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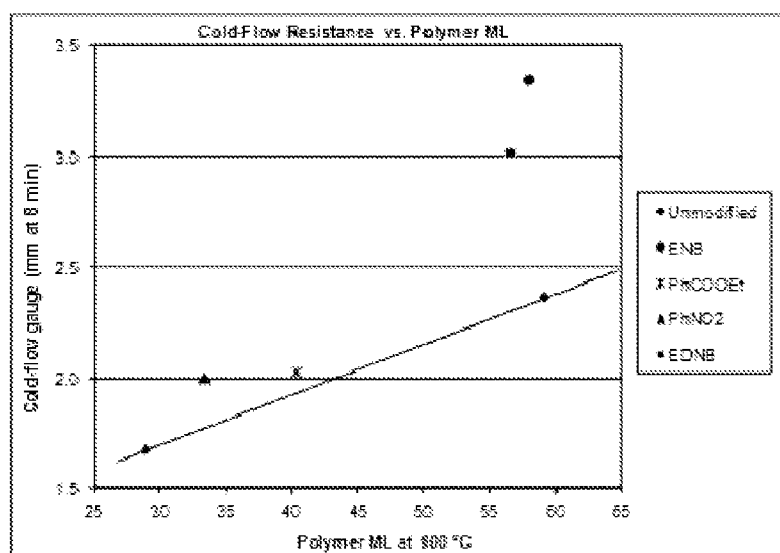


Fig. 1

(57) Abstract: A method for preparing a coupled polymer, the method comprising the steps of polymerizing monomer to form a re-active polymer and reacting the reactive polymer with a carboxylic or thiocarboxylic ester containing a nitro group, where the carboxylic or thiocarboxylic ester containing a nitro group includes a single nitro group.