

A process for activating a catalyst, catalyst and use of same for polymerization of monoolefins

The invention relates to a process for activating a chromium-containing catalyst this catalyst, and its use for the polymerization of monoolefins.

Supported chromium oxide catalysts can be used to prepare olefin polymers in a hydrocarbon solution to give a product having excellent characteristics from many standpoints. Supported chromium oxide catalysts can also be used to prepare olefin polymers in a slurry system wherein the polymer is produced in the form of small particles of solid material suspended in a diluent. This process, frequently referred to as a particle-form process, has the advantage of being less complex. However, certain control operations which are easily carried out in the solution process are considerably more difficult in the particle-form process. For instance, in the solution process, control of the molecular weight can be effected by changing the temperature with lower molecular weight (higher melt flow) being obtained at the higher temperatures. However, in the slurry process, this technique is inherently limited since any effort to increase the melt flow to any appreciable extent by increasing temperature would cause the polymer to go into solution and thus destroy this slurry or particle-form process.

It is known in the art to utilize various techniques for altering the catalyst so as to give higher melt flow polymers but these techniques can cause a broadening in the molecular weight distribution. This is undesirable because many uses of high melt flow polymers, such as high speed extrusion and injection molding, require a narrow molecular weight distribution.

Accordingly, a main object of the invention is to provide a catalyst which, compared with comparable prior art catalysts, gives monoolefin polymers exhibiting significantly increased melt index without significantly broadening the molecular weight distribution. Subaspects of this main object of the invention reside in providing a catalyst suitable for use in slurry polymerization systems, providing an improved method of activating a chromium-containing catalyst, providing a catalyst capable of giving high activity in addition to high melt flow and narrow molecular weight distribution, and providing a catalyst capable of giving polymers suitable for injection molding and other applications requiring high melt flow and narrow molecular weight distribution.

Thus, the invention relates to a process for activating a catalyst comprising a silica base material containing from 0.1 to 20 percent of materials other than silica, from 0.001 to 10 percent chromium, and from 0.1 to 10 percent titanium, in which said catalyst is subjected to a first thermal treatment step with a non-oxidizing, inert or reducing, ambient and to a second thermal treatment step with an oxidizing ambient, which process is characterized in that a catalyst, obtained by co-precipitating a titanium compound and silica to form a cogel, and containing chromium, is subjected to said first thermal treatment step at a temperature within the range of 650 to 1100°C for a time from 5 minutes to 24 hours, and to said second thermal treatment step within a temperature range of 450 to 1000°C for a time of 5 minutes to 10 hours.

In a specific embodiment the invention relates to a process wherein prior to said first step said catalyst containing at least a portion of said chromium in the form of CrO_3 is treated in a self-reduction step at a temperature of 600 to 1100°C in an inert atmosphere for a time sufficient to achieve at least partial self-reduction of said chromium to a lower valence state, and wherein said non-oxidizing ambient of said first step is a reducing agent under the conditions employed in said first step.

In a further specific embodiment the invention relates to a process wherein prior to said self-reduction step, said catalyst is heated in air to a temperature within the range of 250 to 1000°C for a time of 5 minutes to 24 hours, thereafter said self-reduction step is carried out in nitrogen at a temperature within the range of 700 to 925°C for a time of 5 minutes to 15 hours, said reducing agent is an ambient comprising 2 to 100 percent carbon monoxide used at a temperature of 700 to 925°C for a time from 0.5 to 24 hours, and said second step is carried out in air as oxidizing ambient at a temperature within the range of 500 to 925°C for a time of 0.5 to 10 hours.

In a further specific embodiment the invention relates to process for activating a catalyst comprising a silica base material containing from 0.1 to 20 percent of materials other than silica, and from 0.001 to 10 percent chromium, wherein said catalyst is subjected to a first thermal treatment step with a non-oxidizing ambient and a final thermal treatment step with an oxidizing ambient, which process is characterized in that a titanium-free catalyst wherein at least a portion of said chromium is in the form of CrO_3 is subjected to (a) said first thermal treatment step using an inert ambient as non-oxidizing ambient within a temperature range of 600 to 1100°C for a time of at least 5 minutes, to (b) a further thermal treatment step with a reducing ambient within a temperature range of 650 to 1100°C for a time of 5 minutes to 24 hours, and (c) to said final thermal treatment step within a temperature range of 450 to 1000°C for a time of 5 minutes to 10 hours, with the proviso that if said catalyst is not raised to said temperature of 600 to 1100°C in step (a) in air, then the final thermal treatment in step (c) is carried out within a temperature range of 593 to 871°C.

In a further specific embodiment said inert ambient is nitrogen, said reducing ambient comprises 2 to 100 percent carbon monoxide, and said oxidizing ambient is air.

In a further specific embodiment said CrO_3 is obtained by incorporating said chromium onto said base material as CrO_3 initially.

In a further specific embodiment said CrO_3 is obtained by heating said catalyst to said temperature of 600 to 1100°C in the presence of air.

In a further specific embodiment the invention relates to a process wherein said chromium is present in an amount within the range of 0.1 to 5 weight percent based on the weight of said base material.

The invention also relates to the use of the catalyst as obtained according to the process of the invention for polymerizing monoolefins.

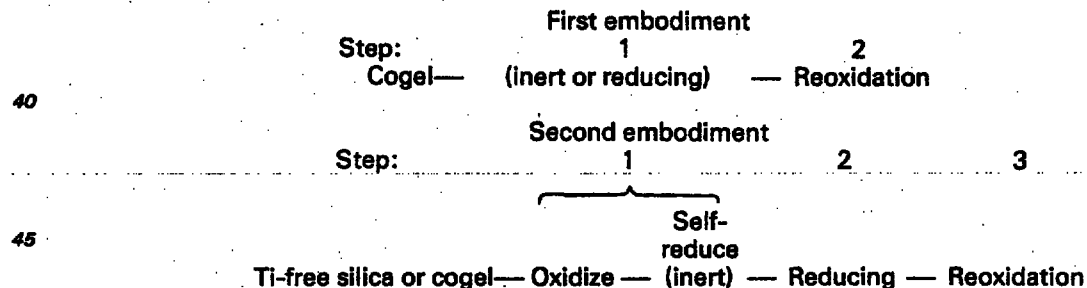
In US—A—4,041,224 it is disclosed to produce higher melt flow polymer by impregnating a titanium compound onto a chromium-containing catalyst, heating in an inert or reducing medium and thereafter reoxidizing. However, this technique is indicated to be ineffective for titanium-free catalyst systems and the presence of impregnated titanium, while not mentioned by the patent, results in a broad molecular weight distribution.

Thus, whereas US—A—4,041,224 discloses impregnating or otherwise mixing a titanium compound with a support, treating the resulting mixed material with carbon monoxide and thereafter treating with air, it is shown in Example 9 in the present application that carbon monoxide treatment of silica impregnated with titanium gives a catalyst which produces polymer having a broad molecular weight distribution in terms of a high HLMI/MI ratio which would be unsuitable for applications such as injection molding. The present invention utilizing coprecipitated titanium as defined in claims 1 to 3 under comparable conditions gives much lower HLMI/MI ratios. Also in accordance with the invention defined in claim 4, silica, subjected to a self-reduction step before the reduction step in a reducing ambient, gives far lower HLMI/MI ratios at comparable titanium concentrations and polymerization temperatures than is obtained by conventional air oxidation. Thus, the data show a totally unexpected result for the subject matter of the invention.

US—A—3,812,058 does not show a two stage reduction-oxidation. Rather, the said patent discloses introducing a catalyst into an activator which is already at an elevated temperature so as to heat the catalyst composition from about room temperature to a range of 600 to 650°F in less than about 1 minute (see claims 1 and 2 and column 1, lines 50 to 64).

US—A—3,950,316 and 3,887,494 disclose the preparation of the catalyst compositions used as starting material in the activation process of the invention.

There are two embodiments in this invention. In the first, a silica-titanium cogel is subjected to a two-step process. In the second, a silica is subjected to a prior oxidation and self-reduction step (step 1) followed by a reducing step (step 2) which is analogous to step 1 of the first embodiment except that the ambient is specifically a reducing ambient whereas step 1 of the first embodiment can utilize either a reducing or an inert ambient. Step 2 of the first embodiment and step 3 of the second embodiment are similar. These two embodiments are illustrated hereinbelow in schematic form.



In the first embodiment of this invention, the chromium-containing catalyst is a cogel, that is, a catalyst produced by coprecipitating silica and a titanium-containing compound. Production of such cogs is disclosed in US—A—3,887,494, the disclosure which is hereby incorporated by reference. Cogs can be formed for instance by adding a titanium compound to a mineral acid, introducing an alkali metal silicate into the acid containing said titanium compound to form a hydrogel, aging the hydrogel for a time of greater than one hour, washing the thus aged hydrogel to produce a substantially alkali metal free hydrogel, forming a mixture comprising the thus washed hydrogel and a normally liquid oxygen-containing water soluble organic compound, and separating said organic compound and water from said mixture to form a xerogel. The catalyst contains chromium in an amount generally within the range of about 0.001 to 10, preferably 0.1 to 5, more preferably about 1 weight percent based on the weight of the cogel, i.e. the dried silica-titanium base (xerogel). The chromium compound can be incorporated as known in the art. For instance, a hydrocarbon solution of a material such as tertiary butyl chromate can be used to impregnate the xerogel or an aqueous solution of a chromium compound such as chromium trioxide or chromium acetate can be added to the hydrogel before drying or chromium can be coprecipitated along with the silica and titanium. Anhydrous hydrocarbon solutions of π -bonded organochromium compounds such as diarene chromium compounds or biscyclopentadienyl chromium(II) can be used. Suitable chromium compounds are disclosed in US—A—3,976,632, 3,349,067, and 3,709,853.

The first embodiment is described in more detail as follows. The dry silica-titania cogel is preferably fluidized and heated to an elevated temperature and contacted with the nonoxidizing ambient after which it is reoxidized in an ambient containing about 10—100% oxygen. The nonoxidizing ambient is preferably carbon monoxide (CO) or a mixture of carbon monoxide and nitrogen (N₂). About 2—100% carbon monoxide and 98—0% nitrogen, for instance, can be utilized. About the same results are obtained with from 5—100% carbon monoxide (gas percentages are all in volume percent). Other nonoxidizing ambients include inert ambients such as carbon dioxide (CO₂), vacuum, helium and nitrogen, and reducing ambients in addition to CO such as hydrogen (H₂) and materials decomposable to CO and/or H₂ such as hydrocarbons, alcohols, ammonia and carboxylic acids.

Suitable hydrocarbons include methane, benzene, and the like which decompose into C and H₂.

Suitable alcohols for this purpose include saturated and unsaturated aliphatic and aromatic alcohols with boiling points of about 300°C or less as a matter of convenience. Particularly preferred alcohols from an economic standpoint and ready availability are methanol and isopropanol. These can decompose into H₂ and CO.

Suitable carboxylic acids for this purpose include saturated and unsaturated compounds which are normally liquid as a matter of convenience. A fatty acid, particularly acetic acid, is presently preferred because of ready availability and low cost. These decompose into various mixtures of CO, CO₂, C and H₂.

The cogel base for this chromium compound is broadly referred to as a silica cogel although it can contain 0.1 to 20% of other materials, such as alumina, as is well known in the art. The only limitation being that it not contain titanium incorporated by impregnation. The titanium is present in the cogel in an amount within the range of 0.1 to 10, preferably 0.5 to 5 weight percent titanium based on the weight of the dried cogel (xerogel).

The catalyst can be heated to the temperature at which it is treated in the nonoxidizing ambient in either of three ways. First, it can be raised to that temperature in carbon monoxide or one of the other reducing ambients. Second, it can be raised to the appropriate temperature in air, the air quickly removed so as to avoid self-reduction in the inert ambient used to remove the air, and the reducing ambient such as carbon monoxide then introduced. The self-reduction is not necessarily harmful and indeed would be frequently preferred for better results. However, to avoid confusion between the first and the second embodiment, self-reduction is avoided in the first embodiment. Third, if the chromium is in the +3 valence state, it can be raised to the appropriate temperature in an inert atmosphere such as nitrogen. In the second method of raising the material to the temperature for treatment with the nonoxidizing ambient, the reason for avoiding nitrogen or some other inert ambient is to avoid self-reduction. If there is a substantial time utilized for flushing the air out with nitrogen in the second method, then there would be time for self-reduction to occur. Similarly, in the third method if the chromium is in the +6 state, self-reduction would occur on heating if an inert ambient, such as nitrogen, were used. Such procedures are not necessarily harmful and indeed they are frequently preferred as the data in the examples will show. However, such procedures would put the operation within the scope of the second embodiment rather than the first embodiment. With the first embodiment utilizing cogel, the self-reduction step can be eliminated and still obtain an excellent product.

In the second embodiment, the catalyst is either a titanium-free silica or a cogel. Again as is well known in the art, the base can contain 0.1 to 20% of other materials, such as alumina.

The first step of oxidation and self-reduction is referred to as a single step even though it actually involves two substeps for the reason that the initial oxidation may well occur when the catalyst is initially prepared which may be some time before it is actually used. Such a catalyst, which has been oxidized in the final step in its initial preparation, can then be subjected to the self-reduction step without any further treatment or it can be treated in air ambient at high temperatures to dry and oxidize same immediately prior to the self-reduction. It is also possible to utilize as a starting material a silica base having a chromium compound thereon which is in the +3 valence state and which is oxidized and subjected to the self-reduction.

The ambient for the self-reduction step of the second embodiment is coextensive with the inert nonoxidizing ambients of step 1 of the first embodiment. Nitrogen is the preferred material but vacuum, helium and the like can also be utilized. The reducing ambient for step 2 of the second embodiment is coextensive with the reducing ambients of the nonoxidizing treatment of step 1 of the first embodiment. The preferred material is carbon monoxide and mixtures of carbon monoxide and nitrogen as disclosed hereinabove with respect to the first embodiment. However, hydrogen and other materials decomposable into reducing agents described hereinabove as reducing agents in the first embodiment can also be used herein.

As to the third step, reoxidation, this is carried out in an identical or essentially identical manner to the reoxidation (step 2) for the first embodiment, air being the preferred ambient. With both embodiments, other oxidizing ambients such as nitrous oxide (N₂O), nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), nitric oxide (NO), oxygen-containing halogen compounds such as iodine pentoxide (I₂O₅) or chlorine monoxide (Cl₂O) and other materials which release oxygen can be used.

The temperature for the reduction step of the first embodiment will be in the range of 650—

1100°C, preferably 700—925°C. Temperatures of 760—925°C are particularly suitable for carbon monoxide and carbon monoxide/nitrogen mixtures. Times for these treatments are from 5 minutes, preferably a half hour, to 24 hours, more preferably 2 to 7 hours.

The reoxidation temperatures are from 450—1000°C, preferably 500—925°C, more preferably 590—800°C. The time for the reoxidation step is at least 5 minutes, preferably one-half to 10 hours, more preferably 1 to 4 hours. Of course, the times and temperatures can be influenced by the percent of oxygen in the reoxidation ambient with a temperature of about 650—800°C being especially preferred when utilizing air reoxidation of a carbon monoxide reduced material.

As to the second embodiment, there is substantial leeway in the manner of effecting the first part of step 1, that is, the initial oxidation. As is noted hereinabove, the material may be oxidized during the final step of its formation and thus is ready to immediately go into the second part of step 1, the self-reduction. Or the chromium may be in a lower valence state, generally, the valence state of +3 in which case it can be simply heated in air for a time sufficient to convert at least a majority of the chromium into the form of chromium trioxide (CrO_3). Alternatively CrO_3 can simply be added to the base to give a material already in the proper form for the self-reduction portion of step 1. Thus, the heating temperature will generally start at room temperature and by the time the material is heated to about 650°C sufficient oxidation will have taken place. This heating step will take at least 5 minutes, preferably 30 minutes to 24 hours, more preferably from 2 to 7 hours. Alternatively, the heating can be stopped at some set temperature between 250°C and 1000°C and held at that temperature in the presence of an oxygen-containing ambient for the times recited above. As with the reoxidation treatment, ambients containing about 10—100% oxygen, the remainder being an inert material such as nitrogen can be used. However, for convenience, air is the preferred ambient. After the temperature reaches a point within the range of 250—1000°C, preferably about 650°C, the oxidizing ambient is discontinued and the inert ambient is begun. Even when the catalyst is originally formed using CrO_3 , it is preferred to heat up to self-reduction temperature in air so as to avoid high temperature contact of the chromium with moisture in an inert atmosphere.

The self-reduction portion of step 1 of the second embodiment is carried out at a temperature within the range of 600—1100°C, preferably 700—925°C. This treatment can simply be carried out during the time required to heat from the initial temperature to the final temperature or the temperature can be held at any point within the above disclosed range. In any event, the total heating time will be at least 5 minutes and will generally be within the range of 5 minutes to 15 hours, preferably 20 minutes to 10 hours, more preferably 40 minutes to 3 hours. Reducing step 2 is carried out for the same times and at the same temperatures set out hereinabove with respect to step 1 of the first embodiment. It is again pointed out that in step 2 of the second embodiment, the ambient is changed from the inert ambient of the second part of step 1 to an ambient which is reducing under the conditions used, that is, the carbon monoxide or hydrocarbons as disclosed hereinabove. The final reoxidation is carried out for the same times and temperatures given hereinabove with respect to reoxidation step 2 of the first embodiment. In both embodiments where high melt index is the overriding consideration, the reoxidation step is preferably carried out at a temperature of at least 100°C below the temperature used for the reduction step.

If desired, the catalyst of this invention can be activated in a continuous activator. For instance, catalyst can be introduced at the top of a compartmentalized vertical activator with the first gas to be used in treating the catalyst being introduced at the bottom of the first (upper) compartment and taken off near the top thereof. The second gas is introduced near the bottom of the second (lower) compartment and taken off near the top thereof and if three or more gases are used, the process can continue in a like manner. In each compartment, the catalyst would be fluidized with the treating medium. Alternatively, two or more compartments could be utilized with the same gaseous treating medium, if desired, to increase residence time. An external furnace can heat each compartment to the desired temperature. While a continuous activator was not used to produce the catalysts of the examples set out hereinbelow, the use of a continuous activator was simulated by introducing the catalyst initially into an activator which was at an elevated temperature. It was found that in the embodiments wherein the initial heating is done in a nonoxidizing atmosphere, problems sometimes associated with introducing catalysts in the presence of air into an already heated activator were not encountered.

The catalysts of this invention can be used to polymerize at least one mono-1-olefin containing 2 to 8 carbon atoms per molecule. The invention is of particular applicability in producing ethylene homopolymers and copolymers from mixtures of ethylene and 1 or more comonomers selected from 1-olefins containing 3 to 8 carbon atoms per molecule. Exemplary comonomers include aliphatic 1-olefins, such as propylene, 1-butene, 1-hexene, and the like and conjugated or nonconjugated diolefins, such as 1,3-butadiene, isoprene, piperylene, 2,3-dimethyl-1,3-butadiene, 1,4-pentadiene, 1,7-hexadiene, and the like and mixtures thereof. Ethylene copolymers preferably constitute at least about 90, preferably 95 to 99 mole percent polymerized ethylene units. Ethylene, propylene, 1-butene and 1-hexene are especially preferred.

The polymers can be prepared from the activated catalysts of this invention by solution polymerization, slurry polymerization, and gas phase polymerization techniques using conventional

equipment and contacting processes. However, the catalysts of this invention are particularly suitable in slurry polymerizations for the production of high melt index (MI) polymers, i.e. polymers having MI values in the 8 to 35 range and above in the absence of molecular weight modifiers, such as hydrogen, and molecular weight distribution values sufficiently narrow to be of commercial interest for applications such as injection molding. The slurry process is generally carried out in an inert diluent such as a paraffin, aromatic or cycloparaffin hydrocarbon. For predominantly ethylene polymers, a temperature of about 66—110°C is employed. For example, ethylene homopolymers exhibiting a melt index in the 5 to 35 range can be obtained by contact with the catalyst of this invention, whereas otherwise identical catalyst conventionally activated yield 5 to 6 MI polymers at the same 110°C reactor temperature. At lower reactor temperatures, both the invention and control catalysts give lower MI and higher HLMI/MI ratios so the comparisons must be at the same reactor temperature. The high MI polymers have HLMI/MI ratio values ranging from about 33 to 38 with M_w/M_n values of about 4 at the 110°C reactor temperature. Such resins can be injection molded in conventional apparatus to form tough, low warpage articles.

The figure shows the relationship between melt index potential and activation procedure. In each instance, the catalyst is a titanium-silica cogel. The figure is a bit unusual in that the temperature numbers on the abscissa represent something different for each of the three curves. In the bottom curve, represented by the triangles, the numbers represent the air activation temperature of the catalyst, which catalyst has received no other type of treatment, that is, simply a control catalyst. Note that this is a cogel catalyst, which represents the best system of the prior art with these type of catalysts for achieving high melt flow. The curve represented by the squares depicts the melt index-temperature relationship for polymer produced with catalysts of this invention wherein the temperature numbers on the abscissa represent the temperature at which the CO treatment was carried out and also the temperature at which the air reoxidation was carried out, that is, the temperature was left the same after the CO treatment for the reoxidation treatment. Since the optimum temperature for reoxidation is not the same as the optimum temperature for the carbon monoxide treatment, it can be seen that the melt indexes achieved are not as high as those achieved in the third curve. However, they are substantially higher than that of the control showing that the treatment in the non-oxidizing atmosphere and the subsequent reoxidation can be carried out at the same temperature. The temperature numbers on the abscissa for the third curve represented by the circles is the carbon monoxide treatment temperature utilized prior to a 760°C reoxidation. As can be seen, extremely high melt index values are achieved using carbon monoxide treating temperatures within the preferred range of 760—925°C and air reoxidation temperatures within the preferred range of 550—800°C. The data in the figure were obtained in runs at 110°C.

The catalysts of this invention can be used with conventional cocatalysts if desired. Also hydrogen can be used to further increase the MI if desired.

Example I

A series of catalysts was prepared from a silica-titania cogel containing 2 weight percent titanium in the form of titanium oxide and 1 weight percent chromium in the form of chromium acetate. The silica-titania cogel was prepared by coprecipitation, aged, washed, impregnated with an aqueous solution of chromium acetate and dried by azeotrope distillation with ethyl acetate. The catalysts were activated in 48 mm O.D. quartz tubes using a heat-up rate of 3—5°C per minute and a gas flow of about 40 liters per hour. This gas flow corresponds to a superficial linear velocity at 1600°F (871°C) of 0.1 ft/sec (0.03 m/sec). Generally, 30—80 ml of catalyst was charged during each activation and each catalyst was activated under fluid bed conditions.

Each activated catalyst was tested for melt index capability by polymerizing ethylene in a particle form process in a 2 or 3 liter stainless steel reactor with isobutane as the diluent at 550 psig (3.89 MPa) to give yields of about 5000 g polymer per gram catalyst. Reactor temperature employed was 110°C in all instances. Melt index values, determined according to ASTM D 1238-62T, condition E (g/10 min), are adjusted slightly to a productivity value of 5000 g polyethylene/g catalyst based on correlations between MI and productivity. High load melt index (HLMI) is determined according to ASTM D 1238-65T, condition F (g/10 min). The ratio, HLMI/MI, gives a measure of the molecular weight distribution M_w/M_n of the polymer, the smaller the number the narrower the distribution. That is, if the molecules were all of the same length, the weight average molecular weight (M_w) would be the same as the number average molecular weight (M_n) and the ratio would be 1. However, as a practical matter, there are always some short molecules and some longer ones. Since the longer molecules exercise a disproportionate effect on the properties of the polymer, a molecular weight average simply based on adding up the molecular weight of all of the molecules and dividing by the number of molecules (M_n) would not give a true picture of the situation, hence the use of the weight average molecular weight. However, the ratio of M_w/M_n also affects polymer properties with polymers having a narrower distribution (lower M_w/M_n or lower HLMI/MI ratio) being better suited for uses such as high speed extrusion cooling and injection molding. The activation conditions used and results obtained are given in Table 1 to illustrate embodiment 1 of the invention.

TABLE 1
Catalyst activation in non-oxygen ambient followed by air oxidation

Run no.	Activation procedure	MI (g/10 min)	HLMI		Run time (min)	Productivity (g/g catalyst)	Remarks
			MI	MI			
1	Heat in air to 871°C, hold 5 hrs.	5.2	37.9		58	4970	conventional activation, control
2	Heat in CO to 871°C, hold 3 hrs., then 2 hrs. in air at 871°C	10.8	35.8		59	5740	invention
3	Heat in CO to 871°C, hold 3 hrs., then 2 hrs. in air at 705°C	20.7	42.7		80	5150	invention
4	Heat in N ₂ to 871°C, hold 5 hrs., then 2 hrs. in air at 600°C	17.0	37.5		100	4400	invention
5	Heat in N ₂ to 871°C, hold 5 hrs., then 2 hrs. in air at 705°C	12.0	37.5		60	5250	invention
6	Heat in N ₂ to 871°C, hold 6 hrs., then 2 hrs. in air at 760°C	11.6	37.9		80	5210	invention ⁽¹⁾
7	Heat in N ₂ to 871°C, $\frac{30 \text{ air}}{70 \text{ N}_2}$ for 3 hrs. at 871°C, N ₂ for 2 hrs. at 871°C, air for 2 hrs. at 650°C	6.3	40.0		84	5830	invention ⁽²⁾

Notes: ⁽¹⁾Cogel impregnated with n-hexanol.

⁽²⁾Cogel impregnated with 30 weight percent Tween® 20 (polyoxyethylene (20) sorbitan monolaurate) a product of Atlas Chemical Industries, Inc.

The results show the melt index potential of silica-titania-chromium oxide catalysts activated in this invention can be increased from about 1.2 to 4 times compared to conventional air activation, run 1, by first heating the catalysts in a non-oxygen gaseous ambient such as carbon monoxide, nitrogen and vapors of certain oxygen-containing organic compounds and then oxidizing the products at the same or lower temperature in air. Based on the MI of polyethylene made over the catalysts, it can be seen that an initial heat treatment in carbon monoxide is more effective than in the other mediums tested. Comparing runs 2 and 3, and 4 and 5, it is evident that when the initial heat treatment is conducted in either carbon monoxide or nitrogen at about 870°C, the subsequent oxidation treatment is preferably conducted below about 870°C to further improve the melt index capability of the catalysts. Runs 6 and 7 show that even when catalysts containing minor amounts of oxygen-containing organic compounds such as esters, nonionic surfactants, are heated in a non-oxidizing atmosphere and then reoxidized in air the melt index capability of the catalysts is improved relative to control run 1.

Example 2

A series of catalysts prepared from a silica-titania composite (cogel) containing chromium acetate formed and dried as described in Example 1 was activated according to embodiments 1 and 2 previously described.

Another series of catalysts was prepared from a sample of silica containing 2 weight percent CrO_3 (1 weight percent chromium) calculated on a dry basis of support plus CrO_3 formed by spray drying a silica hydrogel having about 0.1 weight percent alumina containing an aqueous solution of CrO_3 . Essentially identical catalyst can be formed by impregnating 952 Grade silica commercially available from Davison Chemical Company with an aqueous solution of CrO_3 and drying at about 200—400°F, (129—204°C) in air. In this and subsequent examples this is referred to as Ti-free silica. All of the titanium-free silica used in this and the subsequent examples was made in this manner except for runs 13—15 of this example, the preparation of which runs 13—15 is described hereinafter.

An experimental silica-chromium acetate catalyst was prepared in the manner described for the cogel except that titanium was absent. The preparation of such a large pore silica is described in US—A—3,900,457. This gives a large pore silica which inherently gives higher melt index polymer. Samples of it were activated according to this invention.

Each of the activated catalysts was tested in ethylene polymerization as described in Example 1. All melt index values are adjusted to a productivity level of 5000 g polyethylene per g catalyst.

The catalyst activation conditions employed and polymerization results obtained are given in Table 2.

TABLE 2
Catalyst activation by preoxidation, reduction and reoxidation

Run no.	Temperature rise			CO °C/hrs.	Air °C/hrs.	MI (g/10 min)	HLMI MI	Run time (min)	Productivity (g/g catalyst)	Catalyst base	Remarks
	Air to	CO to	N ₂ to								
1	871°C	na ⁽¹⁾	na	na	760/2	5.5	40.0	106	5700	silica-titania cogel	conventional activation, control
2	na	871°C	na	871/3.0	760/2	14.7	37.5	84	5130	silica-titania cogel	invention (embodiment 1)
3	643°C	na	871°C	871/0.5	760/2	10.0	37.1	62	5290	silica-titania cogel	invention (embodiment 2) ⁽²⁾
4	621°C	na	871°C	871/1.5	760/2	17.4	33.6	76	4730	silica-titania cogel	invention (embodiment 2)
5	649°C	na	871°C	871/3.0	760/2	19.9	44.0	65	4050	silica-titania cogel	invention (embodiment 2)
6	638°C	na	871°C	871/6.5	760/2	22.8	39.3	65	5180	silica-titania cogel	invention (embodiment 2)
7	816°C	na	na	na	816/5.5	2.4	46.0	58	5470	Ti-free silica	conventional activation, control
8	na	871°C	871°C	871/3.0	760/2	3.3	45.3	66	5530	Ti-free silica	control ⁽³⁾
9	na	na	871°C	871/3.0	760/2	3.4	42.6	110	6240	Ti-free silica	control ⁽³⁾
10	538°C	na	871°C	871/4.5	816/0.5	5.9	46.0	50	4980	Ti-free silica	invention (embodiment 2)
11	538°C	na	871°C	871/4.5	760/0.5	6.8	45.0	110	5250	Ti-free silica	invention (embodiment 2)
12	649°C	na	871°C	871/4.5	760/0.5	7.1	42.0	70	4830	Ti-free silica	invention (embodiment 2)
13	760°C	na	na	na	760/5.5	1.1	41.0	100	5700	exper. silica (Ti-free)	conventional activation, control
14	na	na	871°C	871/3.0	760/2.0	4.0	44.0	87	5590	exper. silica (Ti-free)	control
15	649°C	na	871°C	871/3.0	760/2.0	6.8	36.0	70	3870	exper. silica (Ti-free)	invention (embodiment 2)

Notes:

⁽¹⁾Not applicable.

⁽²⁾As previously set out, embodiment 2 can be used with either coprecipitated titanium or titanium-free silica catalysts.

⁽³⁾Titanium-free catalysts require embodiment 2 using the preoxidation and self-reduction.

In each series of catalysts, the invention catalysts according to embodiment 2 are compared with conventionally activated catalysts (controls, runs 1, 7, 13) and with invention catalysts activated according to embodiment 1 on the basis of polymer melt index, etc. The results demonstrate that catalysts consisting of chromium oxide supported on silica or on coprecipitated silica-titania and activated according to this invention are substantially improved in melt index capability compared with otherwise identical catalysts conventionally activated in air. Comparing invention runs 2 and 5, it is seen that catalyst activated according to embodiment 2 additionally improves melt index capability compared to embodiment 1, i.e. 14.7 MI for run 2 vs. 19.9 for run 5. The benefits of preoxidizing and self-reducing the catalyst before treating in CO, etc. followed by reoxidation compared to omitting the preoxidation step are clearly seen. Inspection of invention runs 3—6 points out another facet of this invention. That is, the duration of CO treatment influences the melt index capability. Thus, other conditions being equal, the catalyst of run 3, for example, gives a polymer of 10 MI while the catalyst of run 6 gives a polymer of 22 MI. Runs 11 and 12 illustrate yet another facet of this invention. That is, other conditions being equal, the preoxidation temperature employed also affects melt index capability of the catalysts. For this particular catalyst, a preoxidation temperature of 649°C gives somewhat better results than a preoxidation temperature of 538°C. The results illustrate the relatively complex interrelationships present in practicing this invention.

Example 3

Another series of catalysts activated according to embodiment 2 of this invention was prepared from the cogel catalyst previously described.

Each of the catalysts was tested in ethylene polymerization as described in Example 1.

The catalyst activation conditions employed and polymerization results obtained are shown in Table 3. The melt index values are adjusted to a productivity level of 5000 g polyethylene per g catalyst.

TABLE 3
Cogel catalyst activation via preoxidation, treating agent and reoxidation

Run no.	Air temp. rise to	Self-reduction ambient at 871°C	Gaseous treatment at 871°C	Activation in air °C/hrs.	HLMl		Run time (min)	Productivity (g/g catalyst)	Remarks
					MI (g/10 min)	MI			
1	871°C		na ⁽¹⁾	871/3	5.2	37.9	58	4970	conventional activation control
2	871°C	N ₂	20 CH ₄ / 80 N ₂ (15 min), N ₂ (3 hrs.)	650/2	14.6	37.8	48	3690	invention (embodiment 2) ⁽²⁾
3	650°C	N ₂	benzene vapor/N ₂ (30 min); 20 air / 80 N ₂ (1-1/4 hrs); ⁽⁴⁾ N ₂ (1 hr)	705/2	8.5	40.4	60	5540	invention (embodiment 2) ⁽³⁾

Notes:

(1) Not applicable.

(2) Volume % methane/N₂.(3) N₂ saturated with benzene vapor at 23°C at about atmospheric pressure.Air/N₂ mixture is given as volume percent.(4) To burn off carbon. The benzene vapor/N₂; air/N₂; and N₂ are all part of the reduction step.

Inspection of the results presented in Table 3 illustrates that the melt index capability of the catalysts can be improved by preoxidizing them in air, quickly self-reducing in an inert ambient at the high end of the 600—1100°C range for self-reduction and treating them in ambients containing hydrocarbons which decompose to give reducing agents and reoxidizing the products in air.

5 Example 4

A series of catalysts activated according to embodiment 2 of this invention was prepared from the cogel catalyst previously described.

Each catalyst was tested for copolymerization of ethylene with a small amount of a higher 1-olefin
10 in a 2 liter stainless steel stirred reactor at an ethylene pressure of 550 psig (3.89 MPa g) in an isobutane diluent. The catalyst activation conditions employed, polymerization conditions used and polymerization results are presented in Table 4. Runs were carried out to yields of approximately 5000 g polymer per g catalyst. The melt index values are adjusted to a productivity level of 5000 g polymer per g catalyst.

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TABLE 4
Ethylene/1-olefin copolymerization with catalyst activated by preoxidation, reduction and reoxidation

Run no.	Temperature rise		Activation		Comonomer		Run temp. (°C)	MI (g/10 min)	HLMl	Density (g/cc)	Run time (min)	Productivity (g/g catalyst)	Remarks
	Air to	N ₂ to	CO °C/hrs.	Air °C/hrs.	Olefin	Vol. %							
1	650°C	871°C	871/65	760/2	0	na ⁽¹⁾	110	22.8	39.3	0.969	65	5180	invention homopolymer
2	650°C	871°C	871/65	760/2	hexene-1	0.9	107	28.2	37.2	0.961	53	4700	invention copolymer
3	650°C	871°C	871/65	760/2	hexene-1	1.6	105	28.4	31.9	0.959	61	4320	invention copolymer
4	650°C	871°C	871/65	760/2	butene-1	1.9	103	16.3	35.7	0.950	66	4940	invention copolymer

Notes:

⁽¹⁾Not applicable.

The results show that catalysts activated according to the invention are active for ethylene/1-olefin copolymerization and that efficient incorporation of the comonomer was achieved. The copolymers have relatively narrow molecular weight distributions characteristic of the activated catalysts of this invention.

Example 5

This example shows the effect of the self-reduction step both with silica titanium cogel and Ti-free silica. The cogel contained 2% titanium and 1% chromium and the Ti-free silica contained 1% chromium. As can be seen comparing runs 1 and 2, higher melt index was obtained utilizing the three step process wherein self-reduction was carried out prior to reoxidation. Run 5 shows the good results obtained with a titanium-free support utilizing the sequence air, nitrogen, CO prior to reoxidation. The results are shown hereinbelow in Table 5.

TABLE 5
Effect of preoxidation step

Cogels A and B contained 2% Ti and 1% Cr. Reactor conditions were 110°C and 3.89 MPag (550 psig) ethylene in isobutane. MI values have been corrected to 5000 gm/gm.

Run	Catalyst	Rise	Activation		MI (g/10 min)	HLMI MI	Run time (min)	Produc- tivity (gm/gm)
			CO — 3 hrs	Air — 2 hrs				
1	Cogel A	CO to 871°C	871°C	760°C	14.7	37.5	84	5130
2	Cogel A	Air to 650°C, N ₂ to 871°C	871°C	760°C	19.9	44.0	65	4050
3	Cogel B	N ₂ to 900°C	900°C	760°C	13.9	31.2	60	5270
4	Cogel B	Air to 650°C, N ₂ to 900°C	900°C ^a	760°C	16.9	37.4	77	5380
5	Ti-free silica	Air to 650°C N ₂ to 871°C	871°C	760°C	4.8	39.4	66	5230

^a25% CO—75% N₂.

Reactor temperature 109°C.

Example 6

This is an accumulative example further showing the advantage for embodiment 2. In this example, silica-titania cogel containing about 2% titania prepared as in Example 1 containing 1% chromium was reduced and reoxidized. The results are shown hereinbelow in Table 6.

TABLE 6
Preoxidation treatments
Polymerizations run in isobutane at 3.8 MPa (550 psig) ethylene at 110°C

Run	Rise	Activation					Run temp., °C	Run time (min.)	MI ⁽¹⁾	HLM ^I	Productivity (g/g)
		CO treatment		Temp. of 2-hr air treatment °C							
		CO/N ₂ (% CO)	Time (hrs.)	Temp., °C	°C	°C					
1	100% CO to 871°C	100	3	871	760	110	84	14.7	38	5130	
2	Air to 650°C; N ₂ to 871°C	100	3	871	760	110	65	19.9	44	4050	
3	N ₂ to 900°C	100	3	900	760	110	60	13.9	31	5270	
4	Air to 650°C; N ₂ to 900°C	100	3	900	760	110	77	16.9	37	5380	
5	5% CO to 871°C	5	2	871	649	107	62	10.8	38	5000	
6	Air to 871°C	5	2	871	649	107	50	10.2	35	5430	

⁽¹⁾MI's are corrected to 5000 g/g productivity.

As can be seen, runs 2 and 4 utilizing embodiment 2 show higher melt index. However, the embodiment 1 runs also show a higher melt index compared with conventional activation, see Example 1, control run 1. One word of explanation is in order with respect to run 6. It is possible to go directly from air to carbon monoxide because the percentage carbon monoxide is sufficiently low that combustion does not occur.

Example 7

This example shows the advantage for heating the titanium-free silica in the second embodiment to the self-reduction temperature in the presence of air. In this example, a titanium-free silica containing 1% chromium was subjected to self-reduction either by being directly heated in nitrogen to 871°C or by being heated in air to 650°C and thereafter in nitrogen to 871°C, thereafter reduced in carbon monoxide for 3 hours at 871°C and subjected to a 2 hour air reoxidation at varying temperatures. Results are shown hereinbelow in Table 7.

TABLE 7
Reoxidation temperature

CO treatment for 3 hours at 871°C Polymerization at 110°C in isobutane, and 3.8 MPa (550 psig) ethylene.						
Run	Raised in	Two-hour air treatment at temp. °C	Run time (min.)	Product- ivity (g/g)	MI ⁽¹⁾ (g/10 min.)	HLMI MI
2	N ₂ to 871°C	649	120	4100	3.3	46
3	N ₂ to 871°C	704	90	3490	4.8	37
4	N ₂ to 871°C	760	56	5150	3.3	49
5	N ₂ to 871°C	816	80	4723	3.0	39
6	N ₂ to 871°C	871	106	3900	1.7	43
7	N ₂ to 871°C	838	100	5350	2.3	59
8	N ₂ to 871°C	593	75	4960	3.2	54
9	N ₂ to 871°C	649	87	5450	3.0	52
10	N ₂ to 871°C	704	77	5350	2.4	53
11	air to 650°C	649	155	5760	4.2	43
12	N ₂ to 871°C air to 650°C	704	70	5660	6.2	40
13	N ₂ to 871°C air to 650°C	760	66	5230	4.8	39
14	N ₂ to 871°C air to 650°C	871	50	4960	2.7	44

⁽¹⁾MI corrected to 5000 g/g productivity.

As can be seen by comparison of runs 2 and 11, 3 and 12, 4 and 13, and 6 and 14, better results are obtained by carrying out the initial heating in air.

Example 8

This example also involves the Ti-free silica containing 1% chromium. In this example, the temperature used for the self-reduction step was varied. The results are shown hereinbelow in Table 8.

TABLE 8

In each run after the treatment described, the catalyst was given CO treatment for 3 hours at 871°C and air reoxidation for 2 hours at 704°C. Polymerizations were then run at 110°C in isobutane at 3.8 MPa (550 psig) ethylene.

	Run	Raised in	Run time (min.)	Productivity (g/g)	MI ⁽¹⁾ (g/10 min.)	HLMI
						MI
10	1	Air to 650°C N ₂ at 650°C for 1-1/2 hrs. CO to 871°C	90	5200	2.3	50
15	2	Air to 650°C N ₂ to 760°C N ₂ at 760°C for 1-1/2 hrs. CO to 871°C	60	5040	2.9	49
20	3	Air to 650°C N ₂ to 816°C N ₂ at 816°C for 1-1/2 hrs. CO to 871°C	81	5550	4.8	46
25	4	Air to 650°C N ₂ to 871°C N ₂ at 871°C for 1-1/2 hrs.	110	5000	5.3	44

⁽¹⁾ MI corrected to 5000 g/g productivity.

30 As can be seen, as the self-reduction temperature is increased from 650°C to 871°C, the melt index is increased and the HLMI/MI ratio decreased.

Example 9

35 Titanium-free silica was impregnated with titanium and subjected to CO reduction and reoxidation as in the invention. One percent chromium was present as in the invention and the catalyst used for ethylene polymerization at 225°F (107°C). The results are as follows:

	Run		
40	1	2% impregnated titanium MI=1.2	CO to 1600°F and held 2 hrs., air 1100°F and held 2 hrs. HLMI/MI=83
	2	2% impregnated titanium	CO to 700°C and held 2 hrs. air 450°C and held 15 min. (No reaction after one hour).
45	3	6% impregnated titanium MI=65	CO to 700°C and held 2 hrs., air 450°C and held 15 min. (Low activity, 2 hours 880 gm/gm). HLMI/MI=45
50	4	6% impregnated titanium MI=20	CO to 1600°F and held 2 hrs., air 1100°F and held 2 hrs. (Low activity, 3 hours 1650 gm/gm). HLMI/MI=47

55 This example shows that with titanium impregnated supports, a broad molecular weight distribution polymer is achieved (45—83 HLMI/MI ratio at 107°C reactor temperature) which is essentially useless for applications such as injection molding.

Claims

60 1. A process for activating a catalyst comprising a silica base material containing from 0.1 to 20 percent of materials other than silica, from 0.001 to 10 percent chromium, and from 0.1 to 10 percent titanium, in which said catalyst is subjected to a first thermal treatment step with a non-oxidizing, inert or reducing, ambient and to a second thermal treatment step with an oxidizing ambient, characterized in that a catalyst obtained by coprecipitating a titanium compound and silica to form a cogel and
65 containing chromium is subjected to said first thermal treatment step at a temperature within the range



TABLE 8

In each run after the treatment described, the catalyst was given CO treatment for 3 hours at 871°C and air reoxidation for 2 hours at 704°C. Polymerizations were then run at 110°C in isobutane at 3.8 MPa (550 psig) ethylene.

	Run	Raised in	Run time (min.)	Productivity (g/g)	MI ⁽¹⁾ (g/10 min.)	HLMI
						MI
10	1	Air to 650°C N ₂ at 650°C for 1-1/2 hrs. CO to 871°C	90	5200	2.3	50
15	2	Air to 650°C N ₂ to 760°C N ₂ at 760°C for 1-1/2 hrs. CO to 871°C	60	5040	2.9	49
20	3	Air to 650°C N ₂ to 816°C N ₂ at 816°C for 1-1/2 hrs. CO to 871°C	81	5550	4.8	46
25	4	Air to 650°C N ₂ to 871°C N ₂ at 871°C for 1-1/2 hrs.	110	5000	5.3	44

⁽¹⁾ MI corrected to 5000 g/g productivity.

30 As can be seen, as the self-reduction temperature is increased from 650°C to 871°C, the melt index is increased and the HLMI/MI ratio decreased.

Example 9

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Run			
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45	3	6% impregnated titanium MI=65	CO to 700°C and held 2 hrs., air 450°C and held 15 min. (Low activity, 2 hours 880 gm/gm). HLMI/MI=45
50	4	6% impregnated titanium MI=20	CO to 1600°F and held 2 hrs., air 1100°F and held 2 hrs. (Low activity, 3 hours 1650 gm/gm). HLMI/MI=47

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Claims

60 1. A process for activating a catalyst comprising a silica base material containing from 0.1 to 20 percent of materials other than silica, from 0.001 to 10 percent chromium, and from 0.1 to 10 percent titanium, in which said catalyst is subjected to a first thermal treatment step with a non-oxidizing, inert or reducing, ambient and to a second thermal treatment step with an oxidizing ambient, characterized in that a catalyst obtained by coprecipitating a titanium compound and silica to form a cogel and
65 containing chromium is subjected to said first thermal treatment step at a temperature within the range



of 650 to 1100°C for a time from 5 minutes to 24-hours, and to said second thermal treatment step within a temperature range of 450 to 1000°C for a time of 5 minutes to 10 hours.

2. A process according to claim 1 characterized in that prior to said first step said catalyst containing at least a portion of said chromium in the form of CrO_3 is treated in a self-reduction step at a temperature of 600 to 1100°C in an inert atmosphere for a time sufficient to achieve at least partial self-reduction of said chromium to a lower valence state, and wherein said non-oxidizing ambient of said first step is a reducing agent under the conditions employed in said first step.

3. A process according to claim 2 characterized in that, prior to said self-reduction step, said catalyst is heated in air to a temperature within the range of 250 to 1000°C for a time of 5 minutes to 24 hours, thereafter said self-reduction step is carried out in nitrogen at a temperature within the range of 700 to 925°C for a time of 5 minutes to 15 hours, said reducing agent is an ambient comprising 2 to 100 percent carbon monoxide used at a temperature of 700 to 925°C for a time from 0.5 to 24 hours, and said second step is carried out in air as oxidizing ambient at a temperature within the range of 500 to 925°C for a time of 0.5 to 10 hours.

4. A process for activating a catalyst comprising a silica base material containing from 0.1 to 20 percent of materials other than silica, and from 0.001 to 10 percent chromium, in which said catalyst is subjected to a first thermal treatment step with a non-oxidizing ambient and a final thermal treatment step with an oxidizing ambient, characterized in that a titanium-free catalyst wherein at least a portion of said chromium is in the form of CrO_3 is subjected to (a) said first thermal treatment step using an inert ambient as non-oxidizing ambient within a temperature range of 600 to 1100°C for a time of at least 5 minutes, to (b) a further thermal treatment step with a reducing ambient within a temperature range of 650 to 1100°C for a time of 5 minutes to 24 hours, and to (c) said final thermal treatment step within a temperature range of 450 to 1000°C for a time of 5 minutes to 10 hours, with the proviso that if said catalyst is not raised to said temperature of 600 to 1100°C in step (a) in air, then the final thermal treatment in step (c) is carried out within a temperature range of 593 to 871°C.

5. A process according to one of the preceding claims characterized in that said inert ambient is nitrogen, said reducing ambient comprises 2 to 100 percent carbon monoxide, and said oxidizing ambient is air.

6. A process according to one of claims 2 to 5, characterized in that said CrO_3 is obtained by incorporating said chromium onto said base material as CrO_3 initially.

7. A process according to one of claims 2 to 5, characterized in that said CrO_3 is obtained by heating said catalyst to said temperature of 600 to 1100°C in the presence of air.

8. A process according to one of the preceding claims characterized in that said chromium is present in an amount within the range of 0.1 to 5 weight percent based on the weight of said base material.

9. A catalyst obtained according to the process of one of claims 1 to 8.

10. Use of the catalyst of claim 9 for polymerizing monoolefins.

Patentansprüche

1. Verfahren zur Aktivierung eines Katalysators aus einem Siliciumoxid-Trägermaterial, das 0,1 bis 20% andere Bestandteile als Siliciumoxid, 0,001 bis 10% Chrom und 0,1 bis 10% Titan enthält, wobei der Katalysator einer ersten Wärmebehandlungsstufe in einer nicht oxidierenden, inerten oder reduzierenden Umgebung und einer zweiten Wärmebehandlungsstufe in einer oxidierenden Umgebung unterzogen wird, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß ein Katalysator, der durch gemeinsames Ausfällen einer Titanverbindung und Siliciumoxid unter Bildung eines Gogels erhalten worden ist, und der Chrom enthält, der ersten Wärmebehandlungsstufe bei einer Temperatur im Bereich von 650 bis 1100°C für eine Dauer von 5 Minuten bis 24 Stunden und der zweiten Wärmebehandlungsstufe bei einer Temperatur im Bereich von 450 bis 1000°C für eine Dauer von 5 Minuten bis 10 Stunden unterworfen wird.

2. Verfahren nach Anspruch 1, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß vor dem ersten Schritt der Katalysator, bei dem zumindest ein Teil des Chroms als CrO_3 vorliegt, in einer Selbstreduktionsstufe bei einer Temperatur von 600 bis 1100°C in einer Inertatmosphäre für eine Dauer behandelt wird, die ausreicht, um wenigstens eine teilweise Selbstreduktion des Chroms zu einem niedrigeren Valenzzustand zu erreichen, und wobei die nicht oxidierende Umgebung der ersten Stufe eine Reduktionsmittel unter dem in der ersten Stufe angewendeten Bedingungen ist.

3. Verfahren nach Anspruch 2, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß man vor der Selbstreduktionsstufe den Katalysator in Luft auf eine Temperatur im Bereich von 250 bis 1000°C für eine Dauer von 5 Minuten bis 24 Stunden erhitzt, danach die Selbstreduktionsstufe in Stickstoff bei einer Temperatur im Bereich von 700 bis 925°C für eine Dauer von 5 Minuten bis 15 Stunden vollzieht, wobei das Reduktionsmittel eine Umgebung bildet, die zu 2 bis 100% aus Kohlenmonoxid besteht und die bei einer Temperatur von 700 bis 925°C für eine Dauer von 0,5 bis 24 Stunden zur Anwendung kommt, und die zweite Stufe in Luft als oxidierende Umgebung bei einer Temperatur im Bereich von 500 bis 925°C für eine Dauer von 0,5 bis 10 Stunden durchführt.

4. Verfahren zur Aktivierung eines Katalysators aus Siliciumoxidträgermaterial, das 0,1 bis 20%



andere Bestandteile als Siliciumoxid und 0,001 bis 10% Chrom enthält, wobei der Katalysator einer ersten Wärmebehandlungsstufe in einer nicht oxidierenden Umgebung und einer abschließenden Wärmebehandlungsstufe in oxidierender Umgebung unterzogen wird, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß ein titanfreier Katalysator bei dem zumindest ein Teil des Chroms als CrO_3 vorliegt, (a) der ersten Wärmebehandlungsstufe unter Verwendung einer inerten Umgebung als nicht oxidierende Umgebung bei einer Temperatur im Bereich von 600 bis 1100°C für eine Dauer von wenigstens 5 Minuten, (b) einer weiteren Wärmebehandlungsstufe mit einer reduzierten Umgebung bei einer Temperatur im Bereich von 650 bis 1100°C für eine Dauer von 5 Minuten bis 24 Stunden und (c) der abschließenden Wärmebehandlungsstufe bei einer Temperatur im Bereich von 450 bis 1000°C für eine Dauer von 5 Minuten bis 10 Stunden unterzogen wird, mit der Maßgabe daß, wenn der genannte Katalysator nicht auf die in Stufe (a) genannte Temperatur von 600 bis 1100°C in Luft gebracht wird, die abschließende Wärmebehandlung in Stufe (c) bei Temperaturen im Bereich von 593 bis 871°C durchgeführt wird.

5. Verfahren nach einer der vorhergehenden Ansprüche, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß die inerte Umgebung aus Stickstoff, die erwähnte reduzierende Umgebung zu 2 bis 100% aus Kohlenmonoxid und die erwähnte oxidierende Umgebung aus Luft besteht.

6. Verfahren nach einem der Ansprüche 2 bis 5, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß das CrO_3 durch anfängliches Einführen auf das Trägermaterial als CrO_3 erhalten wird.

7. Verfahren nach einem der Ansprüche 2 bis 5, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß das CrO_3 durch Erhitzen des Katalysators auf die Temperatur von 600 bis 1100°C in Gegenwart von Luft erhalten wird.

8. Verfahren nach einem der vorhergehenden Ansprüche, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß das Chrom in einer Menge im Bereich von 0,1 bis 5 Gewichtsprozent bezogen auf das Gewicht des Trägermaterials enthalten ist.

9. Katalysator, erhalten nach dem Verfahren einer der Ansprüche 1 bis 8.

10. Verwendung des Katalysators nach Anspruch 9 zur Polymerisation von Monoolefinen.

25 Revendications

1. Procédé pour activer un catalyseur comprenant une matière à base de silice contenant 0,1 à 20% de matières autres que la silice, 0,001 à 10% de chrome et 0,1 à 10% de titane, où ce catalyseur est soumis à une première étape de traitement thermique avec un milieu non oxydant, inerte ou réducteur, et à une seconde étape de traitement thermique avec un milieu oxydant, caractérisé en ce qu'un catalyseur obtenu en coprécipitant un composé de titane et de la silice pour former un co-gel et contenant du chrome est soumis à la première étape de traitement thermique à une température dans l'intervalle de 650 à 1100°C pendant un temps de 5 minutes à 24 heures, et à une seconde étape de traitement thermique dans un intervalle de températures de 450 à 1000°C pendant un temps de 5 minutes à 10 heures.

2. Procédé selon la revendication 1, caractérisé en ce qu'avant la première étape, le catalyseur contenant au moins une partie du chrome sous la forme de CrO_3 est traité dans une étape d'auto-réduction à une température de 600 à 1100°C sous une atmosphère inerte pendant un temps suffisant pour obtenir au moins une auto-réduction partielle du chrome à un état de valence inférieur, et en ce que le milieu non oxydant de la première étape est un réducteur dans les conditions employées dans la première étape.

3. Procédé selon la revendication 2, caractérisé en ce qu'avant l'étape d'auto-réduction, le catalyseur est chauffé dans l'air jusqu'à une température dans l'intervalle de 250 à 1000°C pendant un temps de 5 minutes à 24 heures, ensuite l'étape d'auto-réduction est réalisée dans l'azote à une température dans l'intervalle de 700 à 925°C pendant un temps de 5 minutes à 15 heures, le réducteur est un milieu comprenant 2 à 100% d'oxyde de carbone utilisé à une température de 700 à 925°C pendant un temps de 0,5 à 24 heures, et la seconde étape est réalisée dans l'air comme milieu oxydant à une température dans l'intervalle de 500 à 925°C pendant un temps de 0,5 à 10 heures.

4. Procédé pour activer un catalyseur comprenant une matière à base de silice contenant environ 0,1 à 20% de matières autres que la silice et 0,001 à 10% de chrome, où ce catalyseur est soumis à une première étape de traitement thermique avec un milieu non oxydant et à une étape finale de traitement thermique avec un milieu oxydant, caractérisé en ce qu'un catalyseur exempt de titane où au moins une partie du chrome est sous la forme de CrO_3 est soumis (a) à la première étape de traitement thermique en utilisant un milieu inerte comme milieu non oxydant dans un intervalle de températures de 600 à 1100°C pendant un temps d'au moins 5 minutes, (b) à une autre étape de traitement thermique avec un milieu réducteur dans un intervalle de températures de 650 à 1100°C pendant un temps de 5 minutes à 24 heures et (c) à l'étape finale de traitement thermique dans un intervalle de températures de 450 à 1000°C pendant un temps de 5 minutes à 10 heures, en prévoyant que, si la température du catalyseur n'est pas augmentée jusqu'à la valeur de 600 à 1100°C dans l'étape (a) dans l'air, le traitement thermique final dans l'étape (c) est alors réalisé dans un intervalle de températures de 593 à 871°C.

5. Procédé selon l'une des revendications précédentes, caractérisé en ce que le milieu inerte est l'azote, le milieu réducteur comprend 2 à 100% d'oxyde de carbone et le milieu oxydant est l'air.



6. Procédé selon l'une des revendications 2 à 5, caractérisé en ce que CrO_3 est obtenu en incorporant le chrome sur la matière de base sous forme de CrO_3 initialement.

7. Procédé selon l'une des revendications 2 à 5, caractérisé en ce que CrO_3 est obtenu en chauffant le catalyseur jusqu'à la température de 600 à 1100°C en présence d'air.

8. Procédé selon l'une des revendications précédentes, caractérisé en ce que le chrome est présent en quantité dans la gamme de 0,1 à 5% en poids, en se basant sur le poids de la matière de base.

9. Catalyseur obtenu selon le procédé de l'une des revendications 1 à 8.

10. Utilisation du catalyseur de la revendication 9 pour la polymérisation de monooléfines.

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