



SPECIFICATION

159159

PROCESS FOR PRODUCING TITANIUM-CONTAINING SILICON OXIDE
CATALYST, SAID CATALYST AND PROCESS FOR PRODUCING OXIRANE
5 COMPOUND USING THE CATALYST

Technical Field

The present invention relates to a process for producing
a titanium-containing silicon oxide catalyst, said catalyst
10 and a process for producing an oxirane compound using the
catalyst. More particularly, the present invention relates
to a process for producing a titanium-containing silicon oxide
catalyst by which an oxirane compound can be obtained under
high selectivity and yield by reacting an olefin and a
15 hydroperoxide compound in the presence of said catalyst, said
catalyst and a process for producing an oxirane compound using
the catalyst.

Background Art

20 Methods of obtaining an oxirane compound by reacting an
olefin and a hydroperoxide compound in the presence of a catalyst
are publicly known. For example, U.S. Patent No. 4,367,342
discloses a process for using a titanium-supported silica
catalyst. However, conventional methods are insufficient from
25 the standpoints of selectivity to a oxirane compound as an



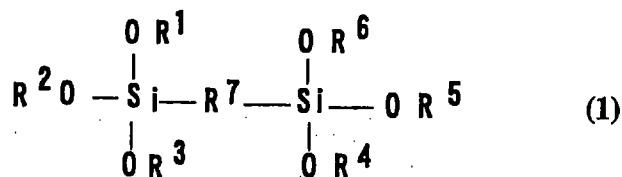
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objective compound and yield thereof.

Disclosure of the Invention

An object of the present invention is to provide a process
 5 for producing a titanium-containing silicon oxide catalyst by
 which an oxirane compound can be obtained with high selectivity
 and yield by reacting an olefin and a hydroperoxide compound
 in the presence of said catalyst, said catalyst and a process
 for producing an oxirane compound using the catalyst.

10 Namely, the present invention relates to a process for
 producing a titanium-containing silicon oxide catalyst having
 a silicon-carbon-silicon bond, silicon-oxygen-silicon bond and
 silicon-oxygen-titanium bond, which comprises causing a
 silicon compound of the following formula (1) and a titanium
 15 alkoxide compound to a gel in a water and/or alcohol solvent
 and removing the solvent in the resulted gel by extraction with
 a supercritical fluid:



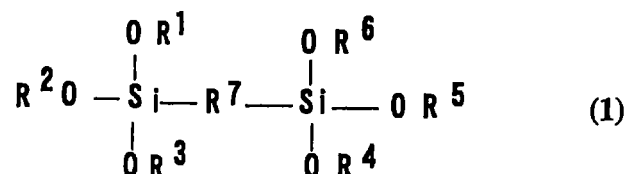
(wherein, R¹ to R⁷ each independently represent a hydrocarbon
 20 group having 1 to 20 carbon atoms.).

Further, another invention relates to a process for
 producing an oxirane compound, comprising reacting an olefin
 with a hydroperoxide compound in the presence of a catalyst

obtained by the above-mentioned process.

BEST MODE FOR CARRYING OUT THE INVENTION

In the process for producing a titanium-containing
 5 silicon oxide catalyst of the present invention, silicon
 compounds of the following formula (1) (hereinafter, referred
 to as silicon compound (1)) are used:



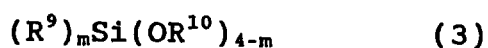
(wherein, R¹ to R⁷ each independently represent a hydrocarbon
 10 group having 1 to 20 carbon atoms.).

Preferably, R¹ to R⁶ represent an alkyl group, and a methyl
 group, ethyl group, propyl group, butyl group, isopropyl group,
 isobutyl group and the like are exemplified, and particularly
 preferable are a methyl group and an ethyl group which are easily
 15 available industrially.

R⁷ represents a divalent hydrocarbon group having 1 to
 20 carbon atoms, and examples thereof include alkylene groups
 such as a methylene group, ethylene group, propylene group,
 butylenes group and the like, aromatic hydrocarbon groups such
 20 as a phenylene group, 1,4-bis(methylene)phenylene group,
 1,4-bis(ethylene)phenylene group and the like, further,
 hydrocarbon groups obtained by combining them, and parts of
 these hydrocarbon groups may be substituted with hetero atoms.

Preferable specific examples of the silicon compound (1) include bis(triethoxysilyl)ethane, bis(triethoxysilyl)methane, bis(trimethoxysilyl)ethane, bis(trimethoxysilyl)methane, bis(trimethoxysilyl)hexane,
5 1,4-bis(trimethoxysilylethyl)benzene and the like.

In the present invention, it is preferable to use a silicon compound of the following formula (2) (hereinafter, referred to as silicon compound (2)) and/or a silicon compound of the following formula (3) (hereinafter, referred to as silicon
10 compound (3)) in addition to the silicon compound (1) from the standpoint of controllability of skeleton strength and hydrophobicity to any degrees.



15 (R^8 , R^9 and R^{10} each independently represents a hydrocarbon group having 1 to 20 carbon atoms. m represents an integer of 1 or 2. When a plurality of R^8 's, R^9 's or R^{10} 's are present, they may be the same or different.).

Preferably, examples of the hydrocarbon group include
20 alkyl groups having 1 to 20 carbon atoms such as a methyl group, ethyl group, propyl group, isopropyl group, butyl group and the like, aryl groups having up to 20 carbon atoms such as a phenyl group and the like, aralkyl groups having up to 20 carbon atoms such as a benzyl group and the like, and parts of these
25 hydrocarbon groups may be substituted by hetero atoms.

Particularly preferable are a methyl group, ethyl group, propyl group, butyl group and phenyl group which are easily available industrially.

Preferable specific examples of the silicon compound (2) include tetramethoxysilane, tetraethoxysilane, tetrapropoxysilane, tetraisopropoxysilane, tetrabutoxysilane and the like. Preferable specific examples of the silicon compound (3) include trimethoxymethylsilane, trimethoxyphenylsilane, dimethoxydimethylsilane, triethoxymethylsilane, triethoxyphenylsilane and the like.

The ratio of the molar amount of hydrocarbon groups bonded to a silicon atom to the total silicon molar amount of the silicon compound (1), and silicon compound (2) and/or silicon compound (3) is preferably from 5 to 150%, further preferably from 20 to 80%. When the ratio is too small, the catalytic performance may be decreased, on the other hand, when too large, gelation may not progress in catalyst synthesis.

As the titanium alkoxide compound, tetramethoxytitanium, tetraethoxytitanium, tetrapropoxytitanium, tetraisopropoxytitanium, tetrabutoxytitanium, diisopropoxybisacetylacetonatotitanium and the like are exemplified.

The use amount used (molar amount) of the titanium alkoxide compound is preferably from 0.0001 to 1 based on the total molar amounts of all silicon compounds. When the use amount of the

titanium alkoxide compound is too small, the activity may become low because of decrease of active points, on the other hand, when too large, the activity may become low because of production of titania.

5 As the solvent alcohol, methanol, ethanol, n-propanol, isopropanol, butanol, cyclohexanol, ethylene glycol and the like are exemplified.

 In the present invention, a silicon compound and a titanium alkoxide compound are gelled in a water and/or alcohol solvent.

10 As the gelling method, the following methods are mentioned. Namely, hydrolysis and condensation reaction of a silicon compound and titanium compound are progressed by adding usually an acid or alkaline as a promoter into an aqueous and/or an alcoholic solution containing a silicon compound and titanium

15 compound dissolved, to obtain gel which is a polymeric condensate having a silicon-carbon-silicon bond, silicon-oxygen-silicon bond and silicon-oxygen-titanium bond. The gelling reaction is usually conducted at from -30 to 100°C. Aging may also be conducted for growth of gelled solid. Aging is usually

20 conducted at from 0 to 200°C for 180 hours or less.

 As the above-mentioned promoter for hydrolysis and condensation reaction, an acid or an alkaline is used, and use of an acid is preferable from the standpoint of the resulting catalytic performance. Examples of the acid include inorganic acids such

25 as nitric acid, hydrochloric acid, sulfuric acid and the like

and organic acids such as formic acid, acetic acid and the like, and examples of the alkaline include sodium hydroxide, potassium hydroxide, ammonia and the like. The added amount of the acid or alkaline can not be restricted since it depends on the kinds and gelling conditions of raw material compounds, and usually in the range from 0.0001 to 100 mol per mol of the silicon compound.

A solvent in the resulted gel is removed by extraction with supercritical fluid. As the fluid, carbon dioxide, methanol, ethanol, propanol and the like are exemplified, and use of carbon dioxide is preferable since post treatment is easy and a high catalytic performance is obtained. As the method of extraction, the following are mentioned. That is, the supercritical extraction can be carried out under conditions for forming supercritical carbon dioxide in an autoclave charged with gel, namely, by flowing supercritical carbon dioxide at a temperature of about 31°C or more under a pressure of about 7.3 MPa or more. For example, supercritical carbon dioxide fluid having a temperature of 31 to 100°C and a pressure of 10 to 30 MPa can be used. By this procedure, water and/or an alcohol solvent incorporated in gel can be removed by extraction. In extraction removal, it is necessary to use supercritical fluid. By this process, porosity which is preferable for a catalyst can be obtained.

In the present invention, after the supercritical extraction operation, the product can be dried and further

subjected to silylation treatment. The drying can be carried out at from 0 to 200°C under reduced pressure or under a stream of air, nitrogen or the like. The silylation treatment is conducted by contacting a dried catalyst obtained in the former
5 step with a silylating agent in a solvent or gas phase at a temperature from 20 to 300°C to convert a hydroxyl group present on the surface of a catalyst into a silyl group. By performing this silylation treatment, a catalytic performance can be improved. Examples of the silylating agent include
10 organosilanes such as chlorotrimethylsilane, dichlorodimethylsilane, chlorotriethylsilane and the like, organosilylamines such as N-trimethylsilylimidazole, N-t-butyltrimethylsilylimidazole, N-trimethylsilyldimethylamine and the like, organosilylamides
15 such as N,O-bis(trimethylsilyl)acetamide, N-trimethylsilylacetamide and the like, organosilazanes such as hexamethyldisilazane, heptamethyldisilazane and the like. Hexamethyldisilazane is a preferable silylating agent.

The catalyst of the present invention is a
20 titanium-containing silicon oxide catalyst having a silicon-carbon-silicon bond, silicon-oxygen-silicon bond and silicon-oxygen-titanium bond. The silicon-carbon-silicon bond in the catalyst can be confirmed mainly by ^{29}Si -NMR and ^{13}C -NMR. For example, when two Si atoms are crosslinked through
25 a phenyl group, carbon number of a phenyl group bonded to Si

can be confirmed by two peaks near 145 ppm by ^{13}C -NMR, and presences of Si and Si atom bonded to C can be confirmed by three peaks appearing near -60 ppm to -80 ppm by ^{29}Si -NMR. Details thereof are described in a literature of Douglas A. Loy, Kenneth J. Shea, et al. (J. Am. Chem. Soc. 1992, 114, 6700, J. of Non-Crystalline Solids 1993, 160, 234) and the like. Further, the state of titanium present in the catalyst can be confirmed by a UV spectrometer or the like. Existence of an absorption band near 200 to 230 nm indicates a titanium atom present in highly dispersed condition in silica. On the other hand, when titanium compounds are mutually condensed to give poorly dispersed state, an absorption band appears characteristically in a region of 300 nm or more.

The catalyst obtained in the present invention can be used in selective oxidation reactions, for example, an olefin epoxidation reaction, and additionally, various oxidation reactions of organic compounds, since the catalyst has large surface area and highly dispersed titanium active sites. If desired, it is also possible to reinforce acid sites of the catalyst by addition of a third component such as alumina or the like, and the catalyst can be used also in an alkylation reaction, catalytic reforming reaction and the like.

The catalyst of the present invention is optimally used in a process for producing an oxirane compound, comprising reacting an olefin and a hydroperoxide compound.

As the olefin subjected to the reaction, exemplified are ethylene, propylene, 1-butene, 2-butene, isobutylene, butadiene, 1-pentene, isoprene, 1-hexene, 1-octene, 1-decene, cyclopentene, cyclohexene, styrene, allyl chloride, allyl
5 alcohol and the like.

As the hydroperoxide compound subjected to the reaction, any of organic hydroperoxides and inorganic hydroperoxides can be used. As the organic hydroperoxide, ethylbenzene hydroperoxide, cumene hydroperoxide, t-butyl hydroperoxide and
10 the like are exemplified. As the inorganic hydroperoxide, hydrogen peroxide and the like are exemplified.

From the industrial viewpoint, a process for producing propylene oxide from propylene and organic hydroperoxide is important, and the catalyst of the present invention can be
15 used suitably in this reaction.

The reaction is carried out in liquid phase in the presence or absence of a suitable solvent. As the solvent, compounds which are inert to the reaction and abundant in solubility of an olefin and/or hydroperoxide compound can be used. Specific
20 examples of a solvent when an organic hydroperoxide is used include hydrocarbons such as butane, octane, benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene, cumene and the like. On the other hand, specific examples of a solvent when an inorganic hydroperoxide is used include methanol, ethanol, isopropanol, t-butanol, water and
25 the like.

The epoxidation reaction can be conducted generally at temperatures from 0 to 200°C. The pressure may be such extent as to keep a reaction mixture in liquid condition, and generally from 0.1 to 10 MPa. The epoxidation reaction uses a powder catalyst or molded catalyst, and can be carried out in a slurry or fixed bed according to a batch-wise method, semi-continuous method or continuous method.

EXAMPLES

Next, the present invention are illustrated by Examples.

Example 1

Into a 300 ml flask was charged 32.1 g of 1,4-bis(trimethoxysilylethyl)benzene, 2.31 g of tetra-n-butoxytitanium and 65 ml of n-propanol. A mixed solution of 23 ml of 70% nitric acid and 35 ml of n-propanol was added from a dropping funnel into this solution over about 1 hour while stirring at 25°C. This solution was allowed to stand at 25°C for 20 days to obtain gel. The resulted gel was transferred into an autoclave, and a solvent in the gel was removed by extraction by flowing supercritical carbon dioxide of 45°C and 24 MPa at a velocity of 8 g/min. for about 12 hours. Subsequently, the product was dried under reduced pressure at 25°C and about 100 Pa for 10 hours to effect silylation treatment, obtaining about 12 g of a catalyst. The resulted catalyst had a surface area of 384 m²/g and a pore volume of 1.4 ml/g.

The epoxidation reaction test was carried out under the following conditions. Into an autoclave was charged about 1 g of the above-mentioned catalyst, 17 g of propylene and 24 g of a 35% solution of ethylbenzene hydroperoxide in ethylbenzene, and they were reacted for 1.5 hours at 80°C while stirring. The reaction solution was analyzed and the reaction result was determined. The results are shown in Table 1.

Example 2

The same operation as in Example 1 was conducted except that 21.6 g of 1,4-bis(trimethoxysilyl)ethylbenzene and 5.9 g of dimethoxydimethylsilane were used as silicon compounds and 21 ml of 70% nitric acid was used. The results are shown in Table 1.

Example 3

The same operation as in Example 1 was conducted except that 16.2 g of 1,2-bis(trimethoxysilyl)ethane and 6.2 g of dimethoxydimethylsilane were used as silicon compounds and 21 ml of 70% nitric acid was used. The results are shown in Table 1.

Example 4

The same operation as in Example 1 was conducted except that 28.0 g of 1,6-bis(trimethoxysilyl)hexane was used as a silicon compound and 5.7 ml of 70% nitric acid was further used. The results are shown in Table 1.

Comparative Example 1

The same operation as in Example 1 was conducted except that 26.1 g of tetramethoxysilane was used as a silicon compound and 30 ml of 70% nitric acid was used. The results are shown in Table 2.

5 Comparative Example 2

The same operation as in Example 1 was conducted except that 10.4 g of tetramethoxysilane and 14 g of trimethoxymethylsilane were used as silicon compounds and 26 ml of 70% nitric acid was used. The results are shown in Table
10 2.

The results indicate the following matters. All examples satisfying the conditions of the present invention show satisfactory reaction results. On the other hand, Comparative Example 1 and Comparative Example 2 which did not use the silicon
15 compound (1) of the present invention are poor in reaction results.

Table 1

	Example			
	1	2	3	4
Ratio of R (%)	50	95	95	50
Reaction result				
EBHP conversion (%)	97.4	87.5	97.4	91.1
PO/C3' yield (%)	97.5	96.2	97.6	97.8

Table 2

	Comparative xample	
	1	2
Ratio of R (%)	0	60
Reaction result		
EBHP conversion (%)	81.0	38.3
PO/C3' yield (%)	90.2	98.0

Explanation of Tables

Ratio of R (%): Ratio of the total molar amount of hydrocarbon groups R bonded to a Si atom to the total molar amount of Si

EBHP conversion (%): $[\text{reacted EBHP (ethylbenzene hydroperoxide)} / \text{fed EBHP}] \times 100 (\%)$

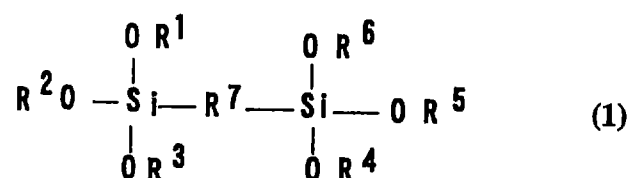
PO/C3' yield (%): $[\text{produced PO (propylene oxide) (mol)} / \text{reacted propylene (mol)}] \times 100 (\%)$

Industrial Applicability

As described above, the present invention can provide a titanium-containing silicon oxide catalyst which can give an oxirane compound under high selectivity and yield by reacting an olefin and a hydroperoxide compound, and a process for producing an oxirane compound using the catalyst.

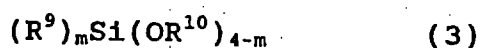
CLAIMS

1. A process for producing a titanium-containing silicon oxide catalyst having a silicon-carbon-silicon bond,
 5 silicon-oxygen-silicon bond and silicon-oxygen-titanium bond, which comprises causing a silicon compound of the following formula (1) and a titanium alkoxide compound to gel in a water and/or alcohol solvent and removing the solvent in the resulted gel by extraction with a supercritical fluid:



(wherein, R^1 to R^7 each independently represent a hydrocarbon group having 1 to 20 carbon atoms.).

2. The process according to Claim 1, wherein a silicon compound of the following formula (2) and/or a silicon compound
 15 of the following formula (3) is used in addition to the silicon compound (1):



(R^8 , R^9 and R^{10} each independently represent a hydrocarbon group
 20 having 1 to 20 carbon atoms. m represents an integer of 1 to 2. When a plurality of R^8 's, R^9 's or R^{10} 's are present in the silicon compound (2) and the silicon compound (3), they may be the same or different.).

3. The process according to Claim 2, wherein the ratio of the molar amount of hydrocarbon groups bonded to a silicon atom to the total silicon molar amount of the silicon compound (1) and silicon compound (2) and/or silicon compound (3) is
5 from 5 to 150%.

4. A titanium-containing silicon oxide catalyst obtained by the process according to any of Claims 1 to 3.

5. A process for producing an oxirane compound, comprising reacting an olefin with a hydroperoxide compound
10 in the presence of the catalyst of Claim 4.