

ABSTRACT

It is an object of the present invention to provide a specific industrially useful process that enables a high-purity diaryl carbonate having low contents of intermediate boiling point and high boiling point impurities as required for producing a high-quality and high-performance polycarbonate to be produced stably for a prolonged period of time using as a starting material a reaction mixture containing an alkyl aryl carbonate obtained through a transesterification reaction between a dialkyl carbonate and an aromatic monohydroxy compound. There have been various proposals regarding processes for the production of reaction mixtures containing aromatic carbonates by means of a reactive distillation method. The present inventors have now carried out studies aimed at discovering a specific process enabling a high-purity diaryl carbonate that can be used as a raw material of a high-quality and high-performance polycarbonate to be continuously produced stably for a prolonged period of time from such a reaction mixture. As a result, the present inventors have reached to the present invention after discovering that the above object can be attained through a process in which separation by distillation is carried out using three distillation columns in a specified order. Moreover, the present inventors have discovered that it is particularly preferable if a reactive distillation column and the three distillation columns, each of which has a specified structure, and the three distillation columns are each operated under specified distillation conditions.