

Description

The invention relates to a novel grade of copolymers of tetramethylenedipamide (nylon 4,6) and tetramethyleneterephthalamide (nylon 4.T) and a process for the preparation thereof.

C. Aubineau et al., Bulletin de la Société chimique de France, 1970, pp. 533-537 and pp. 1404-1408 describes copolymers of nylon 4,6 and nylon 4.T and the preparation thereof by means of solution polymerization. Here the 4,6 : 4.T ratio in the compositions ranges between 1 : 0 and 0 : 1.

The principal characteristic of these known copolymers is formed by the high degree of isomorphism, which manifests itself, inter alia, in a regular increase of the melting temperature of the copolymer as the 4.T content increases. Isomorphous copolymers generally have the advantage that above the glass transition temperature, too, the mechanical properties are substantially preserved so that these copolymers are particularly suitable for uses at higher temperature. However this increase of melting temperature with increasing 4.T content has the drawback that at elevated temperature nylon 4,6 will decompose in the melt very easily so that quality and appearance of moulded goods like filaments, films and injection-moulded articles obtained by processing from the melt are influenced negatively. For this reason the nylon 4,6/4.T copolymers described by Aubineau et al. have limitations in so far as their uses are concerned.

Amorphous copolymers generally have a minimum melting temperature and a definite decline of mechanical properties above the glass transition temperature. On the other hand, owing to their lower melting temperature, it is easier for amorphous copolymers to be processed via the melt. This is important notably for copolymers containing nylon 4,6, however, above the glass transition temperature the mechanical properties of fully amorphous copolymers are less good.

It is therefore the object of the invention to find a 4,6/4.T copolymer which shows the characteristics of amorphous copolymer with respect to its melting temperature and the superior mechanical properties at high temperature connected with amorphous copolymers.

It has now been found, however, that it is possible for nylon 4,6/4.T copolymers to be prepared having such a degree of orientation that in a composition range in which the mole fraction (p) 4.T is less than 0.6 the melting temperature shows little dependence on the composition of the copolymer and remains relatively low, and which copolymers have good mechanical properties.

The copolymer of tetramethylenedipamide and tetramethyleneterephthalamide according to the invention is characterized by a composition in which the mole fraction (p) tetramethyleneterephthalamide is less than 0.6 and the melting temperature of the copolymer is lower than $T_m(4,6) + p(T_m(4.T) - T_m(4,6))$ where $T_m(4,6)$ and $T_m(4.T)$ stand for the melting temperature of the homopolymers polytetramethylenedipamide and tetramethyleneterephthalamide respectively.

Copolymers according to the invention can be obtained by heating mixtures of tetramethylenedipamide and a stoichiometric amount of terephthalic acid and adipic acid. Preference is given to starting from a mixture of the salt of tetramethylenediamine and adipic acid (nylon 4,6 salt) and the salt of tetramethylenediamine and terephthalic acid (nylon 4.T salt). The mixture of the salts is heated in an inert atmosphere in a closed reactor for 10 to 180 minutes, preferably 20 to 120 minutes, at a temperature of 170 to 250°C, preferably between 180 and 230°C especially between 190 and 220°C. The reaction is carried out in the presence of an excess of tetramethylenediamine of between 1 and 12 moles % calculated on the acid groups present, preferably between 2 and 10 moles %. For the reaction to proceed well it is an advantage to add some water to the reaction mixture. For instance, between 1 and 10 % (wt) calculated on the total amount of nylon salts presented, more specifically ca. 5 % (wt).

The product obtained from the reactor after cooling and pressure relief is subsequently subjected to after-condensation in order to obtain a polymer of a sufficiently high molecular weight. The after-condensation is carried out at a chosen temperature between 220 and 340°C, preferably between 240 and 310°C, in a steam-containing inert gaseous atmosphere. The chosen pressure at which the after-condensation is carried out may range within very wide limits, for instance between 0.01 and 10 bar. For practical reasons preference is given to a pressure between 0.1 and 3 bar, especially a pressure approximately equalling atmospheric pressure is applied.

It is particularly advantageous, instead of starting from a mixture of nylon 4,6 and nylon 4.T salts, first to react the terephthalic acid with tetramethylenediamine to form di (4-aminobutyl)-terephthalamide and to subsequently prepare the copolymers by mixing di (4-aminobutyl)terephthalamide, adipic acid and nylon-4,6 salt and polymerizing these according to the nylon salt procedure.

The polyamides according to this invention are copolyamides containing tetramethylenedipamide and tetramethyleneterephthalamide as principal components. In principle there are no restrictions regarding the presence of other copolymers in amounts that do not have an adverse effect on the properties of the copolyamides according to the invention, so that all amide-forming substances known in the art can be

chosen.

Other additives like colourants, fillers, reinforcing agents, heat stabilizers, antioxidants, lubricants, nucleation agents, release agents, softeners, flame retardants, antistatic agents and other polymers can be added to the copolyamide according to the invention in such an amount that the processability and the physical properties are not affected.

The copolymers according to the invention can be used for moulding products from the melt by means of, inter alia, injection moulding, extrusion, extrusion blowing and moulding.

Products obtained by applying copolymers according to the invention may be car parts, electrical and electronic parts, films, fibres, various consumer goods, etc.

The invention will be further elucidated by means of the following examples, which are not exhaustive.

The following methods were used to determine the properties of the polymers in the examples.

Differential thermal analysis (DTA) to determine the melting temperature, the melting heat.

In applying this method the polymers subjected to after-condensation were rapidly heated to about 360°C, subsequently cooled at a rate of 80°C/minute and once again subjected to controlled heating at a rate of 20°C/minute to about 10°C above the melting point of the polymer.

The values for the melting temperature T_m and for the melting heat ΔH , obtained from the second scan, are mentioned in the table. The T_m that was taken was the peak temperature of the endothermic curve. If there are more peaks, they are mentioned. The measurements were made in a Du Pont 990 thermal analyser.

As characteristic for the mechanical properties the torsion pendulum modulus ($\log G'$) was measured at different temperatures on strips of the polymer moulded from the melt. To this end the ground polymer was dried in a vacuum oven at 100°C for 24 hour and moulded at 10°C above the melting temperature and subsequently cooled to 20°C. The torsion modulus was measured at a constant frequency of 0.115 Hz and a heating rate of 1°C min⁻¹.

The inherent viscosity is determined on a solution of 0.5 gramme polymer in 100 ml 96 % (wt) sulphuric acid.

Example 1

Nylon 4.6 salt is prepared in the manner described in R.J. Gayman et al. in J. Polym. Sci, (hem. ed. 15, 537 (1977), in methanol, and has a pH = 7.2 (in a 1 % (wt) solution in water). Nylon 4.T salt is prepared in water and precipitated with ethanol according to the process described in R.J. Gaymans et al. in J. Polym. Sci. The pH of a 1 % (wt) solution in water is 7.25.

25 grammes of a mixture of nylon 4.6 salt and nylon 4.T salt, 1.25 ml water and tetramethylenediamine (8 moles % excess) is introduced into a 100 ml stainless steel autoclave. The autoclave is flushed with nitrogen and given a starting pressure of 5 bar. The autoclave is subsequently heated to 210°C in 60 minutes and kept at this temperature for 40 minutes. After pressure relief and cooling, the prepolymer formed is removed from the autoclave and, in the form of a powder, subjected to after-condensation in a gaseous nitrogen/steam flow (ratio 2 : 1) in a fluidized bed reactor for 4 hours at 260°C.

Of the resulting product of after-condensation the melting point, melting heat torsion (pendulum) modulus and inherent viscosity are determined in the manner described above.

The results hereof are mentioned in Table 1, for different compositions of the copolymer.

Experiment II

Di(4-aminobutyl)terephthalamide is prepared by heating 99 grammes dimethylterephthalate (0.5 mole) and 132 grammes tetramethylenediamine (1.5 moles) in a nitrogen atmosphere in a dry reaction flask to 115°C in about 60 minutes and keeping these at this temperature for 2 hours. The reaction product is ground and extracted with diethylether. Using infrared spectrometry no more ester is demonstrated.

25 grammes mixture of nylon 4.6 salt and di (4-aminobutyl)terephthalamide, 1.5 ml water and so much adipic acid that the excess of tetramethylenediamine is 8 % is subsequently converted in the manner described in example I into copolyamide and the properties thereof are determined.

The results are shown in Table 2.

The results of these experiments show that the 4.6/4.T copolymers according to the invention have a melting temperature changing only very slightly over a very wide range of compositions, so that the processability is not adversely affected. The pendulum torsion modulus, on the other hand, does increase

as the 4.T content increases and is still high even at a temperature of 140°C.

The relatively small change of the melting heat compared to nylon 4.6 is an indication that the copolymers still have a substantial degree of orientation corresponding with that of nylon 4.6.

TABLE 1

(Polymerization with nylon-salt mixtures)					
Materials 4.6/4.T	η_{inh}	T_m (°C)	ΔH_m (J/g)	log G' (Pa)	
				20°C	140°C
100 / 0	1.30	282/290	77	8.93	8.36
90 / 10	1.08	280/289	68	9.00	8.40
80 / 20	0.97	282/293	64	9.03	8.50
70 / 30	0.72	296/302	73	-	-
50 / 50	0.49	309	76	-	-
0 / 100	0.19	425/475	108	-	-

TABLE 2

(Polymerization with di (4-aminobutyl)terephthalamide)					
Materials 4.6/4.T	η_{inh}	T_m (°C)	ΔH_m (J/g)	log G' (Pa)	
				20°C	140°C
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50 / 50	0.75	310	77	9.12	8.60

Claims

1. Copolymer of tetramethyleneadipamide and tetramethyleneterephthalamide, characterized in that the mole fraction (p) terephthalamide is less than 0.6 and the melting temperature of the copolymer is lower than $T_m(4.6) + p(T_m(4.T) - T_m(4.6))$, where $T_m(4.6)$ and $T_m(4.T)$ stand for the melting temperature of the homopolymers tetramethyleneadipamide and tetramethyleneterephthalamide respectively.
2. Process for preparing a copolymer according to claim 1, characterized in that a prepolymer is obtained by polymerization in the melt proceeding from a mixture of tetramethylenediamine and less than stoichiometric amounts of terephthalic acid and adipic acid, in which mixture the stoichiometric excess of diamine is 1 to 12%, which prepolymer is subsequently subjected to after-condensation.
3. Process according to claim 2, characterized in that a mixture of the nylon salts of poly-tetramethyleneadipamide and polytetramethyleneterephthalamide plus the excess diamine is started from.
4. Process for preparing a copolymer according to claim 1, characterized in that a prepolymer is obtained by polymerization in the melt of a mixture of di(4-aminobutyl)terephthalamide, the nylon salt of tetramethylenediamine and adipic acid and adipic acid in a less than stoichiometric amount, resulting in an excess of tetramethylenediamine of 1 to 12 mole % calculated on the acid groups present, which prepolymer is subsequently subjected to after-condensation.
5. Process according to any one of claims 2-4, characterized in that water is added to the starting mixture for the melt.

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TABLE 2

(Polymerization with di (4-aminobutyl)terephthalamide)					
Materials 4.6/4.T	η_{inh}	T_m (°C)	ΔH_m (J/g)	log G' (Pa)	
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5. Process according to any one of claims 2-4, characterized in that water is added to the starting mixture for the melt.



6. Process according to claim 5, characterized in that between 1 and 10% (wt) water calculated on the total amount of reaction mixture is added.

Revendications

1. Copolymère de tetraméthylèneadipamide et tetraméthylènetéréphthalamide, caractérisé en ce que la fraction molaire (p) du téréphthalamide est inférieure à 0,6 et la température de fusion du copolymère est inférieure à $T_m(4,6) + p (T_m(4,T) - T_m(4,6))$, formule dans laquelle $T_m(4,6)$ et $T_m(4,T)$ représentent les températures de fusion des homopolymères tetraméthylèneadipamide et tetraméthylènetéréphthalamide respectivement.
2. Procédé de préparation d'un copolymère selon la revendication 1, caractérisé en ce qu'on obtient un prépolymère par polymérisation dans une masse fondue provenant d'un mélange de tetraméthylènediamine et de quantités inférieures au stoechiométrique d'acides téréphthalique et adipique, mélange dans lequel l'excès stoechiométrique de la diamine est de 1 à 12%, puis on soumet le prépolymère à une post-condensation.
3. Procédé selon la revendication 2, caractérisé en ce qu'on part d'un mélange de sels de nylons de polytetraméthylèneadipamide et polytetraméthylènetéréphthalamide plus l'excès de diamine.
4. Procédé de préparation d'un copolymère selon la revendication 1, caractérisé en ce qu'on obtient un prépolymère par polymérisation dans la masse fondue d'un mélange de di(4-aminobutyl)-téréphthalamide, le sel de nylon de tetraméthylènediamine et d'acide adipique et l'acide adipique en une quantité inférieure à la proportion stoechiométrique, ce qui donne un excès de tetraméthylènediamine de 1 à 12 moles% par rapport aux groupes acide présents, puis on soumet ce prépolymère à une post-condensation.
5. Procédé selon l'une quelconque des revendications 2 à 4, caractérisé en ce qu'on ajoute de l'eau au mélange de départ de la masse fondue.
6. Procédé selon la revendication 5, caractérisé en ce qu'on ajoute une quantité d'eau de 1 à 10% par rapport au poids total du mélange de réaction.

Patentansprüche

1. Copolymer von Tetramethylenadipamid und Tetramethylenterephthalamid, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß die Molfraktion (p) Terephthalamid weniger als 0,6 beträgt und die Schmelztemperatur des Copolymers niedriger ist als $T_m(4,6) + p (T_m(4,T) - T_m(4,6))$, wobei $T_m(4,6)$ und $T_m(4,T)$ für die Schmelztemperatur der Homopolymere Tetramethylenadipamid bzw. Tetramethylenterephthalamid stehen.
2. Verfahren zum Herstellen eines Copolymers nach Anspruch 1, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß ein Präpolymer durch Polymerisation in der Schmelze ausgehend von einer Mischung von Tetramethylen-diamin und weniger als den stöchiometrischen Mengen von Terephthalsäure und Adipinsäure erhalten wird, in welcher Mischung der stöchiometrische Überschuß des Diamins 1 bis 12 % beträgt, welches Präpolymer anschließend Nachkondensation unterworfen wird.
3. Verfahren nach Anspruch 2, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß von einer Mischung der Nylonsalze von Polytetramethylenadipamid und Polytetramethylenterephthalamid plus dem überschüssigen Diamin ausgegangen wird.
4. Verfahren zum Herstellen eines Copolymers nach Anspruch 1, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß ein Präpolymer erhalten wird durch Polymerisation in der Schmelze einer Mischung von Di-(4-aminobutyl)-terephthalamid, dem Nylonsalz von Tetramethylendiamin und Adipinsäure und Adipinsäure in einer geringeren Menge als die stöchiometrische Menge, was zu einem Überschuß von Tetramethylendiamin von 1 bis 12 Mol%, bezogen auf die vorhandenen Säuregruppen führt, welches Präpolymer anschließend Nachkondensation unterworfen wird.



5. Verfahren nach einem der Ansprüche 2 bis 4, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß der Ausgangsmischung für die Schmelze Wasser zugesetzt wird.
6. Verfahren nach Anspruch 5, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß 1 bis 10 Gew.% Wasser, bezogen auf die Gesamtmenge der Reaktionsmischung, zugesetzt werden.

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