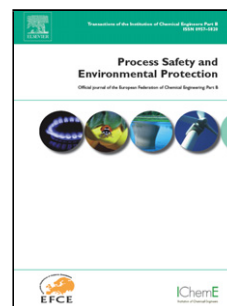


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THERMAL RISK IN SEMI-BATCH REACTORS: THE EPOXIDATION OF SOYBEAN OIL

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Highlights

- A model to account for decomposition of peroxides in epoxidation of soybean oil was developed
- Reactor stability criteria were applied to the model for semi-batch epoxidation
- Best operating and safest conditions for the semi-batch process were proposed
- The process is sensitive to feed rate, excess of reagents and heat transfer
- Very good agreement was found with experimental results on semi-batch epoxidation

Abstract

The interest in the epoxidation of vegetable oils is constantly growing in the chemical industry. The most common process is based on the oxidation of the unsaturated bonds by peroxyacids generated *in situ*, in the water phase, using concentrated hydrogen peroxide and the corresponding organic acid in presence of a mineral acid as catalyst. The overall epoxidation reaction is highly exothermic, hence operating conditions should be always addressed by safety considerations related to the possibility of runaway reactions.

In this paper, best operating conditions and safety considerations have been defined for a complex reaction network for the epoxidation of soybean oil, which includes the decomposition reactions of the performic acid generated during the epoxidation. Furthermore, sensitivity-based reactor stability criteria have been applied and compared, for the design of an adequate Early Warning Detection System for the process.

Abbreviations

DB: double bond

DEG: Degraded EVO

EVO: Epoxidized Vegetable Oil

EWDS: Early Warning Detection System

FA: formic acid

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