

A process for producing isopropyl benzene

Technical field

The present invention relates to a process for producing isopropyl
5 benzene with benzene and propylene.

Background

Isopropyl benzene is an important raw material for organic chemical industries, which is a main intermediate compound of producing phenol,
10 acetone and alpha-methyl styrene. In industry, isopropyl benzene is prepared by alkylation of benzene with propylene, with a main by-product of polyisopropyl benzene. As early as 1945, UOP discloses a process for preparing isopropyl benzene by a reaction of propylene and benzene in the presence of a solid phosphoric acidic catalyst (SPA process)
15 (USP2382318). The SPA catalyst can't catalyze transalkylation of polyisopropyl benzene, thus, the SPA process can only be operated at a high molar ratio of benzene-to-olefin (5~7), and the yield of isopropyl benzene is only about 95 %. In the 1980s, the Monsanto Company developed a process for producing isopropyl benzene using AlCl_3 as the
20 alkylation catalyst, which had been practiced in industry. AlCl_3 cannot catalyze the transalkylation, thus the yield of isopropyl benzene of the AlCl_3 process for isopropyl benzene is still relatively low, while the problems of serious pollution and corrosion of the devices are present.

25 In the 1990s, the companies of Dow, CD Tech, Mobil-Badger, Enichem and UOP and so on (US4992606, US5362697, US5453554, US5522984, US5672799, US6162416, US6051521) disclose in succession fixed bed processes capable of conducting transalkylation with a microporous zeolite as the catalyst. In the present art, alkylation of
30 benzene with propylene is carried out in an alkylation reactor. The polyisopropyl benzene generated from the alkylation process is separated by distillation system, mixed with benzene and then fed into an

transalkylation reactor with a single catalyst bed for transalkylation.

In the transalkylation of polyisopropyl benzene with benzene, the molar ratio of benzene to polyisopropyl benzene, the space velocity of the raw materials, and the composition of the polyisopropyl benzene will affect significantly the conversion of the polyisopropyl benzene and the amount of the impurity of n-propyl benzene. Normally, the transalkylation of polyisopropyl benzene produces more amounts of the impurity of n-propyl benzene, which reduces the quality of the product isopropyl benzene significantly. Therefore, increasing the conversion of the polyisopropyl benzene and reducing the amount of n-propyl benzene generated from the transalkylation by optimizing the process is of significant importance for increasing the production efficiency and improving the quality of products.

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Summary of the invention

The technical problem to be solved by the present invention is the relatively higher content of n-propyl benzene in transalkylation product, so as to provide a new process of producing isopropyl benzene. The process reduces significantly the content of n-propyl benzene and improves the product quality.

In order to solve the technical problem above, the present invention provides a technical solution as follows: a process of producing isopropyl benzene, comprising the steps of:

a) feeding a stream containing the polyisopropyl benzene into a polyisopropyl benzene column, resulting in a stream of relatively lighter components at the column top and a stream of relatively heavier components at the middle of the column through a separation by rectification; and

b) allowing the stream of relatively lighter components and the stream of relatively heavier components into the first and second transalkylation

zones respectively with a benzene stream, carrying out the transalkylation by contacting with a catalyst, and providing respectively a first and a second isopropyl benzene-containing streams, which are post-treated to provide a product isopropyl benzene.

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Therein, the step b) can be carried out as follows, for example:

b1) feeding a first benzene stream and the stream of relatively lighter components into the first transalkylation zone from the top, contacting with the catalyst for an transalkylation, and providing a first isopropyl benzene-containing stream at the bottom; feeding a second benzene stream and the stream of relatively heavier components entering the second transalkylation zone from the top, contacting with the catalyst for an transalkylation, and providing a second isopropyl benzene-containing stream at the bottom of the second transalkylation zone; and feeding the first isopropyl benzene-containing stream and the second isopropyl benzene-containing stream respectively to the subsequent refining procedures, to provide a product isopropyl benzene; or

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b2) feeding a first benzene stream and the stream of relatively lighter components into the first transalkylation zone from the top, contacting with the catalyst for an transalkylation, and providing a first isopropyl benzene-containing stream at the bottom; feeding the first isopropyl benzene-containing stream and the stream of relatively heavier components together into the second transalkylation zone from the top, contacting with the catalyst for an transalkylation, and providing a second isopropyl benzene-containing stream at the bottom of the second transalkylation zone; and feeding the second isopropyl benzene-containing stream to the subsequent refining procedures, to provide a product isopropyl benzene.

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It should be noted that the terms of “first”, “second” and so on used in the process described above are provided for the only purpose of

convenience of description and understanding, which distinguish the different subjects but never make any specific limitation to the time and/or spatial sequences/arrangements thereof.

5 In the above technical solution, in step b1), the weight ratio of the first benzene stream to the stream of relatively lighter components is in the range of 0.3-5, more preferably 0.7-3; and the weight ratio of the second benzene stream to the stream of relatively heavier components is in the range of 0.3-5, more preferably 0.7-3. In step b2), the weight ratio of the
10 first benzene stream to the stream of relatively lighter components is in the range of 0.3-5, more preferably 0.7-3; the weight ratio of the first isopropyl benzene-containing stream to the stream of relatively heavier components is in the range of 0.3-5, more preferably 0.7-3; and the weight ratio of the first benzene stream to the stream containing the polyisopropyl
15 benzene is in the range of 0.3-5. In the stream of relatively lighter components, the content of diisopropylbenzene is preferably in the range of 96-100 wt%. In the stream of relatively heavier components, the content of tri-isopropylbenzene is preferably in the range of 1-50 wt%.

20 In the technical solutions above, the first transalkylation zone and the second transalkylation zone can be each in the form of a fixed bed reactor, wherein the catalyst loaded is selected from the group consisting of Y zeolite, Beta zeolite, mordenite, SHY-1, SHY-2 and a mesoporous molecular sieve, such as MCM-22 introduced by US4954325. The
25 SHY-1 can be prepared according to the process disclosed by CN200410066636.2, and the SHY-2 can be prepared according to the process disclosed by CN200610029979.0.

30 In the technical solutions above, the reaction conditions of the first transalkylation zone can comprise, for example: a reaction temperature of 130~190 degrees C, a reaction pressure of 1.0~3.0MPa, and a liquid space velocity of 0.5-10 hour⁻¹. The reaction conditions of the second

transalkylation zone can comprise, for example: a reaction temperature of 150~210 degrees C, a reaction pressure of 1.0~3.0MPa, and a liquid space velocity of 0.5-10 hour⁻¹. The operation conditions of the polyisopropyl benzene column can comprise, for example: an operation pressure of -300
5 to 0kPa, a column top temperature of 120-160 degrees C, and a column bottom temperature of 190-250 degrees C.

In the process according to the present invention, the pressure means a gage pressure. The stream containing the polyisopropyl benzene means
10 a product stream obtained after the alkylation conducted by benzene and propylene in an alkylation reactor, which comprises benzene, isopropyl benzene, diisopropylbenzene, tri-isopropyl benzene and n-propyl benzene. The polyisopropyl benzene represents diisopropylbenzene and tri-isopropyl benzene, which is generally present in the alkylation product
15 stream in an amount of 90-100% by weight. The raw material of benzene can be fresh benzene, recycled benzene from the subsequent processing section(s) or a mixture thereof.

The process according to the present invention cuts the polyisopropyl
20 benzene through a suitable rectification into two streams of relatively lighter and heavier components, wherein the content of diisopropylbenzene in the stream of relatively lighter components is controlled to be at least greater than 95 wt%, and the content of tri-isopropyl benzene in the stream of relatively heavier components is controlled to be at least greater than
25 0.5 wt%. These two streams are subjected respectively to the transalkylation, reducing the content of n-propyl benzene so significantly that the content of n-propyl benzene in the isopropyl benzene is as minimum as 320 ppm, thereby the product quality is increased and better technical effect is obtained.

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Description of drawings

Figure 1 is a flow chart of a process according to the prior art.

Figures 2, 3 and 4 are flow charts of a process according to the present invention.

In figure 2, the first transalkylation zone and the second transalkylation zone are in the form of two separate fixed bed reactors in parallel.

In figure 3, the first transalkylation zone and the second transalkylation zone are in the form of two separate fixed bed reactors in series.

In figure 4, the first transalkylation zone and the second transalkylation zone are contained in one fixed bed reactor.

In figures 1, 2, 3 and 4, 1 is the first transalkylation zone, 2 denotes the second transalkylation zone, 3 denotes the polyisopropyl benzene column, 4 denotes a catalyst bed layer of the first transalkylation zone, 5 denotes a catalyst bed layer of the second transalkylation zone, 6 denotes the stream containing the polyisopropyl benzene as a raw material, 7 denotes the first benzene stream as a raw material, 8 denotes the second benzene stream as a raw material, 9 denotes the first isopropyl benzene-containing stream as a discharge from the first transalkylation zone, 10 denotes the second isopropyl benzene-containing stream as a discharge from the second transalkylation zone, 11 denotes the stream of heavy components containing the tar as a bottom discharge from the polyisopropyl benzene column, 12 denotes the stream of relatively heavier components as a middle discharge from the polyisopropyl benzene column, 13 denotes the stream of relatively lighter components as a top discharge from the polyisopropyl benzene column, 20 denotes the isopropyl benzene-containing stream as a discharge from the transalkylation zone according to the prior art, 23 denotes a top discharge stream from the polyisopropyl benzene column according to the prior art.

Embodiments

Figure 1 exemplifies a process according to the prior art, wherein a stream containing the polyisopropyl benzene 6 is fed into a polyisopropyl benzene column 3. After separation by rectification, a top discharge stream 14 from the polyisopropyl benzene column is obtained at the column top, and a stream of heavy components containing the tar 11 is obtained at the column bottom, which stream of heavy components containing the tar 11 is then fed into the subsequent procedure. A benzene stream 8 and the top discharge stream 14 from the polyisopropyl benzene column are fed into the transalkylation zone from the top thereof and contacted with the catalyst for an transalkylation, so as to provide a isopropyl benzene-containing stream 20 at the bottom.

The present invention provides a technical solution as follows: a process of producing isopropyl benzene, comprising the steps of:

a) feeding a stream containing the polyisopropyl benzene 6 into a polyisopropyl benzene column 3, resulting in a stream of relatively lighter components 13 at the column top, a stream of relatively heavier components 12 at the middle of the column and a stream of heavy components containing the tar 11 at the column bottom through a separation by rectification, in which the stream of heavy components containing the tar 11 is fed into the subsequent procedures; wherein the stream of relatively lighter components 13 contains at least greater than 95 wt% of diisopropylbenzene, and the stream of relatively heavier components 12 contains at least greater than 0.5 wt% of tri-isopropyl benzene, as showed by figures 2, 3 and 4, for example; and

b1) feeding a first benzene stream 7 and the stream of relatively lighter components 13 into the first transalkylation zone 1 from the top thereof, contacting with the catalyst for an transalkylation, and providing a first isopropyl benzene-containing stream 9 at the bottom; feeding a

second benzene stream 8 and the stream of relatively lighter components 12 into the second transalkylation zone 2 from the top thereof, contacting with the catalyst for an transalkylation, and providing a second isopropyl benzene-containing stream 10 at the bottom; and feeding the first isopropyl benzene-containing stream 9 and the second isopropyl benzene-containing stream 10 respectively to the subsequent refining procedures, to provide a product isopropyl benzene, as showed by figure 2, for example; or

b2) feeding a first benzene stream 7 and the stream of relatively lighter components 13 into the first transalkylation zone 1 from the top thereof, contacting with the catalyst for an transalkylation, and providing a first isopropyl benzene-containing stream 9 at the bottom; feeding the first isopropyl benzene-containing stream 9 and the stream of relatively lighter components 12 together into the second transalkylation zone 2 from the top thereof, contacting with the catalyst for an transalkylation, and providing a second isopropyl benzene-containing stream 10 at the bottom; and feeding the second isopropyl benzene-containing stream 10 to the subsequent refining procedures, to provide a product isopropyl benzene, as showed by figures 3 and 4, for example.

Specifically, in figure 2, a stream containing the polyisopropyl benzene 6 is fed into a polyisopropyl benzene column 3. After separation by rectification, a stream of relatively lighter components 13 is obtained at the column top, a stream of relatively heavier components 12 is obtained at the column middle, and a stream of heavy components containing the tar 11 is obtained at the column bottom, which stream 11 is then fed into the subsequent procedures. The first benzene stream 7 and the stream of relatively lighter components 13 are fed into the first transalkylation zone 1 from the top and contacted with the catalyst for an transalkylation, so as to provide a first isopropyl benzene-containing stream 9 at the bottom.

The second benzene stream 8 and the stream of relatively lighter components 12 are fed into the second transalkylation zone 2 from the top

and contacted with the catalyst for an transalkylation, so as to provide a second isopropyl benzene-containing stream 10 at the bottom. The first isopropyl benzene-containing stream 9 and the second isopropyl benzene-containing stream 10 are fed into the subsequent refining procedures, to provide the product isopropyl benzene.

In figures 3 and 4, a stream containing the polyisopropyl benzene 6 as a raw material is fed into a polyisopropyl benzene column 3. After separation by rectification, a stream of relatively lighter components 13 is obtained at the column top, a stream of relatively heavier components 12 is obtained at the column middle, and a stream of heavy components containing the tar 11 is obtained at the column bottom, which stream 11 is then fed into the subsequent procedure. The stuff benzene stream 7 and the stream of relatively lighter components 13 are fed into the first transalkylation zone 1 from the top and contacted with the catalyst for an transalkylation, so as to provide a first isopropyl benzene-containing stream 9 from the reaction. The first isopropyl benzene-containing stream 9 and the stream of relatively lighter components 12 are fed into the second transalkylation zone 2 from the top and contacted with the catalyst for an transalkylation, so as to provide a second isopropyl benzene-containing stream 10 from the reaction at the bottom. The stream 10 is fed into the subsequent refining procedures, to provide the product isopropyl benzene. During step b2), two separate columns can be used respectively as the first transalkylation zone 1 and the second transalkylation zone 2, as showed by figure 3. In addition, those skilled in the art can understand that, in one embodiment, one single column can be used to carry out the step b2), namely using one single column to contain both the first transalkylation zone 1 and the second transalkylation zone 2, as showed by figure 4.

The process according to the present invention cuts the polyisopropyl benzene through a suitable rectification into two streams of relatively

lighter and heavier components, wherein the content of diisopropylbenzene in the stream of relatively lighter components 13 is controlled to be at least greater than 95 wt%, and the content of tri-isopropyl benzene in the stream of relatively heavier components 12 is controlled to be at least greater than 0.5 wt%. The distribution of the components in the polyisopropyl benzene column 3 is monitored, allowing the position at which the stream of relatively heavier components 12 is taken out from the column middle capable of being such that ensure the content of diisopropylbenzene in the stream of relatively lighter components of at least greater than 95 wt% and/or the content of tri-isopropyl benzene in the stream of relatively heavier components 12 of at least greater than 0.5 wt%.

The present invention will be further illustrated by the following examples.

Example

[Example 1]

According to the procedures of figure 2, the first transalkylation reactor was loaded with 20 g of a catalyst of Beta zeolite, and the second transalkylation reactor was loaded with 50 g of a catalyst of MCM-22 zeolite. The reaction conditions of the first transalkylation reactor comprised: a reaction temperature of 150 degrees C, a reaction pressure of 1.2MPa, a flow rate of the first benzene stream (stream 7) of 40 g/hr, a feeding rate of the polyisopropyl benzene (stream 13) of 20 g/hr, and a content of diisopropylbenzene in stream 13 of 98%. The reaction conditions of the second transalkylation reactor comprised: a reaction temperature of 180 degrees C, a reaction pressure of 1.5MPa, a flow rate of the second benzene stream (stream 8) of 80 g/hr, a flow rate of the polyisopropyl benzene (stream 12) of 80 g/hr, and a content of tri-isopropylbenzene in stream 12 of 10%. The reaction was carried out continuously for 5 days.

The operation conditions of the polyisopropyl benzene column comprised: a column top temperature of 132 degrees C, a column bottom temperature of 215 degrees C, and an operation pressure of -80MPa.

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Reaction results: a conversion of the poly-isopropyl benzene of 65% and a content of n-propyl benzene in the isopropyl benzene of 450 ppm for the first transalkylation reactor; and a conversion of the poly-isopropyl benzene of 55% and a content of n-propyl benzene in the isopropyl benzene of 520 ppm for the second transalkylation reactor.

[Example 2]

According to the procedures of figure 2, the first transalkylation reactor was loaded with 30 g of a catalyst of Beta zeolite, and the second transalkylation reactor was loaded with 40 g of a catalyst of MCM-22 zeolite. The reaction conditions of the first transalkylation reactor comprised: a reaction temperature of 143 degrees C, a reaction pressure of 1.2MPa, a flow rate of the first benzene stream (stream 7) of 60 g/hr, a feeding rate of the polyisopropyl benzene (stream 13) of 20 g/hr, and a content of diisopropylbenzene in stream 13 of 99%. The reaction conditions of the second transalkylation reactor comprised: a reaction temperature of 175 degrees C, a reaction pressure of 1.5MPa, a flow rate of the second benzene stream (stream 8) of 60 g/hr, a flow rate of the polyisopropyl benzene (stream 12) of 40 g/hr, and a content of tri-isopropylbenzene in stream 12 of 8%. The reaction was carried out continuously for 5 days.

The operation conditions of the polyisopropyl benzene column comprised: a column top temperature of 128 degrees C, a column bottom temperature of 209 degrees C, and an operation pressure of -135MPa.

Reaction results: a conversion of the poly-isopropyl benzene of 48%

and a content of n-propyl benzene in the isopropyl benzene of 320 ppm for the first transalkylation reactor; and a conversion of the poly-isopropyl benzene of 55% and a content of n-propyl benzene in the isopropyl benzene of 430 ppm for the second transalkylation reactor.

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[Example 3]

According to the procedures of figure 2, the first transalkylation reactor was loaded with 50 g of a catalyst of Beta zeolite, and the second transalkylation reactor was loaded with 40 g of a catalyst of SHY-1 zeolite.

10 The reaction conditions of the first transalkylation reactor comprised: a reaction temperature of 150 degrees C, a reaction pressure of 1.2MPa, a flow rate of the first benzene stream (stream 7) of 100 g/hr, a feeding rate of the polyisopropyl benzene (stream 13) of 60 g/hr, and a content of diisopropylbenzene in stream 13 of 98%. The reaction conditions of the
15 second transalkylation reactor comprised: a reaction temperature of 180 degrees C, a reaction pressure of 1.5MPa, a flow rate of the second benzene stream (stream 8) of 80 g/hr, a flow rate of the polyisopropyl benzene (stream 12) of 80 g/hr, and a content of tri-isopropylbenzene in stream 12 of 5%. The reaction was carried out continuously for 5 days.

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The operation conditions of the polyisopropyl benzene column comprised: a column top temperature of 132 degrees C, a column bottom temperature of 213 degrees C, and an operation pressure of -95MPa.

25 Reaction results: a conversion of the poly-isopropyl benzene of 62% and a content of n-propyl benzene in the isopropyl benzene of 430 ppm, for the first transalkylation reactor; and a conversion of the poly-isopropyl benzene of 45% and a content of n-propyl benzene in the isopropyl benzene of 480 ppm, for the second transalkylation reactor.

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[Example 4]

According to the procedures of figure 2, the first transalkylation

reactor was loaded with 50 g of a catalyst of Beta zeolite, and the second transalkylation reactor was loaded with 50 g of a catalyst of SHY-1 zeolite. The reaction conditions of the first transalkylation reactor comprised: a reaction temperature of 145 degrees C, a reaction pressure of 1.3MPa, a flow rate of the first benzene stream (stream 7) of 120 g/hr, a feeding rate of the polyisopropyl benzene (stream 13) of 90 g/hr, and a content of diisopropylbenzene in stream 13 of 99%. The reaction conditions of the second transalkylation reactor comprised: a reaction temperature of 178 degrees C, a reaction pressure of 1.5MPa, a flow rate of the second benzene stream (stream 8) of 120 g/hr, a flow rate of the polyisopropyl benzene (stream 12) of 100 g/hr, and a content of tri-isopropylbenzene in stream 12 of 12%. The reaction was carried out continuously for 5 days.

The operation conditions of the polyisopropyl benzene column comprised: a column top temperature of 125 degrees C, a column bottom temperature of 215 degrees C, and an operation pressure of -80MPa.

Reaction results: a conversion of the poly-isopropyl benzene of 45% and a content of n-propyl benzene in the isopropyl benzene of 410 ppm, for the first transalkylation reactor; and a conversion of the poly-isopropyl benzene of 50% and a content of n-propyl benzene in the isopropyl benzene of 480 ppm, for the second transalkylation reactor.

[Example 5]

According to the procedures of figure 3, the first transalkylation zone and the second transalkylation zone were in the form of two separate fixed bed reactors in series. The first transalkylation zone was loaded with 15 g of a catalyst of Beta zeolite, and the second transalkylation zone was loaded with 60 g of a catalyst of SHY-1 zeolite. The reaction conditions of the first transalkylation zone comprised: a reaction temperature of 150 degrees C, a flow rate of the benzene stream (stream 6) of 110 g/hr, a feeding rate of the polyisopropyl benzene (stream 8) of 20 g/hr, and a

content of diisopropylbenzene in stream 8 of 99%. The reaction conditions of the second transalkylation zone comprised: a reaction temperature of 178 degrees C, a pressure at the outlet of the second reaction zone of 1.5MPa, a flow rate of stream 9 of 90 g/hr, and a content of tri-isopropyl benzene in stream 9 of 6%. The reaction was carried out continuously for 5 days.

The operation conditions of the polyisopropyl benzene column comprised: a column top temperature of 134 degrees C, a column bottom temperature of 215 degrees C, and an operation pressure of -80MPa.

Reaction results: a conversion of the poly-isopropyl benzene of 60% and a content of n-propyl benzene in the isopropyl benzene of 460 ppm, for the first transalkylation zone; and a conversion of the poly-isopropyl benzene of 53% and a content of n-propyl benzene in the isopropyl benzene of 480 ppm, for the second transalkylation zone.

[Example 6]

According to the procedures of figure 3, the first transalkylation zone and the second transalkylation zone were two separate fixed bed reactors in series. The first transalkylation zone was loaded with 50 g of a catalyst of Beta zeolite, and the second transalkylation zone was loaded with 30 g of a catalyst of SHY-2 zeolite. The reaction conditions of the first transalkylation zone comprised: a reaction temperature of 148 degrees C, a flow rate of the benzene stream (stream 6) of 100 g/hr, a feeding rate of the polyisopropyl benzene (stream 8) of 50 g/hr, and a content of diisopropylbenzene in stream 8 of 99%. The reaction conditions of the second transalkylation zone comprised: a reaction temperature of 185 degrees C, a pressure at the outlet of the second reaction zone of 1.5MPa, a flow rate of the polyisopropyl benzene (stream 9) of 25 g/hr, and a content of tri-isopropyl benzene in stream 9 of 8%. The reaction was carried out continuously for 5 days.

The operation conditions of the polyisopropyl benzene column comprised: a column top temperature of 129 degrees C, a column bottom temperature of 210 degrees C, and an operation pressure of -120MPa.

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Reaction results: a conversion of the poly-isopropyl benzene of 53% and a content of n-propyl benzene in the isopropyl benzene of 430 ppm, for the first transalkylation zone; and a conversion of the poly-isopropyl benzene of 56% and a content of n-propyl benzene in the isopropyl benzene of 510 ppm, for the second transalkylation zone.

[Example 7]

According to the procedures of figure 3, the first transalkylation zone and the second transalkylation zone were two separate fixed bed reactors in series. The first transalkylation zone was loaded with 40 g of a catalyst of Beta zeolite, and the second transalkylation zone was loaded with 40 g of a catalyst of MCM-49 zeolite. The reaction conditions of the first transalkylation zone comprised: a reaction temperature of 151 degrees C, a flow rate of the benzene stream (stream 6) of 80 g/hr, a feeding rate of the polyisopropyl benzene (stream 8) of 40 g/hr, and a content of diisopropylbenzene in stream 8 of 98%. The reaction conditions of the second transalkylation zone comprised: a reaction temperature of 171 degrees C, a pressure at the outlet of the second reaction zone of 1.5MPa, a flow rate of the polyisopropyl benzene (stream 9) of 50 g/hr, and a content of tri-isopropyl benzene in stream 9 of 5%. The reaction was carried out continuously for 5 days.

The operation conditions of the polyisopropyl benzene column comprised: a column top temperature of 134 degrees C, a column bottom temperature of 215 degrees C, and an operation pressure of -80MPa.

Reaction results: a conversion of the poly-isopropyl benzene of 57%

and a content of n-propyl benzene in the isopropyl benzene of 450 ppm, for the first transalkylation zone; and a conversion of the poly-isopropyl benzene of 52%, and a content of n-propyl benzene in the isopropyl benzene of 470 ppm, for the second transalkylation zone.

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[Example 8]

According to the procedures of figure 4, the first transalkylation zone and the second transalkylation zone were contained in one fixed bed reactor. The first transalkylation zone was loaded with 60 g of a catalyst
10 of Beta zeolite, and the second transalkylation zone was loaded with 20 g of a catalyst of MCM-22 zeolite. The reaction conditions of the first transalkylation zone comprised: a reaction temperature of 145 degrees C, a flow rate of the benzene stream (stream 6) of 120 g/hr, a feeding rate of the polyisopropyl benzene (stream 8) of 70 g/hr, and a content of
15 diisopropylbenzene in stream 8 of 99%. The reaction conditions of the second transalkylation zone comprised: a reaction temperature of 170 degrees C, a pressure at the outlet of the reactor of 1.5MPa, a flow rate of the polyisopropyl benzene (stream 9) of 20 g/hr, and a content of tri-isopropyl benzene in stream 9 of 10%. The reaction was carried out
20 continuously for 5 days.

The operation conditions of the polyisopropyl benzene column comprised: a column top temperature of 125 degrees C, a column bottom temperature of 208 degrees C, and an operation pressure of -150MPa.

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Reaction results: a conversion of the poly-isopropyl benzene of 53% and a content of n-propyl benzene in the isopropyl benzene of 300 ppm, for the first transalkylation zone; and a conversion of the poly-isopropyl benzene of 45% and a content of n-propyl benzene in the isopropyl
30 benzene of 360 ppm, for the second transalkylation zone.

[Comparative example 1]

According to the procedures of figure 1, the transalkylation unit had only one reactor, wherein a stream was drawn out from only the top of the polyisopropyl benzene column, which stream was fed entirely into the transalkylation reactor. The transalkylation zone was loaded with 50 g of a catalyst of Beta zeolite, a reaction temperature of 153 degrees C, a reaction pressure of 1.1MPa, a flow rate of benzene of 100 g/hr, a flow rate of the polyisopropyl benzene of 80 g/hr, and a content of diisopropylbenzene in the polyisopropyl benzene of 96%. The reaction was carried out continuously for 5 days.

Reaction results: a conversion of the poly-isopropyl benzene of only 35%, and a content of n-propyl benzene in the isopropyl benzene of 560 ppm.

[Comparative example 2]

It was same as the [comparative example 1], except for the transalkylation zone being loaded with 60 g of a catalyst of MCM-22 zeolite, a reaction temperature of 185 degrees C, a reaction pressure of 1.5MPa, a flow rate of benzene of 80 g/hr, a flow rate of the polyisopropyl benzene of 80 g/hr, and a content of diisopropylbenzene in the polyisopropyl benzene of 96%. The reaction was carried out continuously for 5 days.

Reaction results: a conversion of the poly-isopropyl benzene of 55%, and a content of n-propyl benzene in the isopropyl benzene of 820 ppm.

[Comparative example 3]

It was same as the [comparative example 1], except for the transalkylation zone being loaded with 60 g of a catalyst of MCM-22 zeolite, a reaction temperature of 172 degrees C, a reaction pressure of 1.5MPa, a flow rate of benzene of 100 g/hr, a flow rate of the polyisopropyl benzene of 80 g/hr, and a content of diisopropylbenzene in

the polyisopropyl benzene of 96%. The reaction was carried out continuously for 5 days.

Reaction results: a conversion of the poly-isopropyl benzene of 40%,
5 and a content of n-propyl benzene in the isopropyl benzene of 630 ppm.

Claims

1. A process of producing isopropyl benzene, comprising the steps of:

a) feeding a stream containing the polyisopropyl benzene (6) into a
5 polyisopropyl benzene column (3), resulting in a stream of relatively
lighter components (13) at the top of the column, a stream of relatively
heavier components (12) at the middle of the column and a stream of
heavy components containing the tar (11) at the bottom of column through
a separation by rectification, in which the stream of heavy components
10 containing the tar (11) is fed into the subsequent procedures; wherein the
stream of relatively lighter components (13) contains at least greater than
95 wt% of diisopropylbenzene and the stream of relatively heavier
components (12) contains at least greater than 0.5 wt% of triisopropyl
benzene; and

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b1) feeding a first benzene stream (7) and the stream of relatively
lighter components (13) into the first transalkylation zone (1), contacting
with the catalyst for transalkylation, and providing a first isopropyl
benzene-containing stream (9) at the bottom of the first transalkylation
20 zone (1); feeding a second benzene stream (8) and the stream of relatively
heavier components (12) into the second transalkylation zone (2),
contacting with the catalyst for an transalkylation, and providing a second
isopropyl benzene-containing stream (10) at the bottom of the second
transalkylation zone (2); and feeding the first isopropyl
25 benzene-containing stream (9) and the second isopropyl
benzene-containing stream (10) into the subsequent refining procedures, to
provide a product isopropyl benzene; or

b2) feeding a first benzene stream (7) and the stream of relatively
30 lighter components (13) into the first transalkylation zone (1), contacting
with the catalyst for transalkylation, and providing a first isopropyl
benzene-containing stream (9) at the bottom of the first transalkylation

zone (1); feeding the first isopropyl benzene-containing stream (9) and the stream of relatively heavier components (12) into the second transalkylation zone (2), contacting with the catalyst for transalkylation, and providing a second isopropyl benzene-containing stream (10) at the bottom of the second transalkylation zone (2); and feeding the second isopropyl benzene-containing stream (10) into the subsequent refining procedures, to provide a product isopropyl benzene.

2. The process of producing isopropyl benzene according to claim 1, characterized in that in step b1), the weight ratio of the first benzene stream (7) to the stream of relatively lighter components (13) is in the range of 0.3-5 and the weight ratio of the second benzene stream (8) to the stream of relatively heavier components (12) is in the range of 0.3-5; and in step b2), the weight ratio of the first benzene stream (7) to the stream of relatively lighter components (13) is in the range of 0.3-5 and the weight ratio of the first isopropyl benzene-containing stream (9) to the stream of relatively heavier components (12) is in the range of 0.3-5.

3. The process of producing isopropyl benzene according to claim 2, characterized in that in step b1), the weight ratio of the first benzene stream (7) to the stream of relatively lighter components (13) is in the range of 0.7-3 and the weight ratio of the second benzene stream (8) to the stream of relatively heavier components (12) is in the range of 0.7-3; and in step b2), the weight ratio of the first benzene stream (7) to the stream of relatively lighter components (13) is in the range of 0.7-3 and the weight ratio of the first isopropyl benzene-containing stream (9) to the stream of relatively heavier components (12) is in the range of 0.7-3.

4. The process of producing isopropyl benzene according to claim 1, characterized in that in the stream of relatively lighter components (13), the content of diisopropylbenzene is in the range of 96-100 wt%; and in the stream of relatively heavier components (12), the content of

tri-isopropyl benzene is in the range of 1-50 wt%.

5 5. The process of producing isopropyl benzene according to claim 1, characterized in that the catalyst is selected from the group consisting of Y zeolite, Beta zeolite, mordenite, SHY-1, SHY-2 and MCM-22.

10 6. The process of producing isopropyl benzene according to claim 1, characterized in that in the first transalkylation zone (1), the reaction temperature is in the range of 130~190 degrees C, the reaction pressure is in the range of 1.0~3.0MPa, and the liquid weight space velocity is in the range of 0.5-10 hour⁻¹.

15 7. The process of producing isopropyl benzene according to claim 1, characterized in that in the second transalkylation zone (2), the reaction temperature is in the range of 150~210 degrees C, the reaction pressure is in the range of 1.0~3.0MPa, and the liquid weight space velocity is in the range of 0.5-10 hour⁻¹.

20 8. The process of producing isopropyl benzene according to claim 1, characterized in that, for the polyisopropyl benzene column (3), the operation pressure is in the range of -300 to 0kPa, the column top temperature is in the range of 120-160 degrees C, and the column bottom temperature is in the range of 190-250 degrees C.

25 9. The process of producing isopropyl benzene according to claim 1, characterized in that in step b2), the weight ratio of the first benzene stream (7) to the stream containing the polyisopropyl benzene (6) is in the range of 0.3-5.