

PROCESS FOR CATALYST RECOVERY FROM HYDROCYANATION PRODUCT MIXTURES

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The invention relates to recovery of catalyst and ligand from a hydrocyanation reaction product mixture comprising organic dinitriles using liquid-liquid extraction.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

It is well known in the art that complexes of nickel with phosphorous-containing ligands are useful as catalysts in hydrocyanation reactions. Such nickel complexes using monodentate phosphites are known to catalyze hydrocyanation of butadiene to produce a mixture of pentenenitriles. These catalysts are also useful in the subsequent hydrocyanation of pentenenitriles to produce adiponitrile, an important intermediate in the production of nylon. It is further known that bidentate phosphite and phosphinite ligands can be used to form nickel-based catalysts to perform such hydrocyanation reactions.

US Patent No. 3,773,809 describes a process for the recovery of Ni complexes of organic phosphites from a product fluid containing organic nitriles produced by hydrocyanating an ethylenically unsaturated organic mononitrile such as 3-pentenenitrile through extraction of the product fluid with a paraffin or cycloparaffin hydrocarbon solvent. It describes that the ratio of mononitrile to dinitrile must be 0.65 or less to obtain effective recovery, with efficiency improving as the ratio is reduced. Therefore, when hydrocyanation reaction conditions produces a mononitrile to dinitrile ratio greater than 0.65, mononitrile must be removed from the product mixture before extraction is performed.

In contrast to the recovery of catalyst comprising monodentate phosphites and Ni, we have observed that Lewis acids utilized as promoters in the hydrocyanation reaction inhibit the effective recovery of diphosphite-nickel catalysts. It is therefore desirable to find conditions underwhich this inhibiting effect is reduced or eliminated.

There is a desire to provide better methods for recovering Ni diphosphite complexes in such a manner that minimal equipment and additional extraction solvent is required.

It is another object of this invention to be able to recover the
5 complexes and operate the extraction in such a way that there is a broad composition range of the reactor product from which the catalyst is to be recovered. A further object of the invention is to delineate operating conditions whereby economical recovery of the catalyst is feasible.

Further objects, features, and advantages of the invention will
10 become apparent from the detailed description that follows.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Disclosed herein is a process for recovering diphosphite-containing compounds from a mixture comprising diphosphite-containing compounds and organic mononitriles and organic dinitriles, using liquid-liquid
15 extraction, wherein the molar ratio of organic mononitrile present to organic dinitrile is from about 0.65 to about 2.5 and wherein the extraction solvent is a saturated or unsaturated alkane or saturated or unsaturated cycloalkane.

Also disclosed is a process for recovering diphosphite-containing
20 compounds from a mixture comprising diphosphite-containing compounds and organic dinitriles and Lewis acid, using liquid-liquid extraction, wherein the molar ratio of organic mononitrile present to organic dinitrile is from about 0.01 to about 2.5 and wherein the mixture is treated with a Lewis base compound selected from the group consisting of monodentate
25 phosphite ligand, alcohol, water, organoamines, ammonia, and basic resin, and wherein the extraction solvent is a saturated or unsaturated alkane or saturated or unsaturated cycloalkane.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

The processes of the present invention involve methods for
30 recovering diphosphite-containing compounds from a mixture comprising diphosphite-containing compounds and organic dinitriles, using liquid-liquid extraction. We have discovered that catalysts comprising diphosphite complexes of Ni allow recovery via liquid-liquid extraction to occur at a higher ratio of organic mono-nitrile to organic dinitrile than

described in US Patent 3,773,809. Though extraction efficiency is still maximized as the mononitrile to dinitrile ratio is reduced, we have successfully demonstrated catalyst recovery at mononitrile to dinitrile ratios as high as 2.3, which is significantly higher than that reported in US 3,773,809. Consequently, under hydrocyanation reaction conditions that produce mononitrile to dinitrile ratios of greater than 0.65, the unreacted mononitriles do not have to be removed before extraction in order to recover the catalyst, resulting in a processing advantage. The preferred mononitrile to dinitrile ratio range is 0.01 to 2.5. The most preferred range is 0.01 to 1.5.

We have also discovered that the inhibiting effect of Lewis acids on the recovery of diphosphite-nickel catalysts via liquid-liquid extraction is reduced by increasing the temperature during extraction. Maximum temperature is limited by the volatility of the hydrocarbon solvent utilized, but we have found recovery improves as the temperature is increased. The preferred operating range is 40°C to 100°C. The most preferred range is 50°C to 80°C.

We have also discovered that inhibiting effect of Lewis acids on the recovery of diphosphite-nickel catalysts via liquid-liquid extraction is reduced by introducing Lewis base compounds to the catalyst-containing mixture which apparently bind either to the nickel catalyst or to the Lewis acid and disrupt the association of the Lewis acid with the catalyst. We have found that introducing monodentate phosphites to the catalyst mixture can improve the extraction recovery. If the size of these monodentate phosphites become large, this effect is reduced. Some of the monophosphite ligands that are useful as an extraction enhancement treatment are those which are disclosed in Drinkard et al US 3,496,215, US 3,496,217, US 3,496,218, US 5,543,536, and BASF WO 01/36429.

We have found that the addition of weakly Lewis basic compounds, such as water or alcohols, or more strongly Lewis basic compounds such as ammonia, aryl- or alkyl amines, such as pyridine or triethylamine, or basic resins such as Amberlyst 21[®], a commercially available basic resin made by Rohm and Haas, can reduce or eliminate the inhibiting effect of

Lewis acid on catalyst recovery.

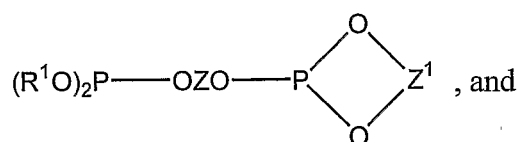
The process may be carried out for the recovery of various bidentate phosphorus-containing ligands and nickel complex catalysts thereof.

- 5 Suitable ligands for the present invention are bidentate phosphorous-containing ligands selected from the group consisting of bidentate phosphites, and bidentate phosphinites. Preferred ligands are bidentate phosphite ligands.

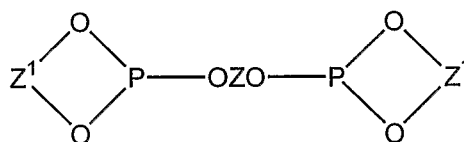
10 The preferred bidentate phosphite ligands are of the following structural formulae:



I



II

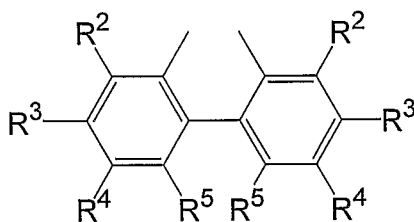


III

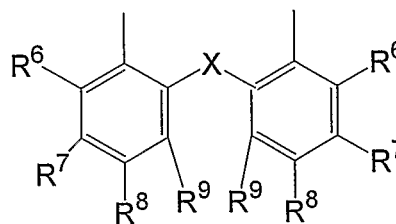
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wherein in I, II and III R^1 is phenyl, unsubstituted or substituted with one or more C_1 to C_{12} alkyl or C_1 to C_{12} alkoxy groups; or naphthyl, unsubstituted or substituted with one or more C_1 to C_{12} alkyl or C_1 to C_{12} alkoxy groups; and Z and Z^1 are independently selected from the group consisting of structural formulae IV, V, VI, VII, and VIII:

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IV



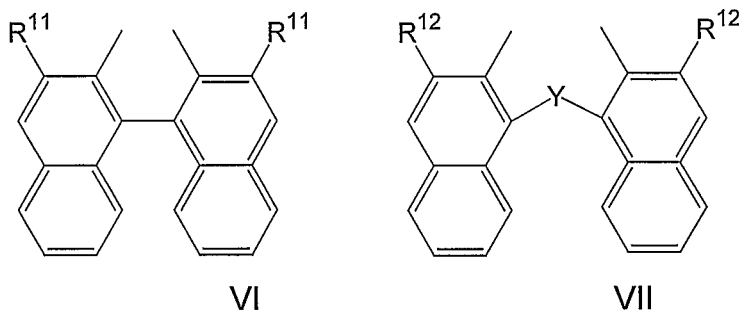
V

25 and wherein

$R^2, R^3, R^4, R^5, R^6, R^7, R^8$, and R^9 are independently selected from the group consisting of H, C_1 to C_{12} alkyl, and C_1 to C_{12} alkoxy; X is O, S, or $CH(R^{10})$;

R^{10} is H or C_1 to C_{12} alkyl;

5



and wherein

R^{11} and R^{12} are independently selected from the group consisting of H, C_1 to C_{12} alkyl, and C_1 to C_{12} alkoxy; and CO_2R^{13} ,

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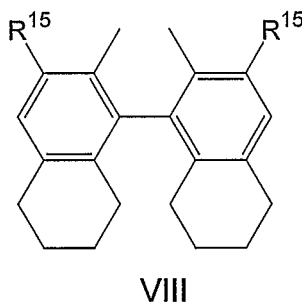
R^{13} is C_1 to C_{12} alkyl or C_6 to C_{10} aryl, unsubstituted or substituted.

with C_1 to C_4 alkyl ;

Y is O, S, or $CH(R^{14})$;

R^{14} is H or C_1 to C_{12} alkyl;

15



wherein R^{15} is selected from the group consisting of H, C_1 to C_{12} alkyl, and C_1 to C_{12} alkoxy and CO_2R^{16} ;

20

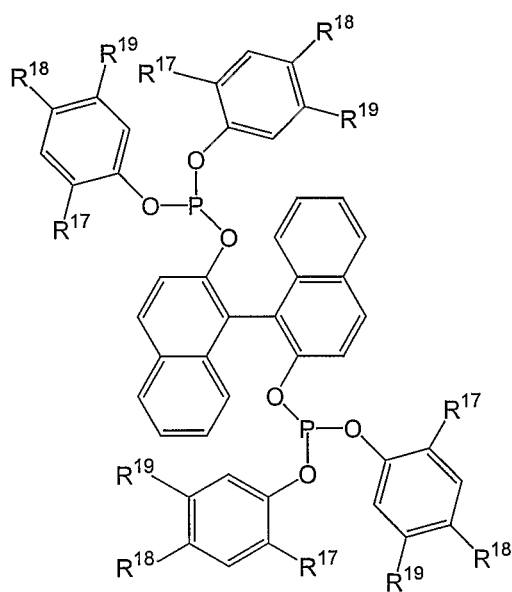
R^{16} is C_1 to C_{12} alkyl or C_6 to C_{10} aryl, unsubstituted or substituted with C_1 to C_4 alkyl.

In the structural formulae I through VIII, the C_1 to C_{12} alkyl, and C_1 to C_{12} alkoxy groups may be straight chain or branched.

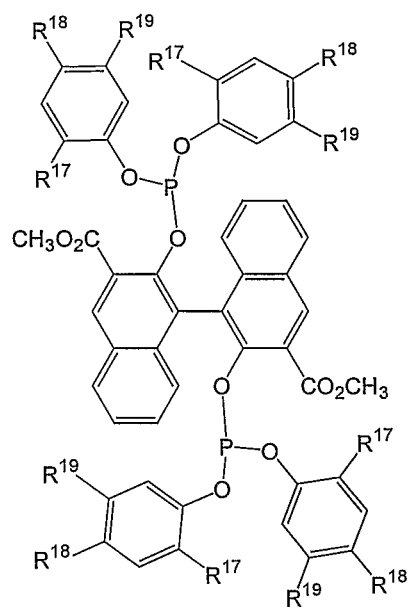
Examples of bidentate phosphite ligands that are useful in the present process include those having the formulae IX to XXXII, shown below wherein for each formula, R^{17} is selected from the group consisting

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of methyl, ethyl or isopropyl, and R^{18} and R^{19} are independently selected from H or methyl:

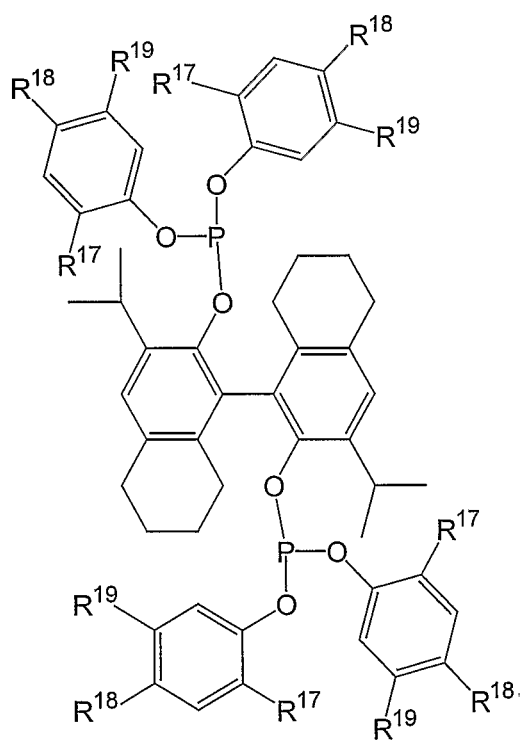


IX

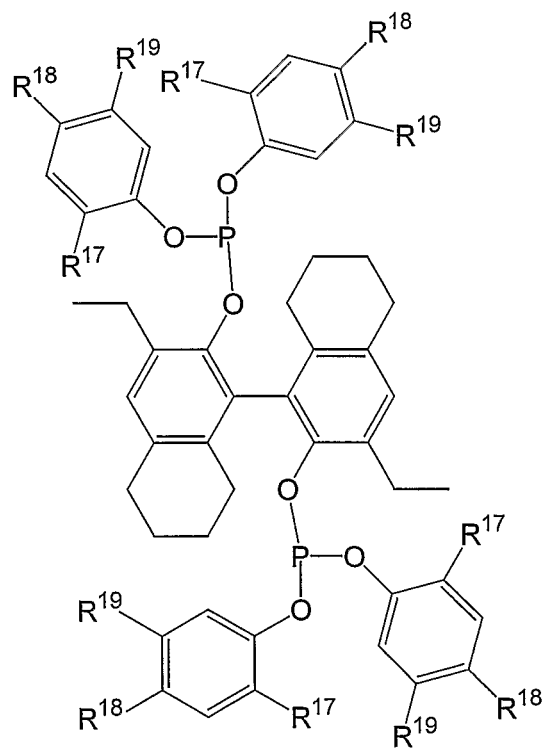


X

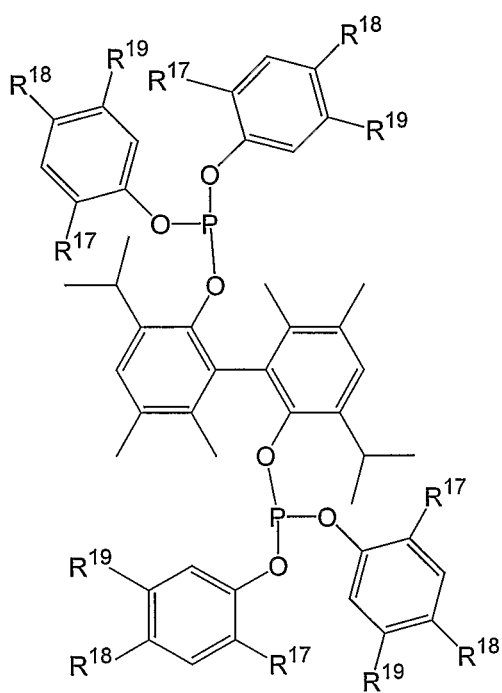
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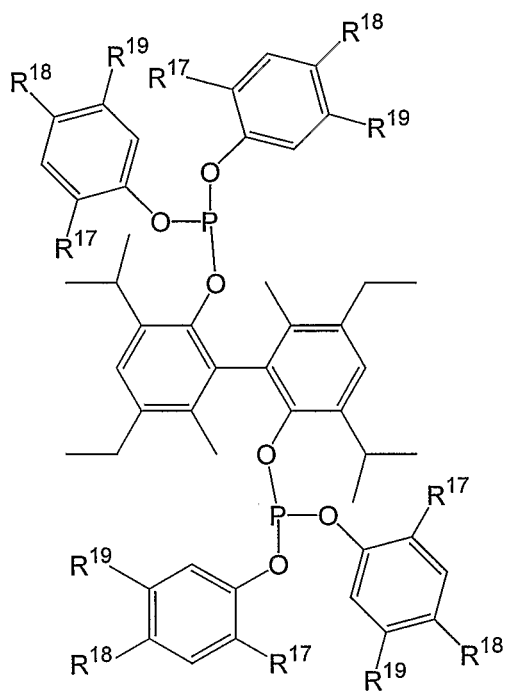
XI



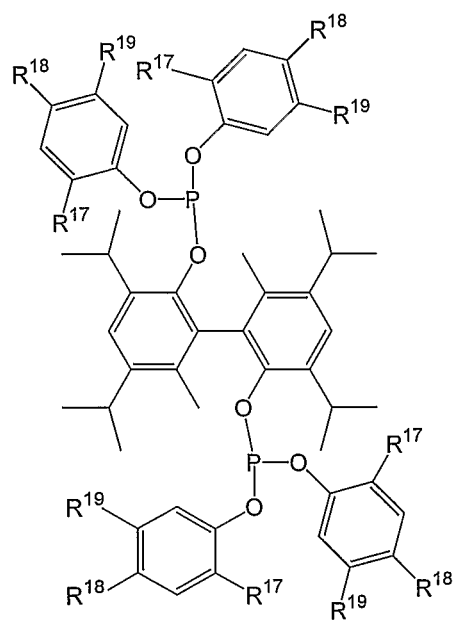
XII



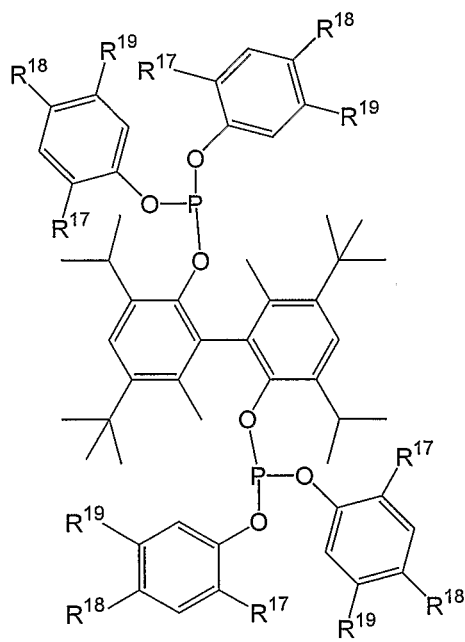
XIII



XIV

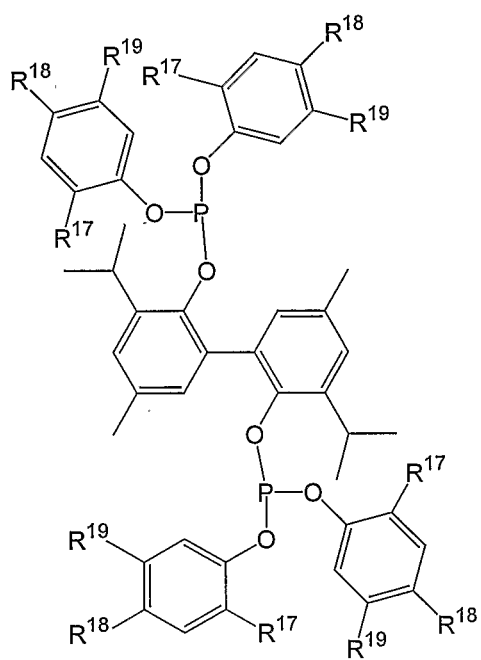


XV

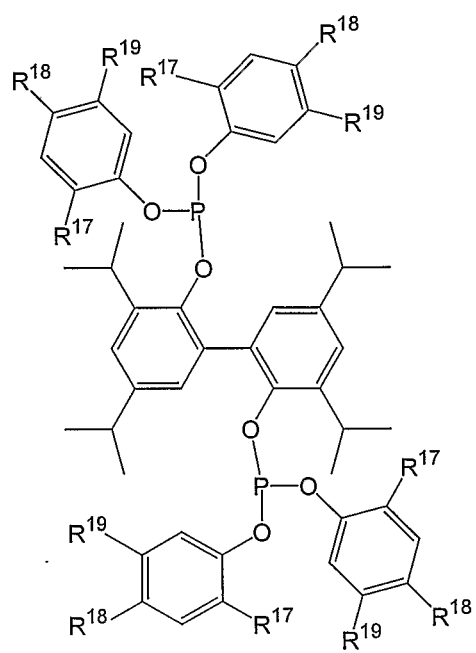


XVI

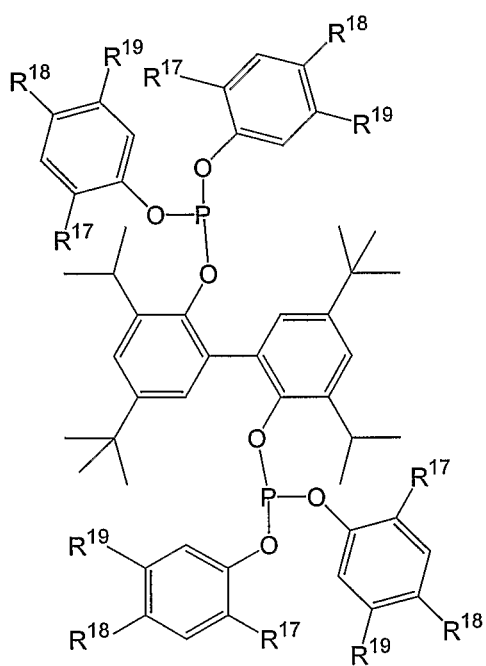
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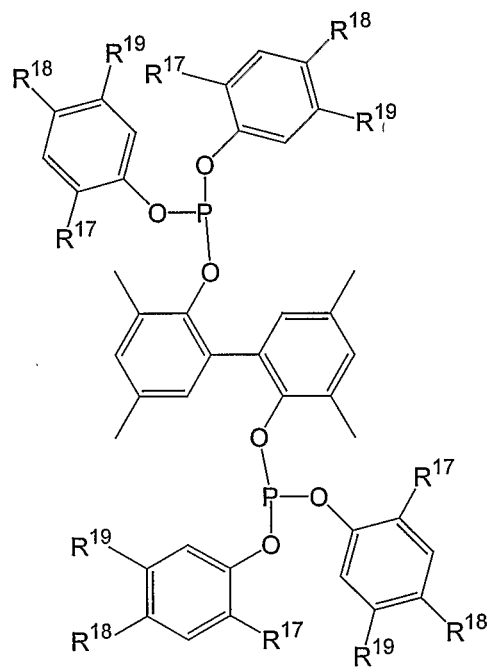
XVII



XVIII

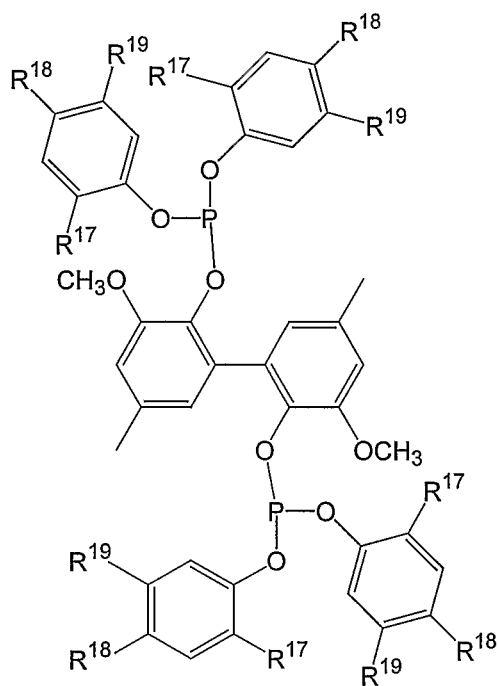


XIX

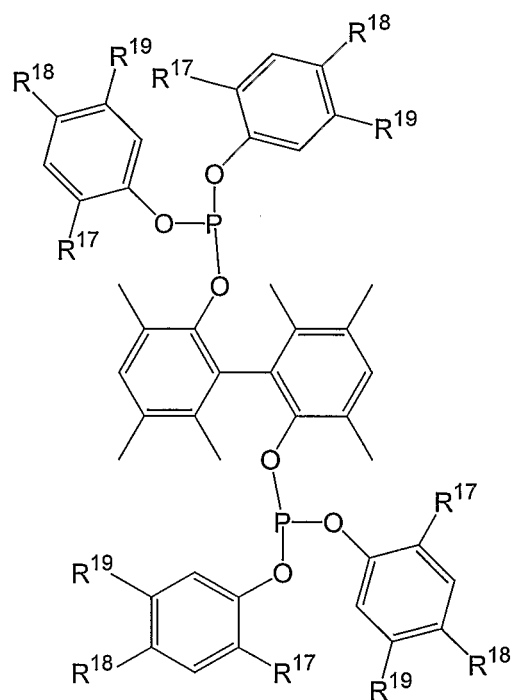


XX

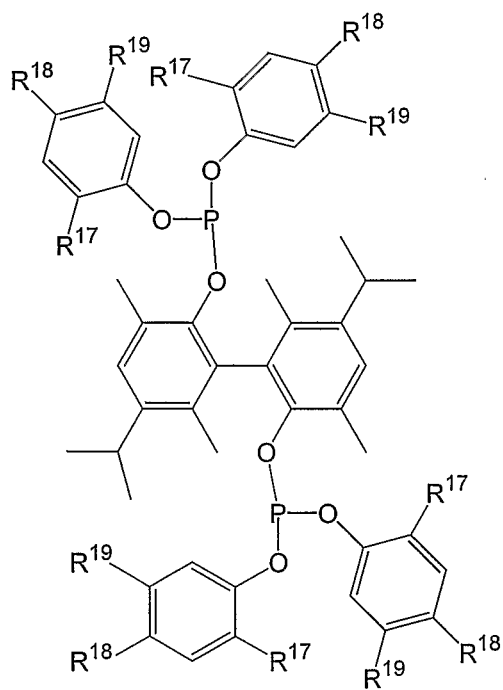
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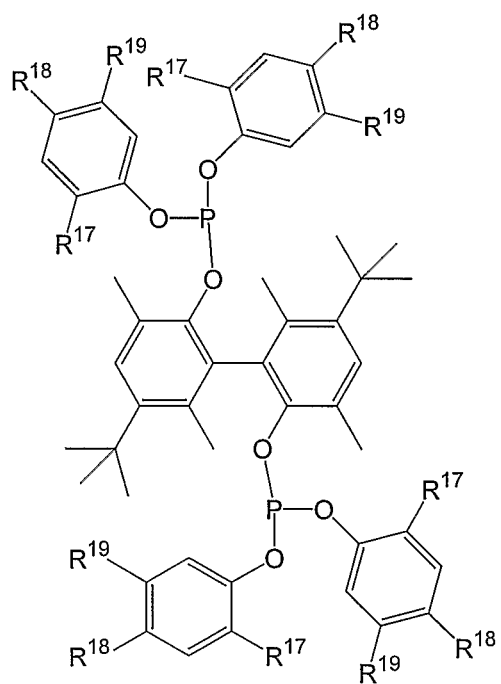
XXI



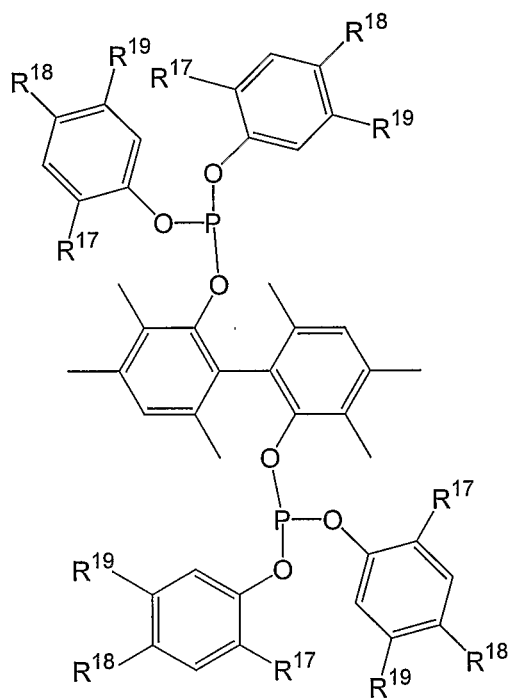
XXII



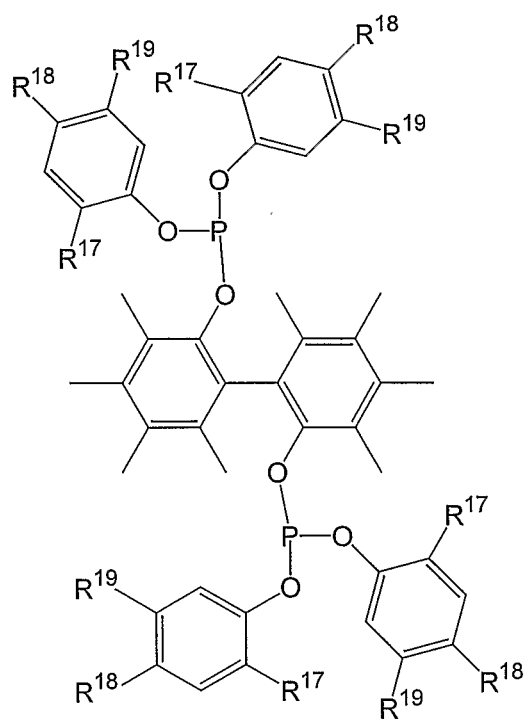
XXIII



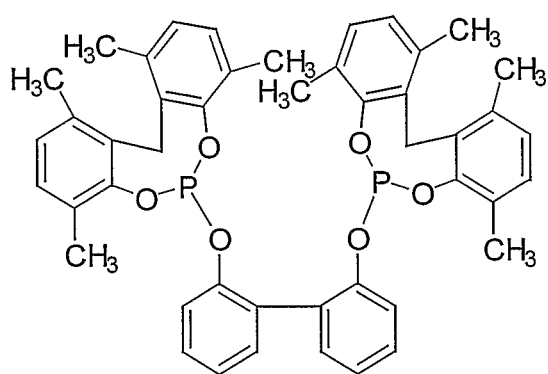
XXIV



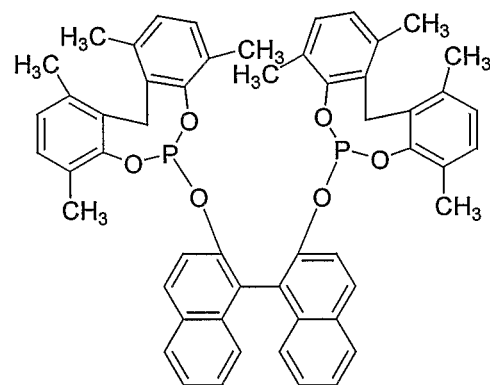
XXV



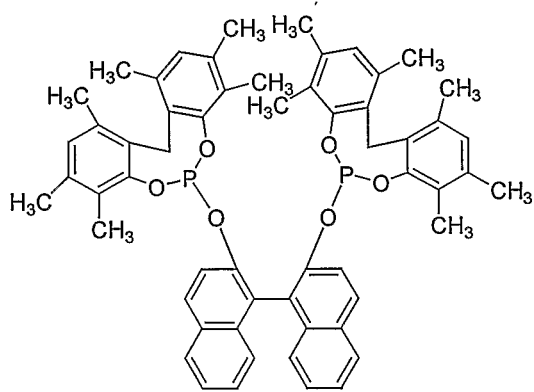
XXVI



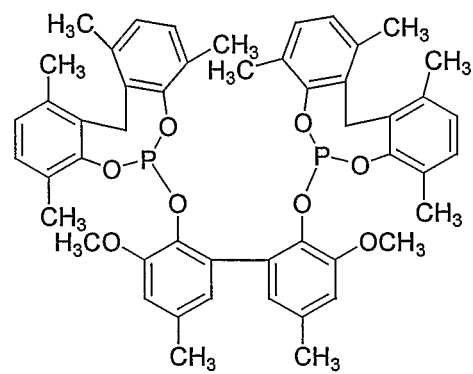
XXVII



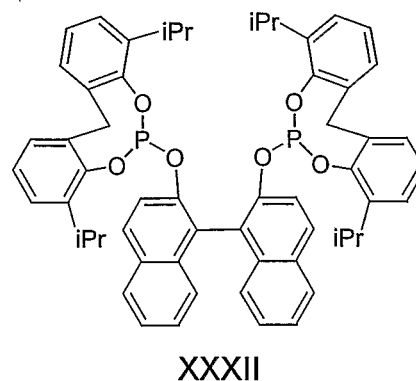
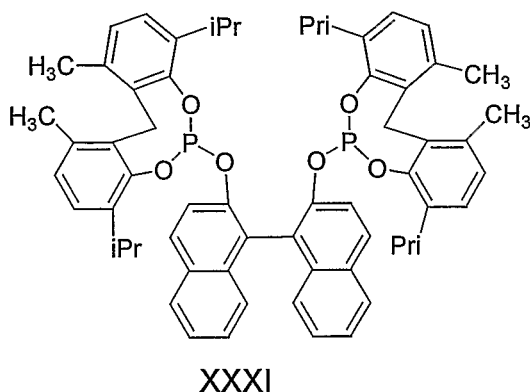
XXVIII



XXIX



XXX



Additional suitable bidentate phosphites are of the type disclosed in
 5 US Patents 5,512,695; 5,512,696; 5,663,369; 5,688,986; 5,723,641;
 5,847,191; 5,959,135; 6,120,700; 6,171,996; 6,171,997; 6,399,534; the
 disclosures of which are incorporated herein by reference. Suitable
 bidentate phosphinites are of the type disclosed in US Patents 5,523,453
 and 5,693,843, the disclosures of which are incorporated herein by
 10 reference.

With one or a combination of these treatments, it is possible to
 recover the catalyst more efficiently with fewer stages of extraction. This
 is a great benefit in that it adds flexibility to the process and reduces
 process costs. With these treatments, the extraction can be done in a
 15 smaller extraction column, or in simple mixer settlers and/or the extraction
 can be accomplished using far less solvent than previously reported. The
 extraction can be accomplished across a broad range of compositions. To
 be most effective, these treatments should be done before extraction.

The present invention has advantages over prior methods for
 20 recovering of phosphite and diphosphite Ni complexes that are used as
 catalysts. These advantages include the ability to achieve a very high
 fractional recovery; the ability to achieve economical recovery in simple
 equipment, such as mixer-settlers instead of more complicated extraction
 towers; the ability to perform the extraction over a wider range of
 25 hydrocyanation reaction compositions; and the ability to enhance the
 extraction to significantly increase the recoverability of the catalyst in
 various types of extraction-suitable vessels.

The present invention also pertains to an economical method for recovering phosphite and Ni diphosphite complexes from a hydrocyanation reaction product mixture comprised of organic dinitriles using liquid-liquid extraction.

5

EXAMPLES

In the following examples, values for extraction coefficient are the ratio of weight fraction of catalyst in the extract (hydrocarbon phase) versus the weight fraction of catalyst in the raffinate (organonitrile phase). An increase in extraction coefficient results in greater efficiency in

10 recovering catalyst.

Examples 1-5:

These examples illustrate that effective catalyst recovery occurs for a mononitrile to dinitrile ratio greater than 0.65

Five different mixtures comprised of a Ni diphosphite complex, with the diphosphite ligand shown in Structure IX (where R17 is isopropyl, R18 is H, and R19 is methyl), ZnCl₂ (equimolar with Ni) and differing in the ratio or mononitrile to dinitrile, were separately liquid-liquid batch extracted with an equal weight of cyane. The molar ratio of organic mononitrile to organic dinitrile and the resulting extraction coefficients are shown in the Table 1 below. A compound may be effectively recovered if it has an extraction coefficient of 1 or greater at solvent to feed ratios greater than 1 using a countercurrent multistage extractor.

20

Table 1:

**Catalyst and ligand extraction coefficient
for various ratios of mononitriles to dinitriles.**

25

Example	mononitrile/ dinitrile	Catalyst extraction coefficient	ligand extraction coefficient
1	2.33	1.28	4.09
2	1.85	1.33	8.08
3	1.19	2.02	16.97
4	0.91	2.63	35.99
5	0.57	4.82	49.59

Examples 6 and 7 show that increasing temperature allows more effective catalyst recovery at limited holdup time.

Example 6:

- 5 Effect of temperature on the extractability of the diphosphite ligand catalyst

A mixture comprised predominantly of organic dinitriles and a Ni diphosphite complex, the structure of the diphosphite ligand being shown in Structure IX (where R17 is isopropyl, R18 is H, and R19 is methyl) and ZnCl₂ (equimolar with Ni) was divided into two portions. One portion was
 10 batch liquid-liquid extracted at 40°C, and the other at 50°C, with an equal weight of cyclohexane. Both portions were sampled with time and the progress of the catalyst recovery into the extract phase is shown in Table 2 as the percent of the final steady state value achieved at a given time.

15 **Table 2: Concentration of Diphosphite ligand with time in the extracting solvent phase.**

Time, minutes	% of steady state concentration at 40°C	% of steady state concentration at 50°C
2	12	11
4	19	38
8	34	53
14	52	95
30	78	104
60	100	102
91	100	100

Example 7: Effect of temperature on the extractability on catalyst

A mixture comprised predominantly of organic dinitriles and a Ni
 20 diphosphite complex, the structure of the diphosphite ligand being shown in Structure XIII (where R17 is methyl, R18 is methyl and R19 is H) and ZnCl₂ (equimolar with Ni) was divided into three portions. The portions were batch liquid-liquid extracted at 50°C, 65°C and 80°C, respectively,

with an equal weight of n-octane and monitored with time. The results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Time	% of steady state at 50°C	% of steady state at 65°C	% of steady state at 80°C
2	0.0	0.0	1.8
4	0.0	0.0	1.6
8	0.0	0.0	3.6
14	0.0	0.0	4.3
20	0.0	0.0	3.6
30	0.0	0.0	7.6
60	0.0	1.6	16.3
90	0.7	4.0	48.6

5 **Example 8: Effect of adding water**

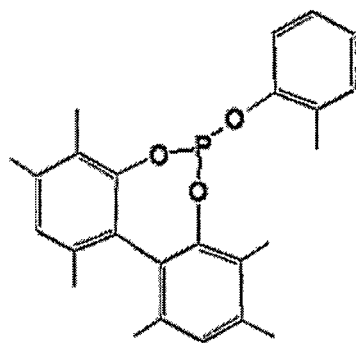
Fifteen grams of a mixture comprised predominantly of organic dinitriles and a Ni diphosphite complex, the structure of the diphosphite ligand being shown in Structure XIII (where R17 is methyl, R18 is methyl and R19 is H) and ZnCl₂ (equimolar with Ni), was batch liquid-liquid
 10 extracted at a temperature of 50°C with an equal weight of cyclohexane for one hour resulting in an catalyst extraction coefficient of 4.3. To this mixture, 100 microliters of water was added. After continuing to heat and agitate for another hour, the diphosphite Ni extraction coefficient was measured as 13.4 – a three fold increase.

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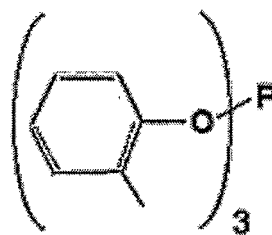
Examples 9-20: Effect of addition of organic monophosphite compounds

Examples 9 –20 illustrate the beneficial impact on catalyst recovery of adding a monophosphite to the catalyst mixture. They utilize a common
 20 experimental protocol as follows: A mixture comprised pentenenitrile and adiponitrile (in a ratio of 0.3) and a Ni diphosphite complex (2-5 wt%) and ZnCl₂ (equimolar with Ni) and very small amounts (<0.3 wt%) of monophosphites (present as side products of the ligand synthesis) was

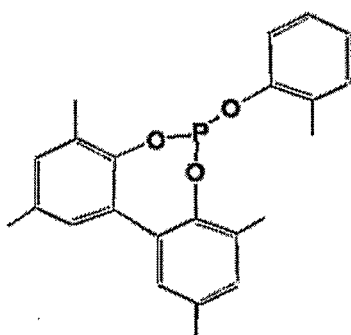
divided into three portions. Different monophosphites were added to the second and third portion in each example as shown in Table 4 to bring the monophosphite concentration up to 5wt%. Each portion was batch extracted with an equal weight of cyclohexane at 50°C for 30 minutes and then allowed to cool to 25°C for one hour and sampled at room temperature. The measured catalyst extraction coefficients are shown in Table 4.



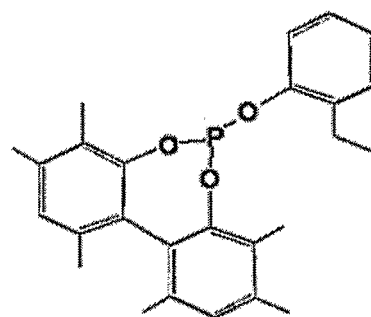
XXXIII



XXXIV

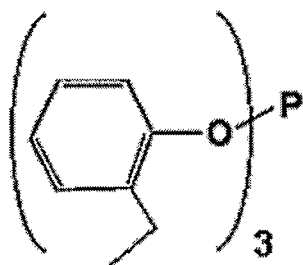


XXXV

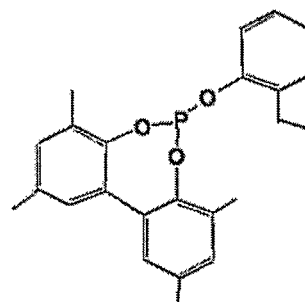


XXXVI

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XXXVII



XXXVIII

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Table 4 – Effect of Monophosphite additives

Example	Ligand	R ¹⁷	R ¹⁸	R ¹⁹	Additive	Extraction coefficient
9	XXV	methyl	H	H	none	0.9
10	XXV	methyl	H	H	XXXIII	9.2
11	XXV	methyl	H	H	XXXIV	12.8
12	XX	methyl	H	H	none	0.3
13	XX	methyl	H	H	XXXV	2.4
14	XX	methyl	H	H	XXXIV	3.9
15	XXV	ethyl	H	H	none	4.7
16	XXV	ethyl	H	H	XXXVI	>10
17	XXV	ethyl	H	H	XXXVII	>10
18	XX	ethyl	H	H	none	1.6
19	XX	ethyl	H	H	XXXVII	2.9
20	XX	ethyl	H	H	XXXVIII	7

- 5 **Examples 21 - 32** show that treatment of catalyst containing solutions with anhydrous ammonia, an amine resin or a soluble organic amine, improves the extraction efficiency.

Example 21:

- 10 A mixture comprising predominantly of organic dinitriles and a Ni diphosphite complex, with the diphosphite ligand shown in Structure IX (where R¹⁷ is isopropyl, R¹⁸ is H, and R¹⁹ is methyl) and ZnCl₂ (equimolar with nickel) was divided into two portions. One portion was treated with excess ammonia by bubbling anhydrous ammonia through the mixture and the other portion was untreated for comparison. Both ammonia-treated and untreated portions were separately liquid-liquid extracted using cyclohexane in a Karr type column. Catalyst recovery was complete for the ammonia-treated mixture but only 76% recovery was found from the untreated mixture.

Example 22:

A mixture comprised predominantly of organic dinitriles and a Ni diphosphite complex, with the diphosphite ligand shown in Structure IX (where R17 is isopropyl, R18 is H, and R19 is methyl) and ZnCl₂ (equimolar with nickel) was divided into two portions. One portion was treated by contacting with an equal weight of Amberlyst 21 resin, and the other portion was untreated for comparison. Both resin-treated and untreated portions were separately liquid-liquid batch extracted with an equal weight of cyclohexane. Catalyst recovery was essentially complete for the resin-treated mixture but only 77% recovery was found from the untreated mixture.

Example 23:

A mixture comprised predominantly of organic dinitriles and a Ni diphosphite complex, the structure of the diphosphite ligand being shown in Structure XXII (where R17 is methyl, R18 is methyl and R19 is H), and ZnCl₂ (equimolar with nickel) was divided into two portions. One portion was treated by contacting with an equal weight of Amberlyst 21 resin, and the other portion was untreated for comparison. Both resin-treated and untreated portions were separately liquid-liquid batch extracted with an equal weight of cyclohexane. Catalyst recovery was 91% for the resin-treated mixture but only 45% recovery was found from the untreated mixture.

Examples 24 –35 use the following common protocol:

Catalyst mixtures derived from pentenenitrile hydrocyanation comprised of pentenenitrile and dinitriles (predominantly adiponitrile) in a ratio of about 0.3, a Ni diphosphite catalyst (1.5 wt%), and ZnCl₂ (about 0.25 wt%) were divided into three portions and the second and third portion treated either with Amberlyst A-21 resin (1 volume of the Amberlyst A-21[®] resin to 2 volumes of dinitrile solution), or pyridine and heated at 50°C. An equal weight of cyclohexane was added to each portion, heated

to 50°C and agitated vigorously, and then allowed to settle at 50°C for about 30 minutes. Samples were carefully withdrawn from top and bottom liquid phases. The top phase being the solvent or extract phase, the bottom being the raffinate phase. Analysis was done for all samples. The results are shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Treatment with Amberlyst 21[®] or Pyridine

Example	Ligand	R ¹⁷	R ¹⁸	R ¹⁹	Additive	Amount wt%	Extraction coefficient
24	XXIV	methyl	H	H	none		0.2
25	XXIV	methyl	H	H	Amberlyst 21 [®]		31
26	XXIV	methyl	H	H	pyridine	9	29
27	XIII	methyl	H	H	none		0.6
28	XIII	methyl	H	H	Amberlyst 21 [®]		12
29	XIII	methyl	H	H	pyridine	5	100
30	XV	methyl	H	H	none		0.4
31	XV	methyl	H	H	Amberlyst 21 [®]		26
32	XV	methyl	H	H	pyridine	3	74
33	XVII	methyl	H	H	none		0.6
34	XVII	methyl	H	H	Amberlyst 21 [®]		7.4
35	XVII	methyl	H	H	pyridine	4	10

Example 36 – 43 use the same common protocol for treatment with anhydrous NH₃.

Catalyst mixtures derived from pentenenitrile hydrocyanation comprised of entenenitrile and dinitriles (predominantly adiponitrile) in a ratio of about 0.3, a Ni diphosphite catalyst (1-1.5 wt%), and ZnCl₂ (about 0.2 wt%) were divided into two portions. One portion was left untreated. The second portion was treated by bubbling NH₃ through the solution for 10 minutes, followed by nitrogen to remove any unreacted NH₃. An equal weight of cyclohexane was added to each portion and agitated vigorously at room temperature, and then allowed to settle. Samples were carefully withdrawn from top and bottom liquid phases. The top phase being the solvent or extract phase, the bottom being the raffinate phase. Analysis was done for all samples. The results are shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Treatment with ammonia

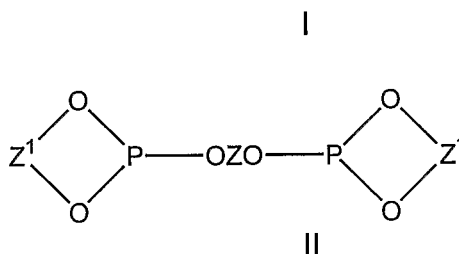
Example	Ligand	R17	R18	R19	Extract coeff. No treatment	Extract coeff. NH3 Treatment
36	XIII	methyl	H	H	0.6	9
37	XVI	methyl	H	H	1.3	133
38	XV	methyl	H	H	0.4	55
39	XI	methyl	H	H	2	7.8
40	XIX	methyl	H	H	<~0.1	9.7
41	XVIII	methyl	H	H	1	21
42	XIII	ethyl	H	H	1.2	21
43	XIII	**	**	**	0.9	35

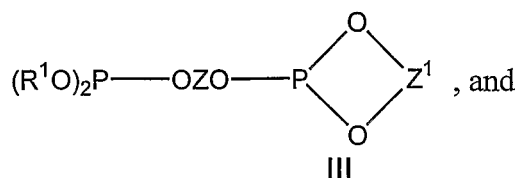
**1/3 of R17, R18 and R19 were methyl, the other 2/3 were H. This was
 5 done in such a way that only one of the R17, R18 or R19 was methyl for a
 given aromatic ring.

CLAIMS

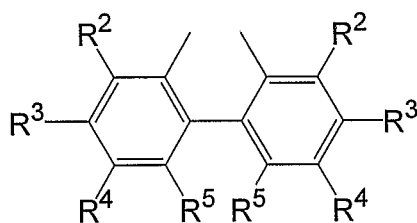
What is claimed:

1. A process for recovering diphosphite-containing compounds
 5 from a mixture comprising diphosphite-containing compounds and organic mononitriles and organic dinitriles, using liquid-liquid extraction, wherein the molar ratio of organic mononitrile present to organic dinitrile is from about 0.65 to about 2.5 and wherein the extraction solvent is a saturated or unsaturated alkane or saturated or unsaturated cycloalkane.
- 10 2. A process according to claim 1 wherein the molar ratio of organic mononitrile to organic dinitrile is from about 1.0 to about 1.5.
3. A process for recovering diphosphite-containing compounds
 15 from a mixture comprising diphosphite-containing compounds and organic dinitriles and Lewis acid, using liquid-liquid extraction, wherein the molar ratio of organic mononitrile present to organic dinitrile is from about 0.01 to about 2.5 and wherein the mixture is treated with a Lewis base compound selected from the group consisting of monodentate phosphite ligand,
 20 alcohol, water, organoamines, ammonia, and basic resin, and wherein the extraction solvent is a saturated or unsaturated alkane or saturated or unsaturated cycloalkane.
4. A process according to claims 1, 2 or 3 wherein the
 25 diphosphite-containing compound is a Ni complex with a diphosphite ligand selected from the group consisting of: $(R^1O)_2P(OZO)P(OR^1)_2$,

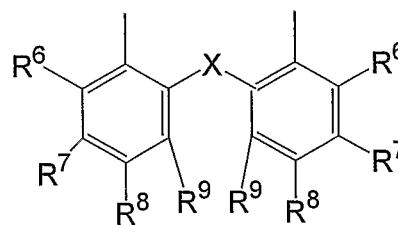




wherein in I, II and III R^1 is phenyl, unsubstituted or substituted with one or more C_1 to C_{12} alkyl or C_1 to C_{12} alkoxy groups; or naphthyl,
 5 unsubstituted or substituted with one or more C_1 to C_{12} alkyl or C_1 to C_{12} alkoxy groups; and wherein Z and Z^1 are independently selected from the group consisting of structural formulae IV, V, VI, VII, and VIII:



IV

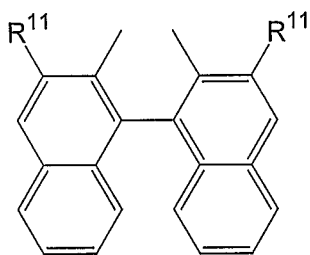


V

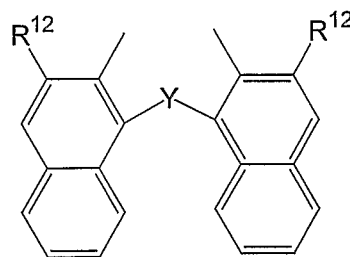
and wherein

$R^2, R^3, R^4, R^5, R^6, R^7, R^8,$ and R^9 are independently selected from the group consisting of H, C_1 to C_{12} alkyl, and C_1 to C_{12} alkoxy;
 15 X is O, S, or $CH(R^{10})$;

R^{10} is H or C_1 to C_{12} alkyl;



VI



VII

and wherein

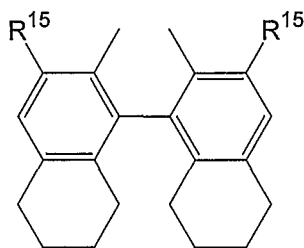
R^{11} and R^{12} are independently selected from the group consisting of H, C_1 to C_{12} alkyl, and C_1 to C_{12} alkoxy and CO_2R^{13} ,

R^{13} is C_1 to C_{12} alkyl, or C_6 to C_{10} aryl unsubstituted or substituted with C_1 to C_4 alkyl;

Y is O, S, or $CH(R^{14})$;

R^{14} is H or C_1 to C_{12} alkyl;

5



VIII

wherein R^{15} is selected from the group consisting of H, C_1 to C_{12} alkyl, and C_1 to C_{12} alkoxy and CO_2R^{16} ,

10 R^{16} is C_1 to C_{12} alkyl, or C_6 to C_{10} aryl, unsubstituted or substituted with C_1 to C_4 alkyl, and wherein for structural formulae I through VIII, the C_1 to C_{12} alkyl, and C_1 to C_{12} alkoxy groups may be straight chain or branched.

15 5. A process according to claims 1, 2 or 3 wherein the extraction is carried out above 40°C .

6. A process according to claim 3 wherein the Lewis base compound is selected from the group consisting of water, methanol,
20 ethanol, isopropanol, ethylene glycol, phenol, cresol, or xyleneol.

7. A process according to claim 3, wherein the Lewis base compound is a monodentate triarylphosphite wherein the aryl groups are unsubstituted or substituted with alkyl groups having 1 to 12 carbon
25 atoms, and wherein the aryl groups may be interconnected.

8. A process according to claim 3 wherein the Lewis base compound is selected from the group consisting of anhydrous ammonia, pyridine, alkylamine, dialkylamine, and trialkylamine wherein the alkyl
30 groups have 1 to 12 carbon atoms.

9. A process according to claim 3 wherein the Lewis base compound is Amberlyst 21[®] resin.

5 10. A process according to claims 1, 2 or 3 wherein the extraction solvent is cyclohexane.

11. A process according to claims 1, 2 or 3 wherein said process is carried out in an extraction column or a mixer-settler.

10

12. A process according to claims 1, 2 or 3 wherein said process is used in a hydrocyanation process.