. To maintain a homogeneous reaction system, the N₂ pressure was raised to a higher reaction pressure (0.8 MPa). Then, the reactor was heated in a water bath and cooled with an ice-salt bath (-20 °C) after the reaction. Finally, the reactor was opened after slowly relieving the pressure. The samples were then removed from the reactor and distilled to remove metal impurities.

The mole fraction of the chlorosilane solution was determined with a 9790 Plus gas chromatograph equipped with a thermal conductivity detector (TCD), and H₂ was used as the carrier gas. The gas chromatography (GC) detection conditions were as follows: a 3 m 25% DC-550/Chromo packed column; an

injection temperature of 150 °C; and a detector temperature of 150 °C. In addition, a programmed temperature rise was used for the oven temperature, *i.e.*, it was first held at 60 °C for 2.5 min, then raised to 120 °C at a rate of 30 °C min⁻¹, and finally held at 120 °C for 2.5 min. The identities of the products were determined from the retention times of standard samples.

The conversion of SiHCl₃ was calculated according to eqn (1), and it was expressed as *X*(SiHCl₃). The inlet and outlet mole fractions of SiHCl₃ were expressed as *x*(SiHCl₃)_{in} and *x*(SiHCl₃)_{out}, respectively. The formula used for calculation of the (CH₃)₂SiHCl conversion rate was the same as that used for SiHCl₃.

$$X(\text{SiHCl}_3) = \frac{x(\text{SiHCl}_3)_{\text{in}} - x(\text{SiHCl}_3)_{\text{out}}}{x(\text{SiHCl}_3)_{\text{in}}} \times 100\% \quad (1)$$

To further identify the components in the reaction product, samples were dissolved in deuterated chloroform (CDCl₃) and qualitatively analysed with nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) spectroscopy using a Bruker Avance III [¹H (400 MHz), ¹³C (101 MHz)].

2.3 Theoretical method

The reactions discussed herein are free radical reactions, including chain initiation reactions, chain propagation reactions, and chain termination reactions. All the calculations were performed with the Gaussian 16 program.¹⁸ The geometric configuration of each stationary point for a reactant, transition state, or product along the reaction pathway was studied with B3LYP calculations by using the def2-TZVP basis set for the metal atoms and the 6-311G++(2d,p) basis set for the remaining atoms. In addition, frequency analyses were performed to ensure that the structure determined for a reactant or product was at a local minimum (all frequencies were positive) or in a transition state (only one negative frequency). The intrinsic reaction coordinates (IRCs) were used to evaluate whether the structures of the transition states were correctly connected to the products and reactants.¹⁹ The energy (*E*) in the entire reaction process was taken from the Gibbs free energy in the output file, that is, EE + thermal free energy correction (*T* = 298.15 K). The energy barrier (EB), the energy change (Δ*E*) and the dissociation energy (DE) were calculated with eqn (2), (3), and (4).

$$\text{EB} = E(\text{transition state}) - E(\text{reactant}) \quad (2)$$

$$\Delta E = E(\text{product}) - E(\text{reactant}) \quad (3)$$

$$\text{DE} = \sum E(\text{free radicals}) - E(\text{molecular}) \quad (4)$$

3. Results and discussion

3.1 Experimental research on chlorination of SiHCl₃/(CH₃)₂SiHCl with WCl₆

3.1.1 Effect of reaction temperature. The influence of reaction temperature on the conversion rate for the reaction of WCl₆ and SiHCl₃/(CH₃)₂SiHCl was investigated over the



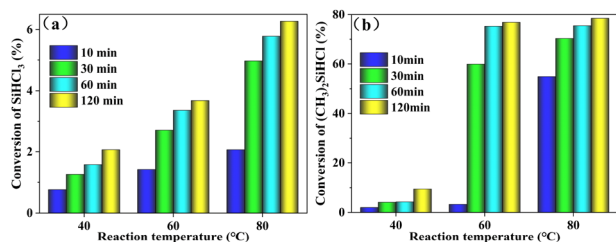


Fig. 1 Conversions of (a) SiHCl₃/(b) (CH₃)₂SiHCl in chlorination reactions run with WCl₆ at different reaction temperatures.

temperature range of 40–80 °C with a reaction pressure of 0.8 MPa and $n(\text{WCl}_6) : n[\text{SiHCl}_3/(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{SiHCl}] = 0.3$. The SiHCl₃ or (CH₃)₂SiHCl conversion rate as a function of temperature is shown in Fig. 1. These results showed that the conversion rates for (CH₃)₂SiHCl and SiHCl₃ both increased with increasing temperature and time. The conversion rate of SiHCl₃ was extremely low, between 0.8% and 6.3% at 40 °C to 80 °C for 10 min to 120 min. The (CH₃)₂SiHCl conversion was also low, between 2.0% and 9.5%, at 40 °C. However, when the reaction temperature was 60 °C, the conversion of (CH₃)₂SiHCl increased substantially from 3.3% to 59.9% with an increase in the reaction time from 10 min to 30 min. By prolonging the reaction time to 60 min, the conversion of (CH₃)₂SiHCl gradually increased to 75.2%. And the conversion of (CH₃)₂SiHCl increased slightly with increasing temperature and time. Therefore, the optimum reaction conditions were 60 °C for 60 min.

In addition, a solid precipitated from the reaction products obtained with conversion rates greater than 50%. The metal chloride is highly moisture-sensitive, and it was difficult to analyse it further. Since the high-valent tungsten chloride was highly soluble in silicon tetrachloride, (CH₃)₂SiHCl is thought to react with WCl₆ to form a low-valent tungsten chloride or elemental tungsten.

3.1.2 Effect of reactant ratio. The conversions of SiHCl₃ or (CH₃)₂SiHCl observed for chlorination reactions run with WCl₆ at different reactant ratios are shown in Fig. 2. Herein, the experimental conditions included a reaction pressure of 0.8 MPa, a reaction temperature of 60 °C and a reaction time of 60 min. When WCl₆ and (CH₃)₂SiHCl were reacted, with increases in the molar ratio of WCl₆ to (CH₃)₂SiHCl from 0.3 to

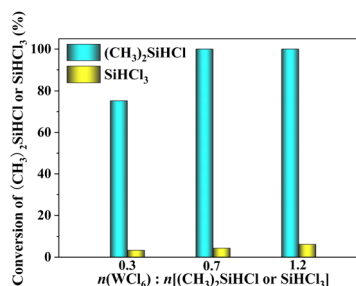


Fig. 2 Conversions of SiHCl₃/(CH₃)₂SiHCl during chlorination of SiHCl₃/(CH₃)₂SiHCl with WCl₆ at different reactant ratios.

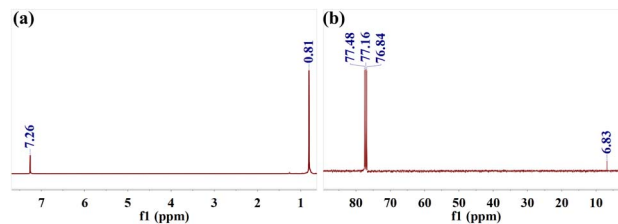


Fig. 3 (a) ¹H NMR and (b) ¹³C NMR spectra for the product of (CH₃)₂SiHCl chlorination by WCl₆.

0.7 and 1.2, the conversion of (CH₃)₂SiHCl increased from 75.2% to 100.0% and 100.0%. The conversion rate of SiHCl₃ was far lower than that of (CH₃)₂SiHCl. Obviously, the optimum molar ratio of WCl₆ to (CH₃)₂SiHCl/SiHCl₃ was 0.7. The ratio of the two conversion rates was 22.7.

The product from the 100% conversion reaction was analysed by GC. It contained a large amount of (CH₃)₂SiCl₂ and a small amount of (CH₂Cl)CH₃SiCl₂. To further confirm the composition of the sample, the product was qualitatively analysed by ¹H NMR and ¹³C NMR, as shown in Fig. 3. The main product (CH₃)₂SiCl₂ (¹H NMR: 0.81 ppm; ¹³C NMR: 6.83 ppm) was identified from the NMR spectrum. Therefore, the main product of the reaction between (CH₃)₂SiHCl and WCl₆ was (CH₃)₂SiCl₂, and the byproduct was (CH₂Cl)CH₃SiCl₂.

3.2 Experimental research on chlorination of SiHCl₃/(CH₃)₂SiHCl with MoCl₅

3.2.1 Effect of reaction temperature. The conversion rates for SiHCl₃/(CH₃)₂SiHCl in chlorination reactions run with MoCl₅ at different temperatures are shown in Fig. 4. Here, the reaction conditions were the same as those used for SiHCl₃/(CH₃)₂SiHCl and WCl₆. Similarly, the conversion rates for (CH₃)₂SiHCl and SiHCl₃ both increased with increases in temperature and time. The conversion rate of SiHCl₃ was very low. (CH₃)₂SiHCl hardly reacted at 40 °C but reacted rapidly at 60 °C and 80 °C. Apparently, the conversion levels for the MoCl₅ reaction with (CH₃)₂SiHCl were much higher than those with SiHCl₃ at 60 °C and 80 °C. In addition, the conversion of (CH₃)₂SiHCl was as high as 64.0% at 60 °C for 60 min. Therefore, we will continue to explore the effect of the reactant ratio on the conversion of SiHCl₃/(CH₃)₂SiHCl in the chlorination reactions with MoCl₅ under these reaction conditions. Additionally, when the products were formed with conversion rates

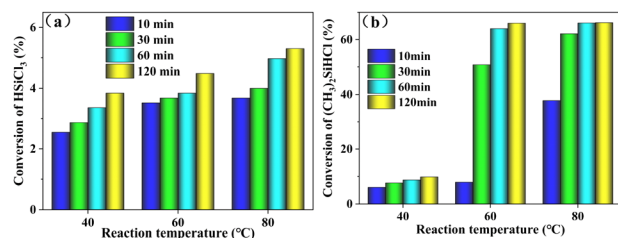


Fig. 4 Conversions of (a) SiHCl₃/(b) (CH₃)₂SiHCl in chlorination reactions run with MoCl₅ at different reaction temperatures.



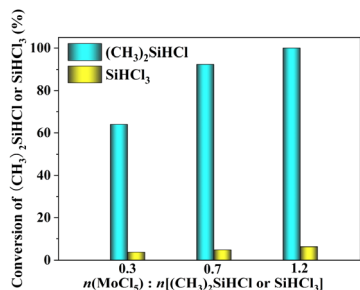


Fig. 5 Conversions of SiHCl_3 or $(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{SiHCl}$ in chlorination reactions run with MoCl_5 at different reactant ratios.

greater than 40%, a solid deposit formed during the reaction of MoCl_5 with $(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{SiHCl}$. The reaction was also presumed to yield a low-valent molybdenum chloride or elemental molybdenum.

3.2.2 Effect of reactant ratio. Fig. 5 shows the conversion of $\text{SiHCl}_3/(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{SiHCl}$ during chlorination with MoCl_5 at different reactant ratios. Herein, the experiment was also carried out at 0.8 MPa, 60 °C and 60 min. Fig. 5 shows that high molar ratios of MoCl_5 to $\text{SiHCl}_3/(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{SiHCl}$ favoured conversion of SiHCl_3 or $(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{SiHCl}$. As expected, the conversion rate of $(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{SiHCl}$ was still much higher than that of SiHCl_3 . When the molar ratio of MoCl_5 to $\text{SiHCl}_3/(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{SiHCl}$ was 0.7, the ratio of the two conversion levels was the largest at 18.5. Therefore, the optimum conditions were 60 °C, 60 min and $n(\text{MoCl}_5) : n(\text{SiHCl}_3 \text{ or } (\text{CH}_3)_2\text{SiHCl}) = 0.7$ for chlorination of $\text{SiHCl}_3/(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{SiHCl}$ with MoCl_5 at 0.8 MPa. Furthermore, the product formed with 100% conversion was also analysed by GC, ^1H NMR and ^{13}C NMR, which showed that the main product of the reaction between $(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{SiHCl}$ and MoCl_5 was $(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{SiCl}_2$ and that the byproduct was $(\text{CH}_2\text{Cl})\text{CH}_3\text{SiCl}_2$.

3.3 Mechanism calculation of chlorination of $\text{SiHCl}_3/(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{SiHCl}$ with WCl_x

To verify the results of the calculations, the main geometric parameters of SiHCl_3 , $(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{SiHCl}$, WCl_6 and MoCl_5 were

Table 1 Calculated and experimental geometric parameters of SiHCl_3 , $(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{SiHCl}$, WCl_6 and MoCl_5 (bond lengths/Å and bond angles/deg)

| Compound | Parameter | Value | |
|-------------------------------|-----------|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| | | Calculated | Experimental ^{20–22} |
| SiHCl_3 | Si–H | 1.462 | 1.464 |
| | Si–Cl | 2.052 | 2.020 |
| | Cl–Si–Cl | 109.582 | 109.4 |
| | Cl–Si–H | 109.360 | 109.5 |
| $(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{SiHCl}$ | Cl–Si | 2.101 | 2.0604 |
| | C–Si | 1.868 | 1.8542 |
| | Cl–Si–C | 108.37 | 108.43 |
| | C–Si–C | 112.83 | 112.32 |
| WCl_6 | W–Cl | 2.316 | 2.26 ± 0.02 |
| MoCl_5 | Mo–Cl | $2.247^a, 2.324^b$ | 2.27 ± 0.02 |

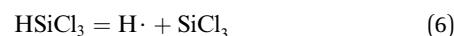
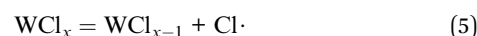
^a Equatorial plane. ^b Axial direction.

Table 2 Dissociation energies of the W–Cl bonds in WCl_x

| Compound | Parameter | DE/kJ mol ^{−1} |
|----------------|-----------|-------------------------|
| WCl_6 | W–Cl | 155.6 |
| WCl_5 | | 202.0 |
| WCl_4 | | 314.2 |
| WCl_3 | | 374.4 |
| WCl_2 | | 389.5 |
| WCl | | 368.6 |

compared with the reported experimental results. It can be seen from the data in Table 1 that the calculated geometric parameters have small errors compared with the experimental values.

3.3.1 Chain initiation reaction. The dissociation energies for the bonds in WCl_x (x indicates the number of chlorine atoms in the metal chloride, and $1 \leq x \leq 6$), SiHCl_3 and $(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{SiHCl}$ are shown in Table 2 and 3. By comparing the dissociation energies, it was found that the bond energy of the W–Cl bonds is the smallest in SiHCl_3 and WCl_x ($4 \leq x \leq 6$), with values of 155.6 kJ mol^{−1}, 202.0 kJ mol^{−1} and 314.2 kJ mol^{−1} respectively. Moreover, the Si–H bond, with an energy of 333.3 kJ mol^{−1}, is the weakest bond in SiHCl_3 , WCl_3 , WCl_2 , and WCl . Therefore, chain initiation reaction can be divided into cleavage of the Si–H bond and cleavage of the W–Cl bond. Chain initiation involves a decomposition reaction in which $\text{Cl}\cdot$ is released from WCl_x (eqn (5)) for the SiHCl_3 reaction with WCl_6 , WCl_5 , and WCl_4 . In contrast, in the reactions between SiHCl_3 and WCl_3 , WCl_2 , and WCl , the chain initiation reaction is cleavage of the Si–H bond of SiHCl_3 (eqn (6)).



Correspondingly, in reactions of $(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{SiHCl}$ with WCl_6 , WCl_5 and WCl_4 , the chain initiation reaction is cleavage of the W–Cl bond in WCl_x (eqn (5)). In the $(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{SiHCl}$ reactions with WCl_3 , WCl_2 and WCl , the chain initiation reaction involves breakage of the Si–H bond in $(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{SiHCl}$ (eqn (7)).



3.3.2 Chain propagation reaction. In the SiHCl_3 reactions with WCl_6 , WCl_5 and WCl_4 , the chlorine atoms from WCl_x continue to react with SiHCl_3 . Then, chain growth could occur *via* two reactions: ① in the substitution reaction, $\text{Cl}\cdot$ attacks the

Table 3 Dissociation energies for SiHCl_3 and $(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{SiHCl}$

| Compound | Parameter | DE/kJ mol ^{−1} |
|-------------------------------|-----------|-------------------------|
| SiHCl_3 | H–Si | 333.3 |
| | Si–Cl | 379.6 |
| $(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{SiHCl}$ | H–Si | 343.5 |
| | H–C | 378.4 |
| | Si–Cl | 411.9 |



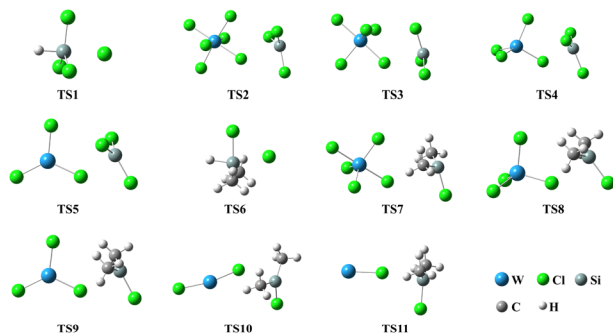


Fig. 6 Structures of transition states formed during the reactions of $\text{SiHCl}_3/(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{SiHCl}$ with WCl_6 .

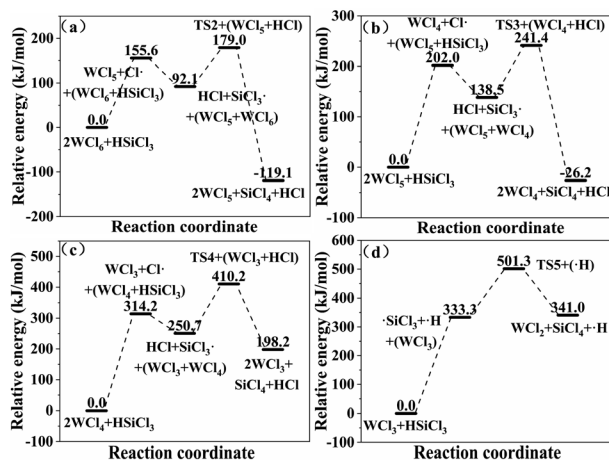
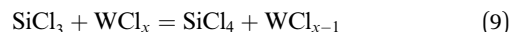
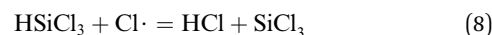


Fig. 7 (a–d) Relative energies for the reactions of SiHCl_3 with WCl_x .

silicon atom in SiHCl_3 to generate $\text{H}\cdot$ and SiCl_4 , and the energy barrier for this step is $144.8 \text{ kJ mol}^{-1}$. The structure of transition state TS1 involved in this reaction is shown in Fig. 6. ② In the

hydrogen abstraction reaction, $\text{Cl}\cdot$ abstracts the hydrogen atom on silicon to generate HCl and SiCl_3 , and the energy barrier is so small that it can be treated as no energy barrier. DeSain *et al.* also considered the reaction to be a barrierless hydrogen abstraction reaction.²³

Therefore, when WCl_6 , WCl_5 and WCl_4 react with SiHCl_3 , the chain growth reaction is hydrogen transfer between SiHCl_3 and $\text{Cl}\cdot$ (eqn (8)). The generated SiCl_3 continues to react with WCl_6 , WCl_5 and WCl_4 (eqn (9)). In the SiHCl_3 reactions with WCl_3 , WCl_2 , and WCl , SiCl_3 from SiHCl_3 continues to react with WCl_x (eqn (9)). The relative energies for the reactions of SiHCl_3 with WCl_6 , WCl_5 , WCl_4 and WCl_3 are shown in Fig. 7. The structures of the transition states involved in each reaction are shown in Fig. 6.



In the $(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{SiHCl}$ reactions with WCl_6 , WCl_5 and WCl_4 , the $\text{Cl}\cdot$ from WCl_x decomposition continues to react with $(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{SiHCl}$. There are also two possible chain growth reactions. ① Substitution reaction: $\text{Cl}\cdot$ directly attacks the silicon atom in $(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{SiHCl}$, passes through transition state TS6, and generates $\text{H}\cdot$ and $(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{SiCl}_2$, and the reaction energy barrier is 85.6 kJ mol^{-1} . TS6 is shown in Fig. 6. ② Hydrogen abstraction reaction: $\text{Cl}\cdot$ attacks the hydrogen atom on silicon to generate $(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{SiCl}\cdot$ and HCl . This reaction step is also regarded as having no energy barrier.

Therefore, the pathway followed in the reaction of $\text{Cl}\cdot$ with $(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{SiHCl}$ is hydrogen transfer from silicon to the chlorine atom (eqn (10)). The generated $(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{SiCl}\cdot$ continues to react with WCl_6 , WCl_5 , and WCl_4 to form $(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{SiCl}_2$ (eqn (11)). In the $(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{SiHCl}$ reactions with WCl_3 , WCl_2 , and WCl , $(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{SiCl}\cdot$ and WCl_x react to form $(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{SiCl}_2$ (eqn (11)). The relative

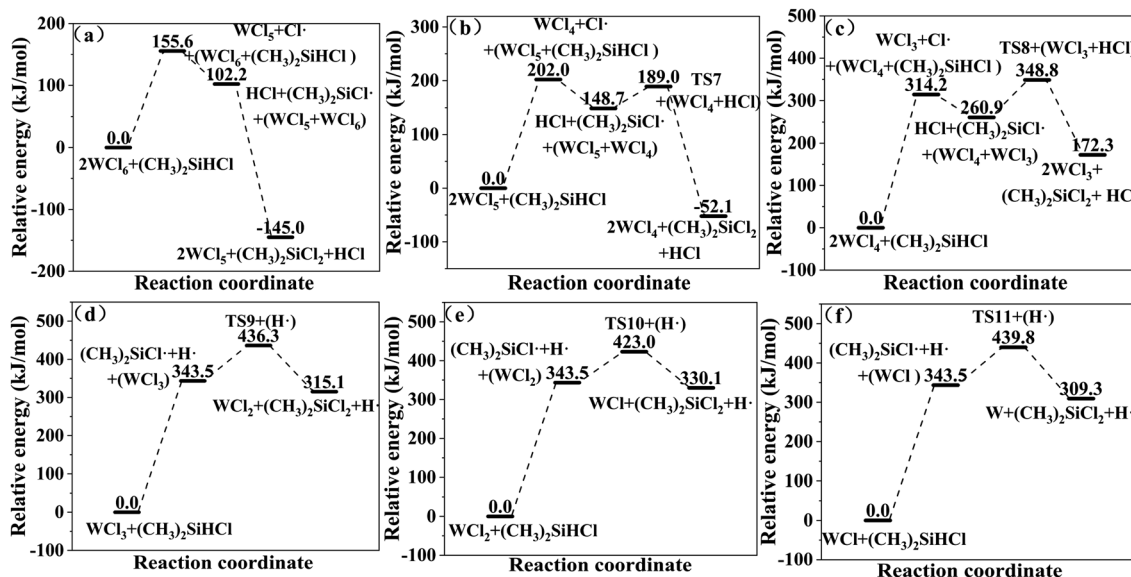


Fig. 8 (a–f) Relative energies for the reactions of $(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{SiHCl}$ with WCl_x .



Table 4 Energy barriers and Gibbs free energy changes for the reactions of WCl_x with $SiCl_3$ and $(CH_3)_2SiCl$.

| Reactant | | EB (kJ mol ⁻¹) | ΔG^a (kJ mol ⁻¹) |
|----------|----------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| WCl_6 | $\cdot SiCl_3$ | 86.9 | -211.2 |
| | $\cdot (CH_3)_2SiCl$ | 0 | -247.2 |
| WCl_5 | $\cdot SiCl_3$ | 102.9 | -164.7 |
| | $\cdot (CH_3)_2SiCl$ | 40.3 | -200.8 |
| WCl_4 | $\cdot SiCl_3$ | 159.5 | -52.5 |
| | $\cdot (CH_3)_2SiCl$ | 87.9 | -88.6 |
| WCl_3 | $\cdot SiCl_3$ | 168.0 | 7.7 |
| | $\cdot (CH_3)_2SiCl$ | 92.8 | -28.4 |
| WCl_2 | $\cdot SiCl_3$ | — | 22.7 |
| | $\cdot (CH_3)_2SiCl$ | 79.5 | -13.4 |
| WCl | $\cdot SiCl_3$ | — | 1.8 |
| | $\cdot (CH_3)_2SiCl$ | 96.3 | -34.2 |

^a The formula used for calculation of ΔG was the same as that for ΔE (eqn (3)).

energies for the $(CH_3)_2SiHCl$ reaction with WCl_6 , WCl_5 , WCl_4 , WCl_3 , WCl_2 and WCl are shown in Fig. 8. The structures of the transition states involved in each reaction are shown in Fig. 6.

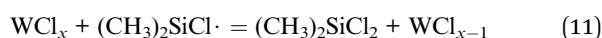
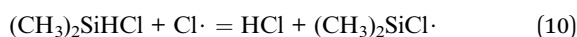
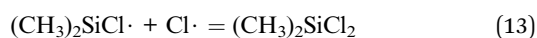


Fig. 7 and 8 show that the difference in the reactions of $SiHCl_3$ and $(CH_3)_2SiHCl$ with WCl_x lies in the energy barriers of the $SiCl_3$ and $(CH_3)_2SiCl$ reactions with WCl_x . The energy barriers and Gibbs free energy changes of the reactions of WCl_x with $SiCl_3$ and $(CH_3)_2SiCl$ are shown in Table 4. The data show that the energy barriers for the reactions of WCl_6 , WCl_5 , WCl_4 and WCl_3 with $SiCl_3$ are higher than those for the $(CH_3)_2SiCl$ reactions, with differences of 86.9 kJ mol⁻¹, 62.6 kJ mol⁻¹, 71.6 kJ mol⁻¹ and 75.2 kJ mol⁻¹. These results also show that $\Delta G > 0$ for the reactions of WCl_3 , WCl_2 , and WCl with $SiCl_3$ and that $\Delta G < 0$ for the reactions of WCl_3 , WCl_2 , and WCl with $(CH_3)_2SiCl$. Obviously, WCl_x reacts more readily with $(CH_3)_2SiHCl$. These results are consistent with the experimental data, which demonstrates the practicality of the calculations.

3.3.3 Chain termination reaction. At the chain termination stage, free radicals combine with each other to form the bond with the largest bond energy. According to a comparative analysis using the data in Tables 5 and 6, in the reactions of $SiHCl_3$ and $(CH_3)_2SiHCl$ with WCl_6 , WCl_5 , and WCl_4 , chain termination involves reactions of both $SiCl_3$ and $(CH_3)_2SiCl$ with $Cl\cdot$ (eqn (12) and (13)). The calculated dissociation energy for H_2 is 436.9 kJ mol⁻¹. Hence, in the reactions of $SiHCl_3$ and $(CH_3)_2SiHCl$ with WCl_3 , WCl_2 , and WCl , the chain termination reaction involves the combination of two $H\cdot$ (eqn (14)).

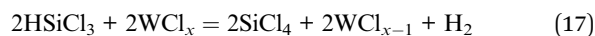
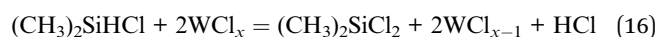
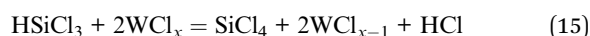
**Table 5** Free radicals and dissociation energies in the chlorination reaction of $SiHCl_3$

| DE/kJ mol ⁻¹ | $\cdot Cl$ | $\cdot SiCl_3$ |
|-------------------------|------------|----------------|
| $\cdot Cl$ | 193.6 | 366.8 |
| $\cdot SiCl_3$ | — | 216.4 |

Table 6 Free radicals and dissociation energies in the chlorination reaction of $(CH_3)_2SiHCl$

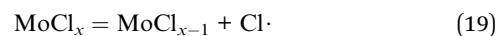
| DE/kJ mol ⁻¹ | $\cdot Cl$ | $\cdot (CH_3)_2SiCl$ | $\cdot CH_2CH_3SiCl_2$ |
|-------------------------|------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| $\cdot Cl$ | 193.6 | 402.9 | 264.0 |
| $\cdot (CH_3)_2SiCl$ | — | 234.6 | 275.4 |
| $\cdot CH_2CH_3SiCl_2$ | — | — | 250.9 |

In summary, the overall process for $SiHCl_3$ and $(CH_3)_2SiHCl$ reactions with WCl_6 , WCl_5 and WCl_4 is shown in eqn (15) and (16), and the overall process for reactions with WCl_3 , WCl_2 and WCl is shown in eqn (17) and (18).

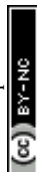


3.4 Mechanism calculation of chlorination of $SiHCl_3/(CH_3)_2SiHCl$ with $MoCl_5$

3.4.1 Chain initiation reaction. The calculation process was the same as that in the previous section. By comparing the bond energies of Si–H bonds and Mo–Cl bonds in Tables 3 and 7, we can also divide the chain reaction into two reaction paths. In the processes involving $MoCl_5$ and $MoCl_4$ reactions with $SiHCl_3$ and $MoCl_5$, $MoCl_4$, $MoCl_3$ and $MoCl$ reactions with $(CH_3)_2SiHCl$, Mo–Cl bond cleavage serves as the chain initiation reaction (eqn (19)). In the processes involving $MoCl_3$, $MoCl_2$, and $MoCl$ reactions with $SiHCl_3$ and $MoCl_2$ reaction with $(CH_3)_2SiHCl$, chain initiation involves cleavage of the Si–H bonds (eqn (6) and (7)).

**Table 7** Dissociation energies of Mo–Cl in $MoCl_x$

| Compound | Parameter | DE/kJ mol ⁻¹ |
|----------|-----------|-------------------------|
| $MoCl_5$ | Mo–Cl | 126.5 |
| $MoCl_4$ | | 281.5 |
| $MoCl_3$ | | 336.5 |
| $MoCl_2$ | | 347.2 |
| $MoCl$ | | 341.3 |



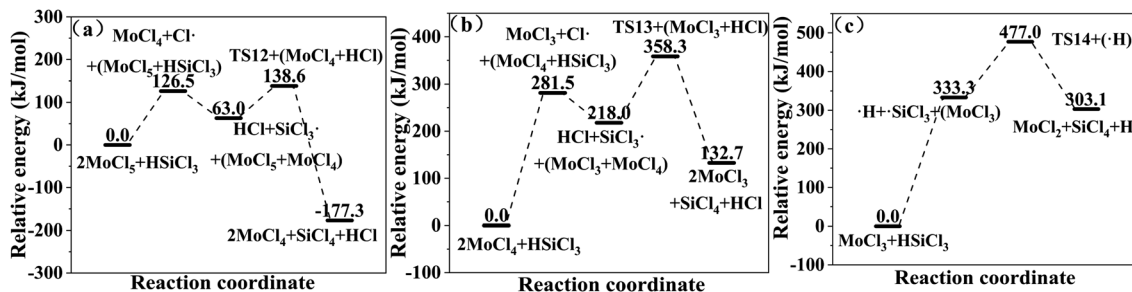
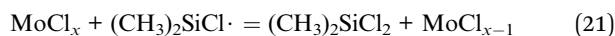
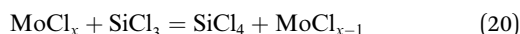


Fig. 9 (a–c) Relative energies for the reactions of SiHCl_3 with MoCl_x .

3.4.2 Chain propagation reaction. When the chain initiation reaction involves the release of $\text{Cl}\cdot$ from molybdenum chloride, chlorine atoms capture the hydrogen on the silicon to generate $\text{SiCl}_3\cdot$ or $(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{SiCl}\cdot$ (eqn (8) and (10)). When the chain initiation reaction involves cleavage of Si-H bonds, $\text{SiCl}_3\cdot$ or $(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{SiCl}\cdot$ is formed. The $\text{SiCl}_3\cdot$ or $(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{SiCl}\cdot$ generated in the two reactions reacts with MoCl_x (eqn (20) and (21)). The relative energies for the reactions of SiHCl_3 and $(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{SiHCl}$ with MoCl_x are shown in Fig. 9 and 10. The structures of the transition states involved in these reactions are shown in Fig. 11.



The main difference between the reactions of MoCl_x with SiHCl_3 and $(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{SiHCl}$ lies in the energy barriers for the reactions of $\cdot\text{SiCl}_3$ and $\cdot(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{SiCl}$ with MoCl_x . Fig. 9 and 10 show the energy barriers and Gibbs free energy changes for MoCl_x reactions with $\text{SiCl}_3\cdot$ and $(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{SiCl}\cdot$, and these are summarized in Table 8. The energy barriers for the reactions of MoCl_5 , MoCl_4 , and MoCl_3 with $\text{SiCl}_3\cdot$ are higher than those for the $(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{SiCl}\cdot$

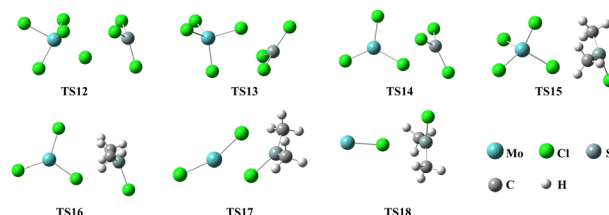


Fig. 11 Structures of transition states during the reactions of $\text{SiHCl}_3/(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{SiHCl}$ with MoCl_5 .

reactions, and the differences are 75.6 kJ mol^{-1} , 72.7 kJ mol^{-1} , and 69.3 kJ mol^{-1} , respectively. The ΔG values for the MoCl_5 , MoCl_4 , MoCl_3 , MoCl_2 and MoCl reactions with $\text{SiCl}_3\cdot$ are all larger than the ΔG values for the corresponding $(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{SiCl}\cdot$ reactions. The above results reveal that MoCl_x reacts more easily with $(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{SiHCl}$. In addition, the energy barrier difference between the reactions of MoCl_5 with SiHCl_3 and $(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{SiHCl}$ and the reactions of WCl_6 can be explained by the presence of only five Cl atoms in MoCl_5 . WCl_6 is more conducive the chlorination of $(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{SiHCl}$ in SiHCl_3 . Obviously, the calculated results are in good agreement with the experimental results.

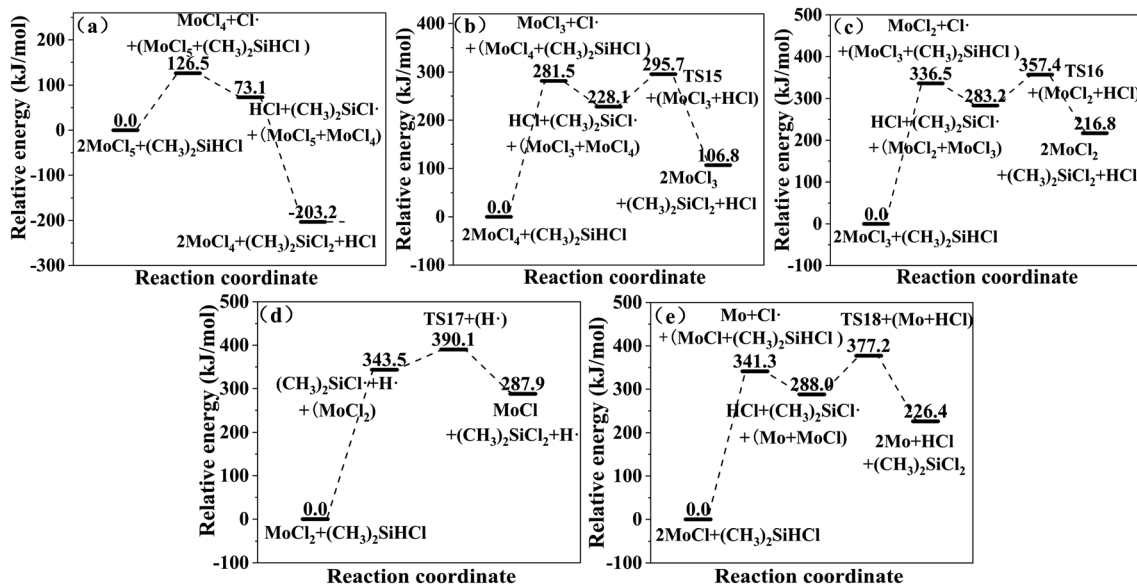


Fig. 10 (a–e) Relative energies for the reactions of $(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{SiHCl}$ with MoCl_x .

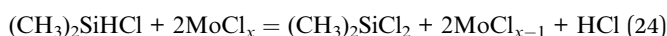
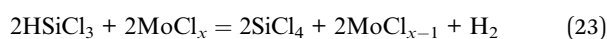
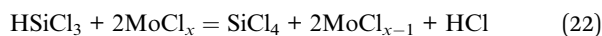


Table 8 Energy barriers and Gibbs free energy changes for MoCl_x reactions with SiCl₃ and (CH₃)₂SiCl.

| Reactant | | EB (kJ mol ⁻¹) | ΔG (kJ mol ⁻¹) |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| MoCl ₅ | ·SiCl ₃ | 75.6 | -240.3 |
| | ·(CH ₃) ₂ SiCl | 0 | -276.3 |
| MoCl ₄ | ·SiCl ₃ | 140.3 | -85.3 |
| | ·(CH ₃) ₂ SiCl | 67.6 | -121.3 |
| MoCl ₃ | ·SiCl ₃ | 143.6 | -30.3 |
| | ·(CH ₃) ₂ SiCl | 74.3 | -66.4 |
| MoCl ₂ | ·SiCl ₃ | — | -19.6 |
| | ·(CH ₃) ₂ SiCl | 46.6 | -55.6 |
| MoCl | ·SiCl ₃ | — | -25.5 |
| | ·(CH ₃) ₂ SiCl | 89.2 | -61.6 |

3.4.3 Chain termination reaction. In the same way, in the SiHCl₃ reactions with MoCl₅ and MoCl₄ and the (CH₃)₂SiHCl reactions with MoCl₅, MoCl₄, MoCl₃ and MoCl, chain termination occurs *via* a combination of SiCl₃ and (CH₃)₂SiCl· reactions with Cl· (eqn (12) and (13)). In the processes for SiHCl₃ reactions with MoCl₃, MoCl₂ and MoCl and (CH₃)₂SiHCl reaction with MoCl₂, chain termination occurs *via* the combination of two hydrogen atoms (eqn (14)).

Therefore, the overall equation for the reactions of SiHCl₃ with MoCl₅ and MoCl₄ is shown as eqn (22), and the overall equation for the reactions with MoCl₃, MoCl₂ and MoCl is shown as eqn (23). The overall equation of the reactions of (CH₃)₂SiHCl with MoCl₅, MoCl₄, MoCl₃ and MoCl is shown as eqn (24), and the overall equation of the reaction with MoCl₂ is shown as eqn (25).



4. Conclusions

Chlorination reactions of SiHCl₃/(CH₃)₂SiHCl were carried out with two metal chlorides (WCl₆ and MoCl₅) as the chlorine sources. The conversion rates for (CH₃)₂SiHCl and SiHCl₃ both increased with increases in the reactant ratio, temperature and time. The conversions for the reactions of (CH₃)₂SiHCl with WCl₆/MoCl₅ were much higher than those of SiHCl₃. Furthermore, the use of WCl₆ as the chlorine source showed higher conversion of the (CH₃)₂SiHCl than MoCl₅. The optimum conditions for the reaction of WCl₆ with (CH₃)₂SiHCl were as follows: a reaction pressure of 0.8 MPa, a reaction temperature of 60 °C, a reaction time of 60 min and $n(\text{WCl}_6) : n(\text{SiHCl}_3 \text{ or } (\text{CH}_3)_2\text{SiHCl}) = 0.7$. The conversion rate for (CH₃)₂SiHCl was 22.7 times that for SiHCl₃ in the reactions of SiHCl₃/(CH₃)₂SiHCl with WCl₆.

The mechanisms for the reactions of SiHCl₃/(CH₃)₂SiHCl with WCl₆/MoCl₅ were explored in detail with density functional

theory calculations. The differences in the reactions of SiHCl₃ and (CH₃)₂SiHCl with WCl₆ or MoCl₅ were found to lie in the energy barriers of the SiCl₃ and (CH₃)₂SiCl· reactions with WCl_x/MoCl_x. The energy barriers for the reactions of WCl_x (3 ≤ x ≤ 6) with SiCl₃ were higher than those for the (CH₃)₂SiCl· reaction. The same is true of MoCl_x (3 ≤ x ≤ 5). On the whole, the energy barrier differences for WCl₆ reactions with SiHCl₃ and (CH₃)₂SiHCl were higher than those for MoCl₅ reactions with SiHCl₃ and (CH₃)₂SiHCl. The experimental results were in good agreement with the calculation results. (CH₃)₂SiHCl is converted to (CH₃)₂SiCl₂ in a chlorination reaction, which is conducive to the removal of carbonaceous impurities from SiHCl₃ by distillation in the improved Siemens method.

Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts to declare.

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