as originally filed

Abstract

A process for the preparation of polyalcohols comprises the stages:

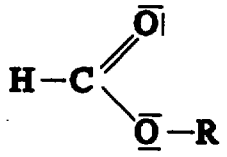
(a) Reaction of an alkanal or ketone with formaldehyde in aqueous solution in the presence of a tertiary amine, to form a formates containing polyalcohol product mixture,

(b) removal of water, excess tertiary amine, excess formaldehyde

(c) heating of remaining mixture from (b) with removal of further formaldehyde and tertiary amine with formation of the formates of the polyalcohol,

(d) transfer of tertiary amine removed from stage (b) and/or from stage (c), to synthesis stage (a) and/or to the subsequent transesterification stage (e),

(e) transesterification of the resulting formates of the polyalcohol from stage (c) with an alcohol of the formula ROH in the presence of a transesterification catalyst to give polyalcohols and formates of the formula



where R is a hydrocarbon radical, preferably alkyl of 1 - 6, particularly preferably 1 - 2, carbon atoms, and

(f) isolation of the polyalcohols.