Journal of Molecular Catalysis B: Enzymatic 57 (2009) 224–228

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Journal of Molecular Catalysis B: Enzymatic

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/molcatb

Synthesis of poly (1,4-dioxan-2-one) catalyzed by immobilized lipase CA

Rong-Yi Chen[a,b], Yu-Rong Zhang[a], Yu-Zhong Wang[a,c,*]

[a] Center for Degradable and Flame-Retardant Polymeric Materials, College of Chemistry, Sichuan University, Chengdu 610064, PR China
[b] Pharcy School, Jiangxi University of Traditional Chinese Medicine, Nanchang 330006, PR China
[c] State Key Laboratory of Polymer Materials Engineering, Chengdu 610065, PR China

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:
Received 27 December 2007
Received in revised form
21 September 2008
Accepted 21 September 2008
Available online 8 October 2008

Keywords:
Enzymatic polymerization
Poly(1,4-dioxan-2-one)
Immobilized lipase CA

ABSTRACT

Polymerization of 1,4-dioxan-2-one was carried out more detailed with immobilized lipase CA as the catalyst. The effect of the enzyme amount, reaction temperature and water content on polymerization was investigated, respectively. Both the conversion of monomer and the M_v of poly(1,4-dioxan-2-one) increased with the increase of enzyme amount, and maximized at 80 °C. At the beginning of polymerization, water molecules act as initiators. As the reaction time increased, linear condensation had gradually became dominant and water was released into the reaction system. Excess water may act as a chain cleavage agent. To obtain poly(1,4-dioxan-2-one) with an ideal molecular weight, polymerization of 1,4-dioxan-2-one was conducted by adding solvent and MS to reaction system, and product with a higher molecular weight (M_v = 58,000) was gained.

1. Introduction

As an aliphatic polyester with excellent biodegradability, bioabsorbability, biocompatibility, and flexibility, poly(1,4-dioxan-2-one) (PPDO) has attracted great concern of researches in recent years. It has been approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to be used as surgical suture material [1]. In addition, PPDO can be applied to bone and tissue fixation and drug delivery system [2–8].

PPDO was synthesized extensively by chemical polymerization with organic metallic catalysts such as organic-tin [6,9], organic-aluminum [10,11], organic-zinc [12], organic rare earth compounds [13], etc. As its usage is focused mainly on pharmacological and surgical applications, the metallic catalysts should be removed before use. The purification process will increase the cost of PPDO. To suppress the harmful effects of metallic residues in PPDO for medical applications, some nontoxic catalysts were investigated, and enzymes were the expected catalysts for preparing harmless PPDO. The reported routes for lipase-catalyzed polymerization are shown in Scheme 1 [14].

There were many reports on the enzymatic synthesis of lactones [15–21]. However, only one study on the enzymatic synthesis of PPDO has been illustrated [14]. Nishida et al. reported that immobilized lipase CA for the bulk polymerization of PDO showed higher polymerization activity than other enzymes. Both the conversion and M_w of PPDO increased with increasing enzyme loading amount. The water component acts not only as a substrate of the initiation process but also as a chain cleavage agent. However, there were still some questions, such as: how does reaction temperature influence polymerization, how does water content change during the enzymatic reaction and what is the relationship of water content change, monomer conversion and M_w of PPDO? So, it is necessary that investigation on the enzymatic synthesis of PPDO was performed in more detail. In this paper, we further studied polymerization of PDO catalyzed by immobilized lipase CA. Moreover, a strategy for increasing molecular weight of PPDO was introduced.

2. Experimental

2.1. Materials

Immobilized lipases CA (Novozym 435) with specific activity 10,000 PLU/g, derived from Candida antarctica, were purchased from Novo Nordisk Bioindustrials, Inc. in China. The enzymes were dried in vacuo at 25 °C for 1 day before use. 1,4-dioxan-2-one (PDO), a gift from the Pilot Plant of Center for Degradable and Flame-Retardant Polymeric Materials (Chengdu, China), was dried over CaH_2 for 48 h, distilled under reduced pressure, stored under nitrogen, and twice distilled in vacuo immediately before use. Other solvents were purchased from Hehong Chemical Factory (Chengdu, China).

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +86 28 85410259; fax: +86 28 85410259.
E-mail address: yzwang@mail.sc.cninfo.net (Y.-Z. Wang).

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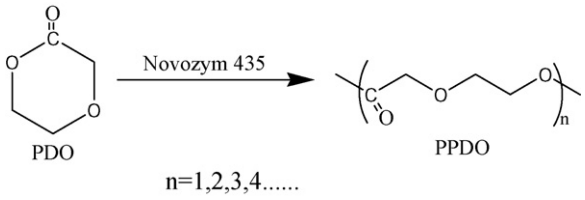
doi:10.1016/j.molcatb.2008.09.013



Scheme 1. Synthesis of poly(*p*-dioxanone).

2.2. Synthesis of PPDO

The polymerization was carried out in bulk. Prescribed amounts monomer and immobilized lipases CA were mixed in a dry vial and sealed. All procedures were carried out in an atmosphere of highly purified nitrogen. The reactor was immersed into a temperature-adjusted oil bath with magnetic stirring for predetermined intervals. The reaction mixture was dissolved in chloroform and then the enzyme was separated by filtration. One fraction of the organic phase was used to measure the conversion of monomer by gas chromatography (GC). The other fraction was added cool methanol. The cloudy methanolic solution was centrifuged (3000 rpm, 30 min). The white precipitate was placed under vacuum to remove methanol and the dry polymer was prepared for ^{1}H NMR, ^{13}C NMR and IR spectroscopy.

2.3. Determination of PPDO structure

The structure of PPDO was determined by NMR and IR spectroscopy. The ^{1}H NMR spectra and ^{13}C NMR were recorded in $CDCl_3$ on a Varian Germini 400 MHz NMR spectrometer. The spectra were obtained with a pulse angle of 25°, a delay time of 10 s, and an acquisition time of 2 s. All chemical shifts were reported in parts per million with tetramethylsilane as a reference. The infrared absorption spectra were performed on a Nicolet FTIR 170SX infrared spectrometer using KBr wafer.

2.4. Determination of PPDO molecular weight

As the conventional solvents such as chloroform, tetrahydrofuran, and toluene used in GPC measurements cannot resolve the resulting polymers with higher molecular weights, only the viscosity–average molecular weights of the resulting polymers were measured in phenol/1,1,2,2-tetrachloroethane (2:3 w/w) solution using an Ubbelohde viscosimeter thermostated at 25 °C. The molecular weights of PPDO can be calculated from the intrinsic viscosity [η] according to Mark–Houwink equation $[\eta] = KM_v^{\alpha}$, where $\alpha = 0.63$ and $K = 79 \times 10^{-3}$ cm^3 g^{-1} [22].

2.5. Determination of monomer conversion

The monomer conversion was determined with a Shimadzu GC14-B GC equipped with an OE-54 capillary column (Altech, 0.25 mm × 30 m), hydrogen flame ionization detector, and CR-6A CHROMATOPAC. The injection volume was 1.0 mL. The pressures of nitrogen gas, hydrogen gas, and air were 600, 70, and 50 kPa, respectively. The temperature of the injection pool and detector were 250 °C. Upon injection, the column oven was held at 180 °C for 3 min and programmed to rise at 10 °C/min to a final temperature of 210 °C which was maintained for 2 min. The calibration curve was made with the monomer.

2.6. Measurement of water content in reaction system

The total reaction water content was determined with a 831 KF Coulometer (Metrohm Ltd. CH-9101 Herisau Switzerland), in which 0.10 g of reaction mixture was dissolved in 3.0 mL 1,1,2,2-tetrachloroethane. The water content of the supernatant was measured with a Karl Fischer titrator relative to a 3.0-mL 1,1,2,2-tetrachloroethane control.

3. Results and discussion

3.1. Structural characterization

The ^{1}H NMR ($CDCl_3$, d, ppm) spectrum of the product showed the three characteristic signals: 4.16, 3.79, and 4.35. The ^{13}C NMR ($CDCl_3$, d, ppm) spectrum of the product also showed the characteristic signals: 170.0, 69.2, 68.3, and 63.9. These data was in accord with published result [1,22,23]. The IR spectrum of PPDO had the characteristic absorption at 3445, 2960, 2926, 1745, 1434, 1386, 1203, 1130, and 1060 cm^{-1}. The broad absorption band at 3445 cm^{-1} is attributed to the vibrations of ν_{O-H} of hydroxyl group. The two bands at 2960 and 2926 cm^{-1} are the characteristic absorption peaks of ν_{C-H}. The band at 1745 cm^{-1} is ascribed to $\nu_{C=O}$ of carbonate group. The band at 1434 cm^{-1} is δ_{C-H} of methylene group. The bands at 1203, 1130 and 1060 cm^{-1} are the characteristic absorption peaks of ν_{C-O}.

3.2. Effect of the enzyme amount on polymerization

Experiments were conducted with immobilized lipases CA of different weight percentage based on the PDO monomer (5.0 g). The polymerizations were carried out in bulk at 60 °C for 15 h. As shown in Fig. 1, the conversion of monomer, the yield and the M_v of PPDO increased with increasing immobilized lipases CA amount. However, the addition of immobilized lipases CA more than 10 wt.% based on 5.0 g PDO led to slight increasing of these values. So, the following experiments were conducted with 10 wt.% of immobilized lipases CA. In the polymerization without the enzyme (control experiment), the monomer was found unreacted, suggesting that the polymerization proceeded through the lipase catalysis.

3.3. Effect of reaction temperature on polymerization

Reaction temperature is one of important factors for enzymatic polymerization because it not only influences reaction rate but enzyme activity. In this research, we investigated the effects of reaction temperature on polymerization. The polymerizations were conducted at temperatures from 40 to 120 °C for 15 h. The results were shown in Fig. 2. Both the conversion of PDO and M_v of PPDO maximized at 80 °C. The conversion and M_v at more than 80 °C

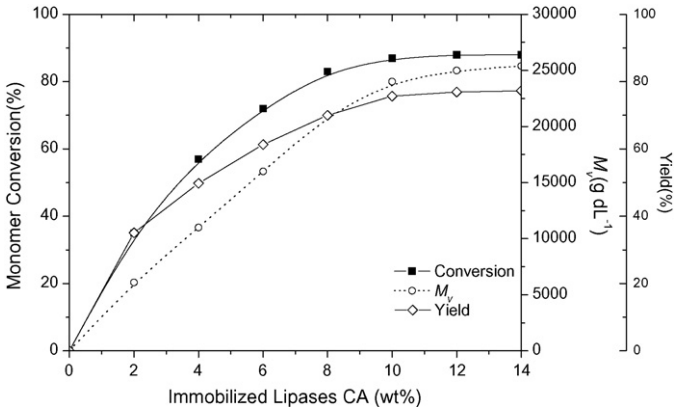


Fig. 1. Effect of the immobilized lipases CA amount on the PDO polymerization. Polymerization: 5.0 g of PDO with immobilized lipases CA at 60 °C for 15 h in bulk.