

the polymerization of the adsorbed product to the coke precursor is decreased. This can be confirmed by the thermogravimetric analysis that the percent weight loss of coke over H-Beta was decreased when water was added in the solvent (Figure 2.32).

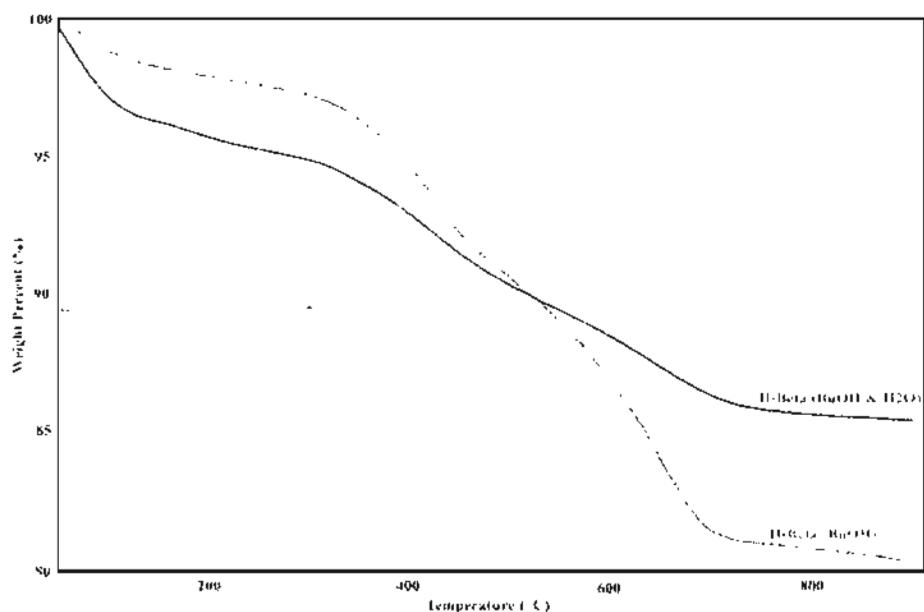


Figure 2.32 Thermogravimetric analysis of H-Beta in the reaction using butanol and water added in butanol as solvent

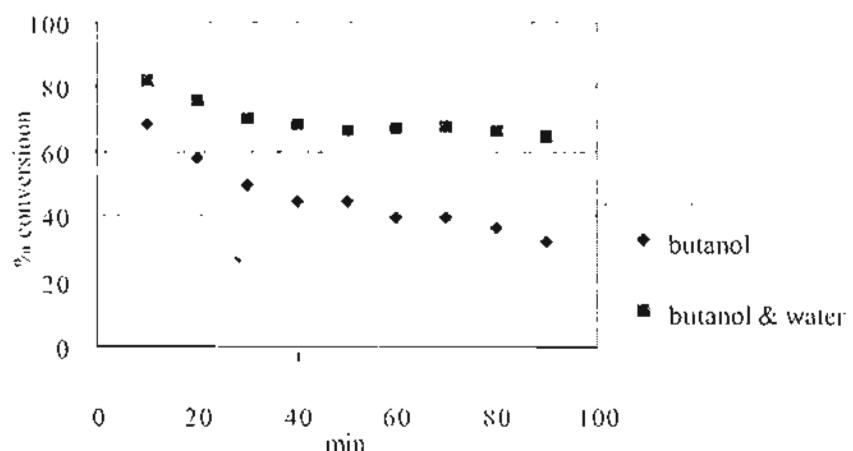


Figure 2.33 Effect of water added in solvent on the conversion of cyclohexanone oxime over Dealuminated Beta

Reaction condition; temperature: 350°C, pressure: 1 atm, diluent: butanol, butanol : water: 1:53 molar ratio, carrier gas: N₂, time on stream: 90 min, contact time: 13.6 g_{cat} h mol⁻¹ oxime

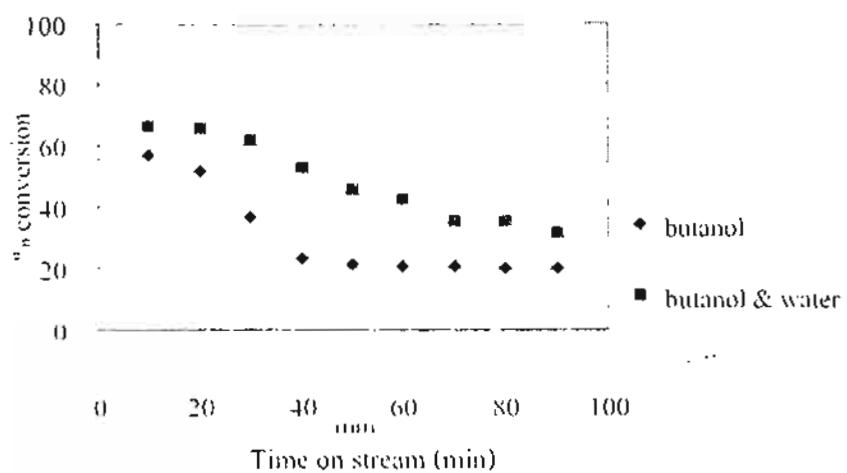


Figure 2.34 Effect of water added in solvent on the conversion of cyclohexanone oxime over Ti-Beta

Reaction condition: temperature, 350°C, pressure, 1 atm, diluent: butanol, butanol + water, 1.53 molar ratio, carrier gas, N_2 , time on stream, 90 min, contact time, 13.6 g_{catalyst} h mol⁻¹ cyclohexanone

In the case of dealuminated Beta and Ti-Beta it was found that the conversion of cyclohexanone oxime was also increased with water added in butanol (Figure 2.33 and Figure 2.34). It seems that the effect of water co-feeding for dealuminated Beta and Ti-Beta are in a similar manner as H-Beta. The increased polarity of the solvent can facilitate the desorption of product from the active sites for all zeolite catalysts. However, the conversion of cyclohexanone oxime is in the order of H-Beta, Dealuminated Beta and Ti-Beta, respectively.

2.3.5.2 Deactivation rate of catalyst

In the case of H-Beta, the deactivation rate was decreased with water added in the butanol (Figure 2.31). This is because the higher polarity solvent can facilitate the desorption of product from the active sites. Consequently, polymerized product over the active sites is decreased leading to a decrease coke formation. In the case of Dealuminated Beta and Ti-Beta, it was found that the deactivation rate was also decreased with water addition (Figure 2.32 and Figure 2.33). It was suggested that the effect of water added in butanol on Dealuminated Beta and Ti-Beta are in a similar manner as H-Beta. This is consistent with the thermogravimetric analysis of those catalyst that percent weight loss decreases with butanol/water as solvent in the reaction (Table 2.4).

Table 2.4 Percent weight loss of the butanol and butanol/water as solvent

	H-Beta	Dealuminated Beta	Ti-Beta
Butanol	16.84	14.13	12.03
Butanol-Water	10.53	13.60	10.65

However when water is added in butanol as solvent the deactivation rate is in the order of Ti-Beta, Dealuminated Beta and H-Beta. This is because water, which possesses nucleophilicity can be strongly adsorbed on the Brønsted acid sites within H-Beta which possess electrophilicity. This facilitates the desorption of the adsorbed products, as compared to in the case of dealuminated Beta, which possesses silanol as active sites. In the case of Ti-Beta the cyclohexanone oxime can be strongly adsorbed on titanium sites in framework. Therefore, water added in butanol on H-Beta, can result in marked increase in catalyst activity, as compared to Dealuminated Beta and Ti-Beta.

2.3.5.3 Selectivity of caprolactam

In H-Beta, it was found that the selectivity of caprolactam was increased when the reaction using water as a co-feeding (Figure 2.35).

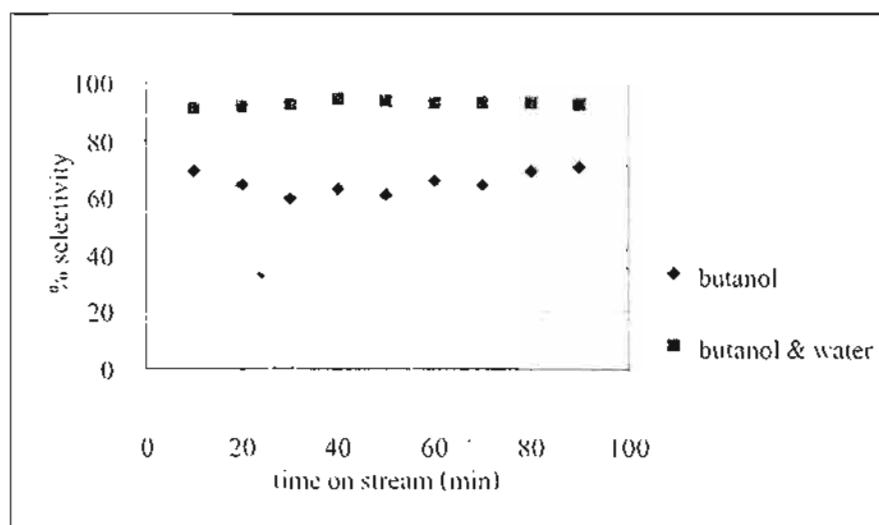
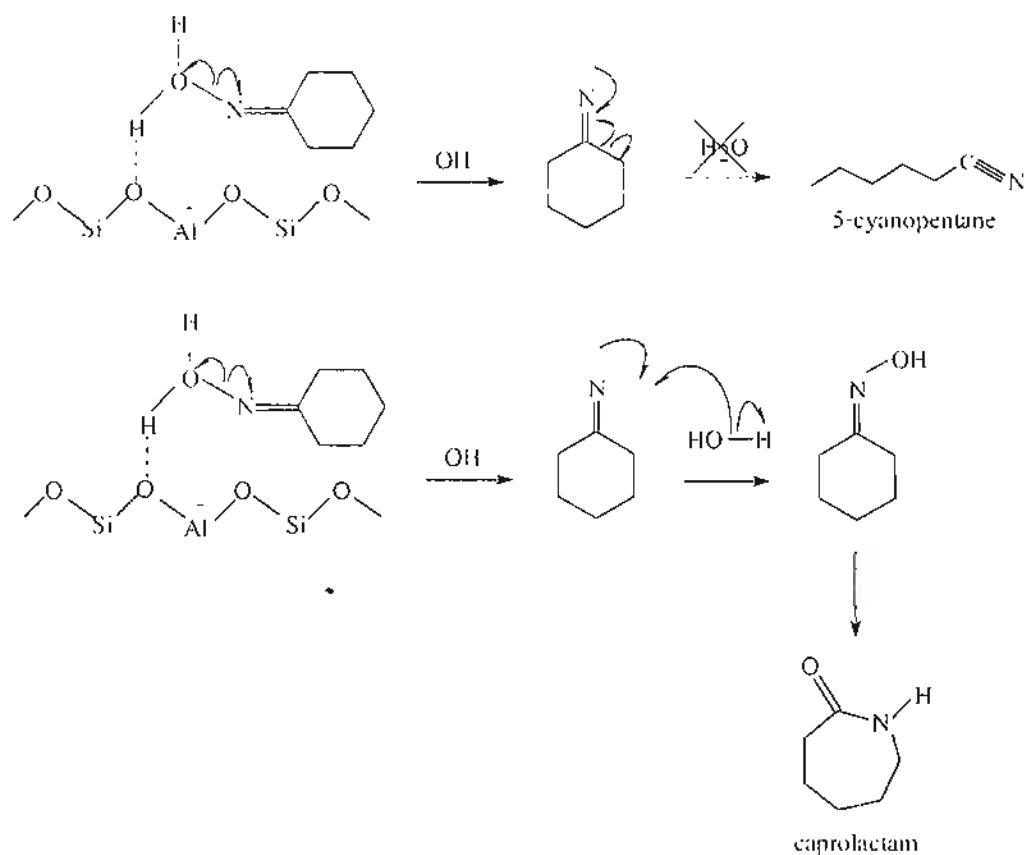


Figure 2.35 Effect of water added in solvent on the selectivity of caprolactam over H-Beta

Reaction condition: temperature: 350°C, pressure: 1 atm, diluent: butanol, butanol : water: 1:53 molar ratio, carrier gas: N₂, time on stream: 90 min, contact time: 13.6 g_{catalyst} h mol⁻¹ caprolactam

This is because the polarity of solvent was rised, desorption of product from active sites was increased. This leads to a decrease in the rate of side-reaction, namely polymerization of the adsorbed product on the active sites. Moreover it was found that the selectivity of 5-cyano-1-pentene was drastically decreased when the water was added in solvent (Figure 2.36).

In the presence of water as co-feeding, 5-cyanopentane, which is formed by the cyclohexanone oxime oxidation, was not observed. This is because water can reduce the intermediate, which is formed during the oxidation process. The reaction pathway for the inhibition of 5-cyanopentane formation is proposed follows:



However, small amount of 5-cyano-1-pentene can be formed and it can undergo cyclization and the cyclised product can be readily hydrolyzed to form cyclohexenone in the presence of water as co-feeding (as earlier discussion in section 2.3.3.3). Moreover, the

hydrolyzed products, namely cyclohexanone and cyclohexenone formed by hydrolysis of cyclohexanone oxime and 5-cyano-1-pentene can still be observed in the reaction using water as co-feeding.

In the case of Dealuminated Beta and Ti-Beta the selectivity of caprolactam was increased when water was added in butanol (Figure 2.37 and Figure 2.38). The effect of water added for Dealuminated Beta and Ti-Beta are in a similar manner as H-Beta.

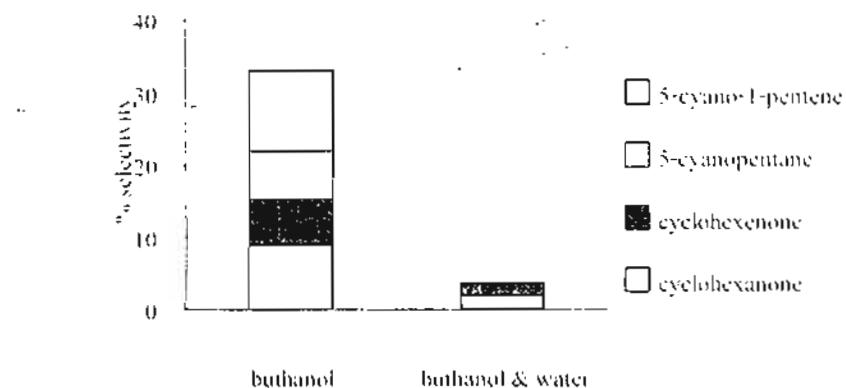


Figure 2.36 Effect of water added in solvent on the selectivity of by-product over H-Beta

Reaction condition: temperature: 350°C, pressure: 1 atm, diluent: butanol, butanol : water: 1:53 molar ratio, carrier gas: N₂, average time on stream: 10-90 min, contact time: 13.6 g_{cat}·h/mol^{1/2}_{cat,cat}

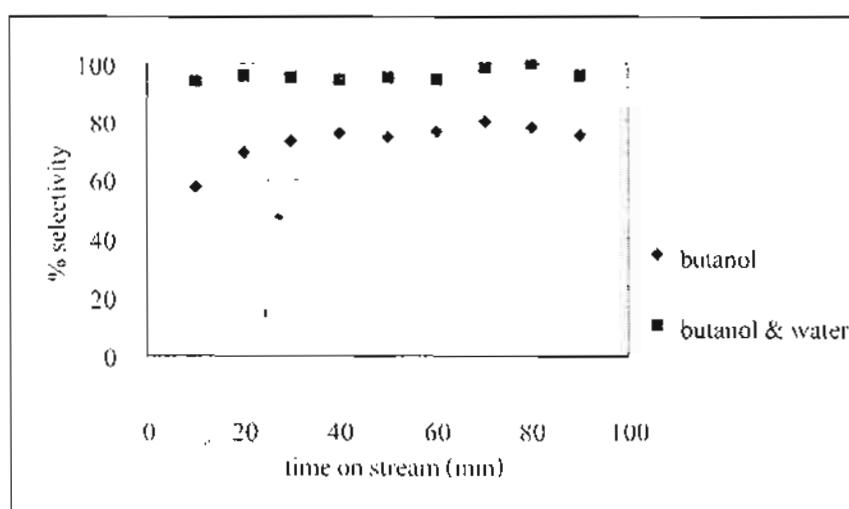


Figure 2.37 Effect of water added in solvent on the selectivity of caprolactam over Dealuminated Beta

Reaction condition: temperature; 350°C, pressure; 1 atm, diluent; butanol, butanol : water; 1:53 molar ratio, carrier gas; N_2 , time on stream; 90 min, contact time; $13.6 \text{ g}_{\text{catalyst}} \text{ h mol}^{-1}_{\text{reaction}}$

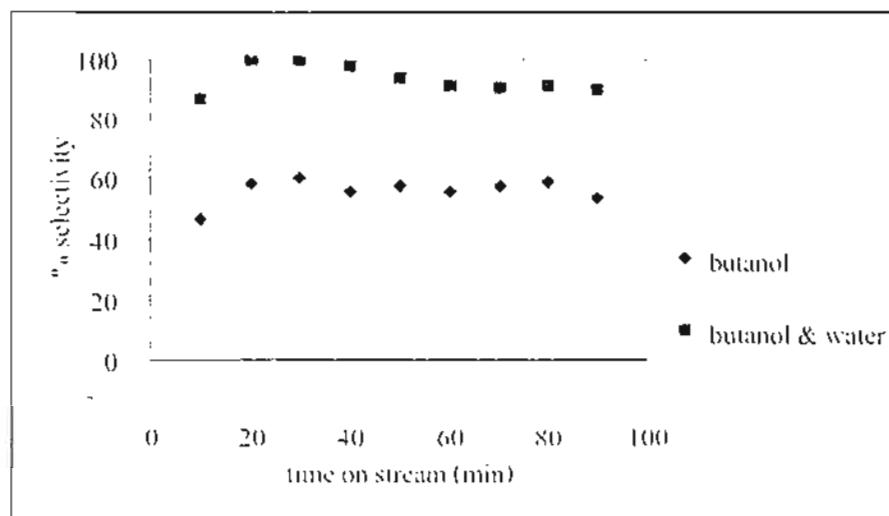


Figure 2.38 Effect of water added in solvent on the selectivity of caprolactam over Ti-Beta

Reaction condition: temperature; 350°C, pressure; 1 atm, diluent; butanol, butanol : water; 1:53 molar ratio, carrier gas; N_2 , time on stream; 90 min, contact time; $13.6 \text{ g}_{\text{catalyst}} \text{ h mol}^{-1}_{\text{reaction}}$

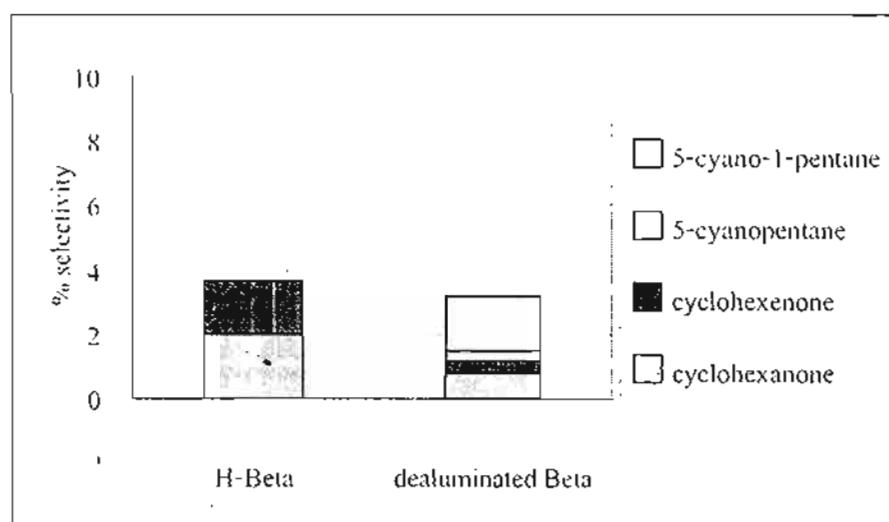
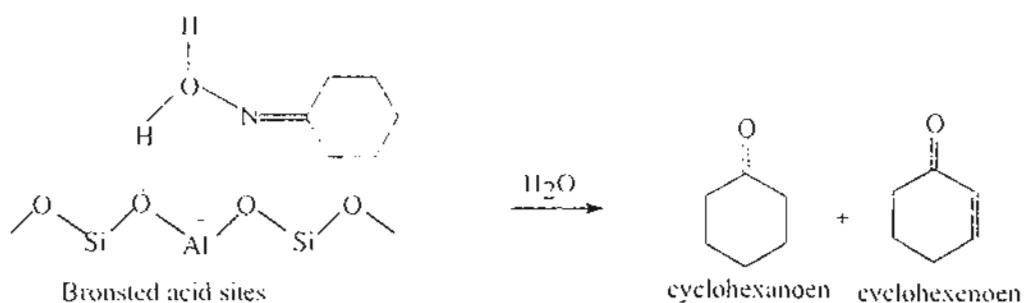


Figure 2.39 Effect of water added in solvent on the selectivity of by-product over H-Beta and Dealuminated Beta

Reaction condition: temperature; 350°C, pressure; 1 atm, diluent; butanol, butanol : water; 1:53 molar ratio, carrier gas, N_2 , average time on stream; 10-90 min, contact time; $13.6 \text{ g}_{\text{catalyst}} \text{ h mol}^{-1}_{\text{reaction}}$

Although, in the case of H-Beta, the formation of 5-cyano-1-pentene formed by decomposition of cyclohexanone oxime in the system lacking of water, cannot be formed in the system containing water. This is not the case for the dealuminated Beta, since the water adsorption ability of dealuminated Beta is relatively low. Therefore, the formation of 5-cyano-1-pentene is still observed.

Moreover, it was clearly shown that the selectivity of cyclohexanone and cyclohexenone, which are formed by hydrolysis of cyclohexanone oxime in dealuminated Beta was lower than H-Beta (Figure 2.39). Since the adsorption of water on Brønsted acid sites within H-Beta is higher than that silanol sites of dealuminated Beta. Hence, hydrolysis of cyclohexanone oxime to cyclohexanone and cyclohexenone in H-Beta is relatively high, as compared to the dealuminated Beta.



The selectivity of by-product in Ti-Beta was also decreased when water was present as co-feeding in the solvent (Figure 2.40). Regarding to the selectivity of 5-cyanopentane in Ti-Beta, which was predominant formed over Ti-Beta, it was drastically decreased when water was added.

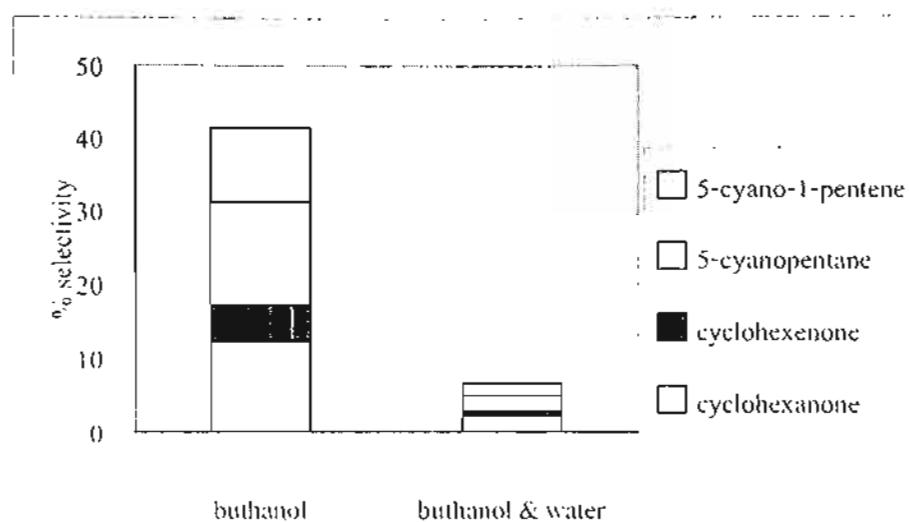
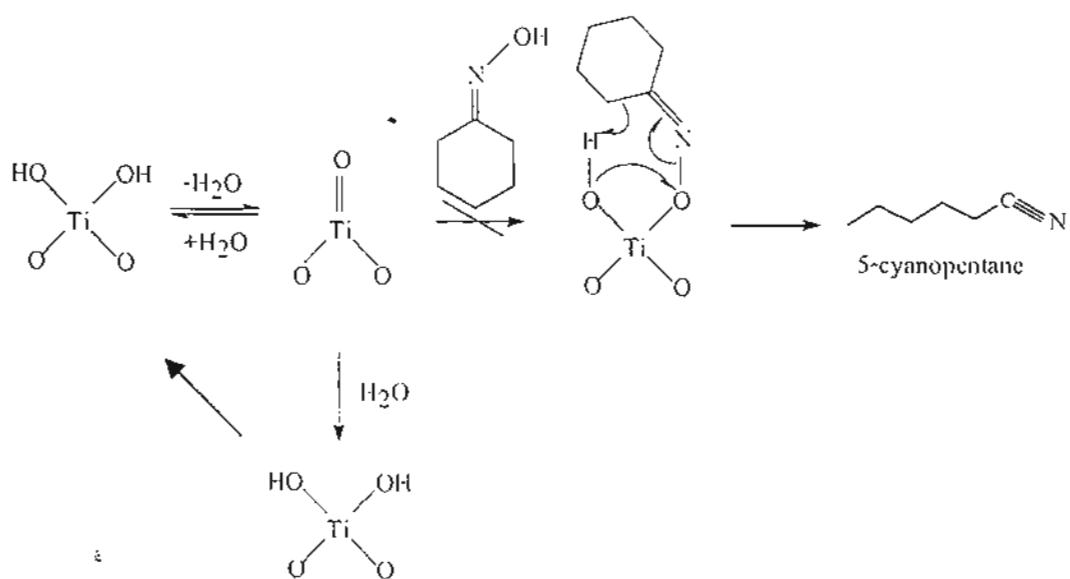


Figure 2.40 Effect of water added in solvent on the selectivity of by-product over Ti-Beta

Reaction condition: temperature: 350 °C, pressure: 1 atm, diluent: butanol, butanol : water: 1:53 molar ratio, carrier gas: N₂, average time on stream: 10-90 min, contact time, 13.6 g_{cat}.h mol⁻¹ _{cat}.min

This is because the decomposition of cyclohexanone oxime to form 5-cyanopentane was decreased. When the water is present, it can be decreased the active sites which convert cyclohexanone oxime to 5-cyanopentane with depicted as below, in addition to the inhibition as discussed in page 68. Therefore, the selectivity of 5-cyanopentane is exceedingly decreased, in the reaction with addition of water.



It was concluded that, when the water was fed in the reaction, the conversion of cyclohexanone oxime was rised for all zeolite catalysts. Moreover the selectivity of caprolactam was improved. This is because water added decreases the side-reaction, namely decomposition of cyclohexanone oxime and coke. In addition the decomposition of cyclohexanone oxime was also reduced in presence of water, particularly over Ti-Beta catalyst.

2.3.5.4 Effect of solvent in Ti-Beta

From the earlier discussion, the polarity of solvent and water as co-feeding can influence the desorption of product from the active sites. This leads to the increased conversion of cyclohexanone oxime and selectivity of caprolactam. So, a various type of solvent including butanol, ethanol; water added in butanol and water added in ethanol was studied in reaction using Ti-Beta as catalyst. It was found that the conversion of cyclohexanone oxime using ethanol as solvent was higher than that using butanol as solvent (Figure 2.41).

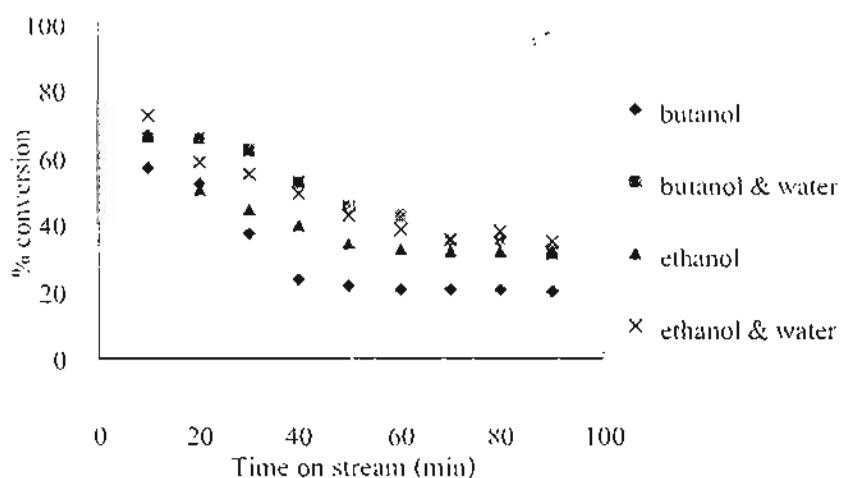


Figure 2.41 Effect of various type of solvent on the conversion of cyclohexanone oxime over Ti-Beta

Reaction condition: temperature: 350°C, pressure: 1 atm, carrier gas: N₂, time on stream, 90 min, contact time: 13.6 g_{catalyst} h mol⁻¹ reaction, diluent: butanol, ethanol, water added in butanol and ethanol, water : diluent: 1:53 molar ratio

This is because ethanol which possesses the relatively high polarity, as compared to butanol, can facilitate the desorption of products from the active sites of Ti-Beta. This leads to a high number of free active sites for adsorbing cyclohexanone oxime. Consequently, the conversion of cyclohexanone oxime with ethanol as solvent was higher than that using butanol as solvent. In addition, when the water is present as co-feeding in the ethanol, it is found that the conversion of cyclohexanone oxime is higher than that using pure ethanol as solvent. However, the activity is similar to that using the water as co-feeding in the butanol. This may will be ascribed that the presence of water in ethanol can increased the polarity of this mixed solvent. Although, polarity of solvent play an important role in catalytic activity, it is worth noting that high polar solvent, such as ethanol water mixture, cannot only desorb products, but can also inhibit sorption of the reactant. Therefore, the observed activity is only in a similar manner as that using butanol water system. Accordingly, a balance between adsorption of reactant and desorption of product is required for optimal catalytic activity.

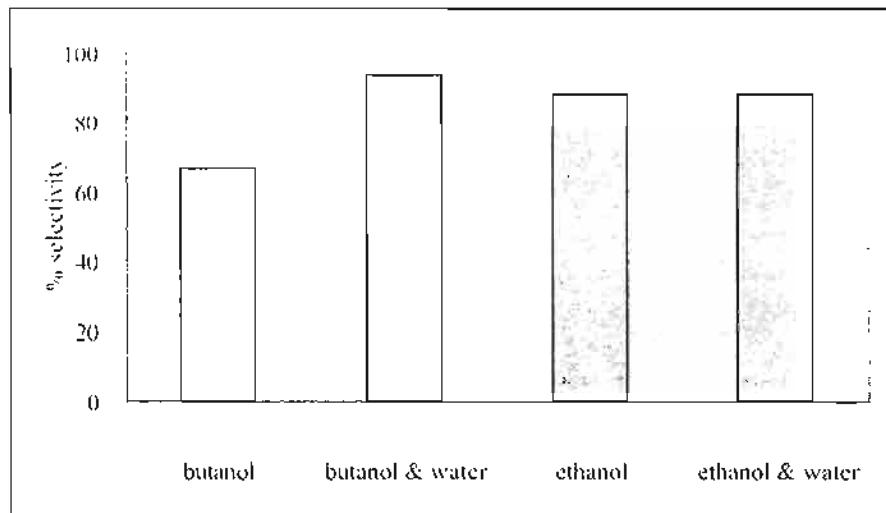


Figure 2.42 Effect of various type of solvent on the selectivity of caprolactam over Ti-Beta

Reaction condition: temperature: 350°C, pressure: 1 atm, carrier gas: N_2 , average time on stream: 10-90 min, contact time: 13.6 g_{cat} h mol⁻¹ _{reactant}, diluent : butanol, ethanol, water added in butanol and ethanol, water : diluent: 1:53 molar ratio

It seems that the selectivity of caprolactam for various type of solvent is in the order of butanol/water, ethanol/water, ethanol and butanol respectively (Figure 2.42). It was suggested that the water as co-feeding decrease side-reactions, such as decomposition of cyclohexanone oxime to form 5-cyano-1-pentane. Water as co-feeding can also decrease the reduction of cyclohexanone oxime to formed 5-cyanopentane. Furthermore, the high polarity of solvent can facilitate the desorption of product from the active sites, leading to a decrease in polymerized product over the active sites. Therefore, the selectivity of caprolactam was increased with rise in polarity of solvent and the presence of water. However, in the reaction using ethanol/water, the selectivity of caprolactam is less than the case of butanol/water. This may well be ascribed that the presence of water in high polar solvent (water added ethanol) can facilitate hydrolyzed products namely cyclohexanone as shown in Figure 2.43. This leads to a slightly lower selectivity of caprolactam, as compared to that using butanol/water. Therefore, it can be concluded that the polarity of solvent and water added in solvent plays important role in the selectivity of caprolactam.

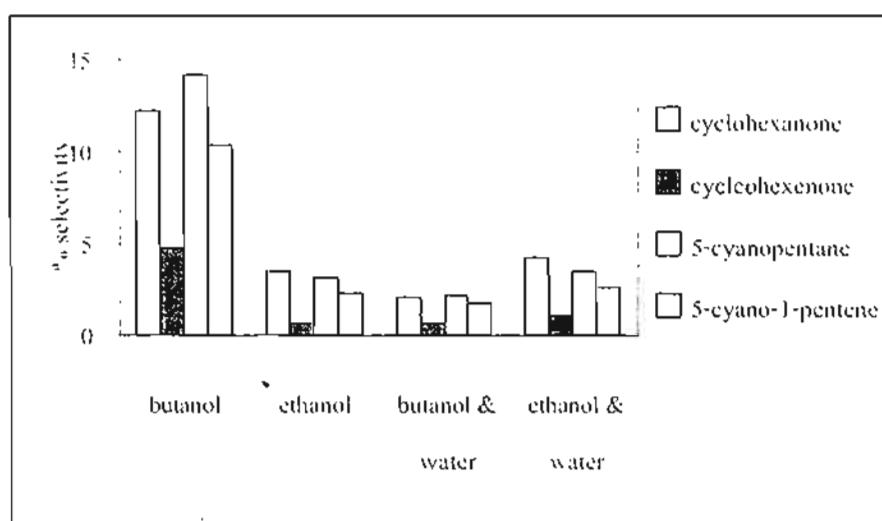


Figure 2.43 Selectivity of by-product over butanol, ethanol, butanol/water and ethanol/water as solvent.

Reaction condition: temperature: 350°C, pressure: 1 atm, carrier gas: N_2 , average time on stream: 10-90 min, contact time: $13.6 \text{ g}_{\text{catalyst}} \text{ h mol}^{-1}_{\text{catalyst}}$, diluent: butanol, ethanol, water added in butanol and ethanol, water : diluent: 1 : 53 molar ratio

2.3.6 The effect of titanium content in Ti-Beta zeolite

2.3.6.1 Activity of catalyst

The effect of titanium content in Ti-Beta was investigated over unwashed Ti-Beta and washed Ti-Beta by sulfuric acid. Figure. 2.44 shows the conversion of cyclohexanone oxime over those catalysts.

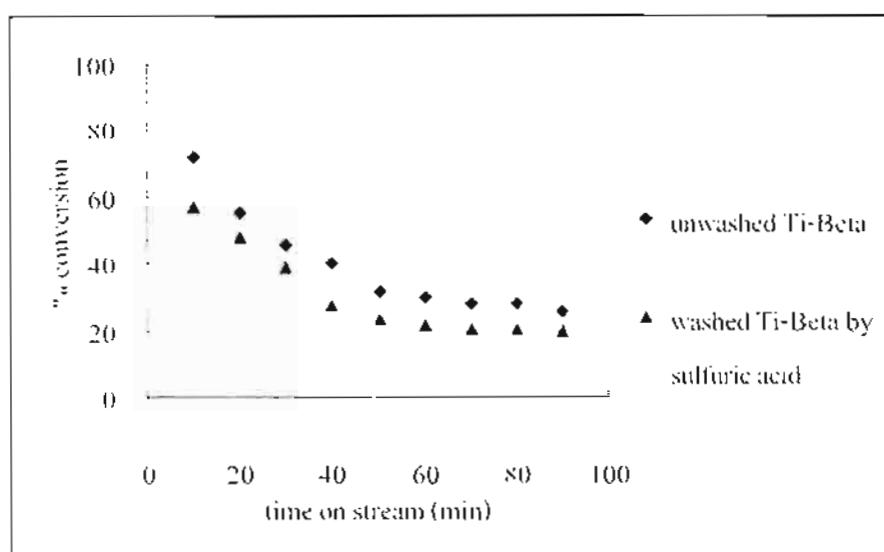


Figure 2.44 Conversion of cyclohexanone oxime over unwashed Ti-Beta and washed Ti-Beta by sulfuric acid as catalyst.

Reaction condition, temperature: 350°C, pressure: 1 atm, WF: 13.6 g_{cat} h mol⁻¹ cyclohexanone, diluent, butanol, carrier gas: N₂, time on stream: 90 min

When the non-framework titanium species in the zeolite was leached by washing with sulfuric acid (as shown by elemental analysis in Table 2.5), it was found that the conversion of cyclohexanone oxime is lower than that in the reaction using unwashed Ti-Beta as shown in Figure 2.44. It was suggested that the non-framework titanium species, presumably titanium dioxide is also active for converting cyclohexanone oxime.

Table 2.5 Si/Al ratio and surface area of the unwashed Ti-Beta and the washed Ti-Beta by sulfuric acid

Type of zeolite	Si/Ti	Surface area (m ² /g)
Unwashed Ti-Beta	26	307
Washed Ti-Beta with sulfuric acid	43	627

It appears that the activity of Ti-Beta was not described only from the silanol active sites and the framework titanium active sites but it can also be attributed to the non-framework titanium. This can be confirmed by the thermogravimetric analysis of the unwashed Ti-Beta and washed Ti-Beta by sulfuric acid that coking is reduced in wash sample (Figure 2.45).

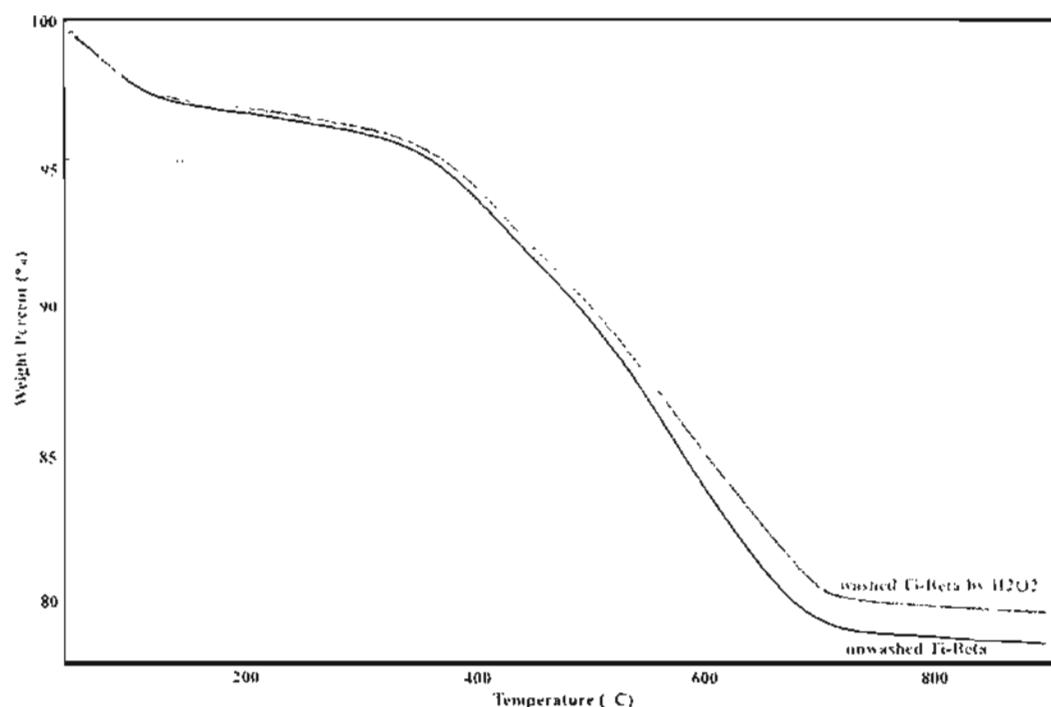


Figure 2.45. Thermogravimetric analysis of the unwashed Ti-Beta and washed Ti-Beta by sulfuric acid with using in the reaction.

It was found that the unwashed Ti-Beta gave higher percent weight loss, as compared to washed Ti-Beta by sulfuric acid. This is evidenced that non-framework titanium should possess higher activity, as compared to washed non-framework titanium. It can be described from the fact that the non-framework titanium within the pore of unwashed Ti-Beta can probably activate cyclohexanone oxime to form products, which desorption are somewhat retarded. This leads to further undesirable reactions to produce high molecular weight products and coke deposited in the pore of zeolite. When the non-framework titanium was leached by washing with sulfuric acid, the coke deposited in the pore of zeolite was decreased. Therefore, the percent weight loss from thermogravimetric analysis of the washed Ti-Beta by sulfuric acid is lower than that unwashed Ti-Beta.

2.3.6.2 Selectivity of caprolactam

The effect of non-framework titanium in Ti-Beta on the product can be investigated by washing with hydrogen peroxide and sulfuric acid. It is evident by the elemental analysis that the Si/Ti ratio and surface area of the Ti-Beta washed by sulfuric acid is higher than that the Ti-Beta washed by hydrogen peroxide and unwashed Ti-Beta, respectively (Table 2.6).

Table 2.6 Si/Al ratio and surface area of the unwashed Ti-Beta, the washed Ti-Beta by hydrogen peroxide and the washed Ti-Beta by sulfuric acid

Type of zeolite	Si/Ti	Surface area
Unwashed Ti-Beta	26	307
Washed Ti-Beta by hydrogen peroxide	32	467
Washed Ti-Beta by sulfuric acid	43	627

It was found that the washed Ti-Beta by sulfuric acid gave higher selectivity of caprolactam, as compared to washed Ti-Beta by hydrogen peroxide and unwashed Ti-Beta, respectively (Figure 2.46). The selectivity of by-product in those catalyst are shown in Figure 2.47.

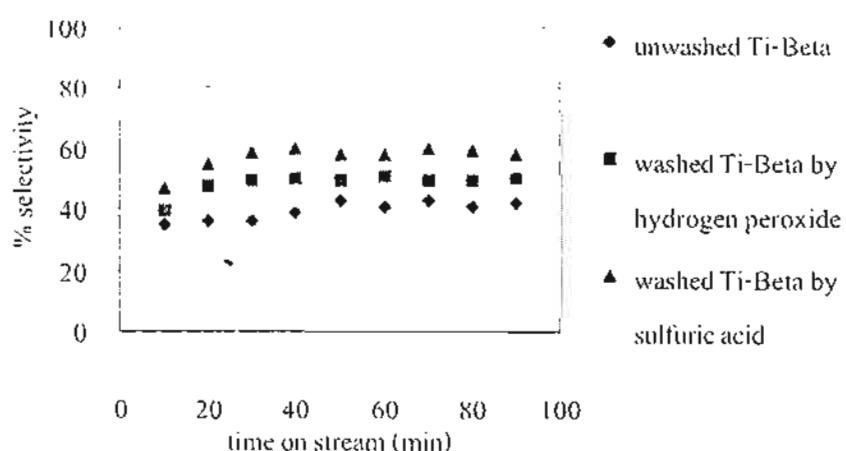


Figure 2.46 Selectivity of caprolactam over unwashed Ti-Beta, washed Ti-Beta by hydrogen peroxide and washed Ti-Beta by sulfuric acid as catalyst.

Reaction condition: temperature: 350°C, pressure: 1 atm, WF: 13.6 g_{catalyst} h mol⁻¹ _{caprolactam}, diluent: butanol, carrier gas: N₂, time on stream: 90 min

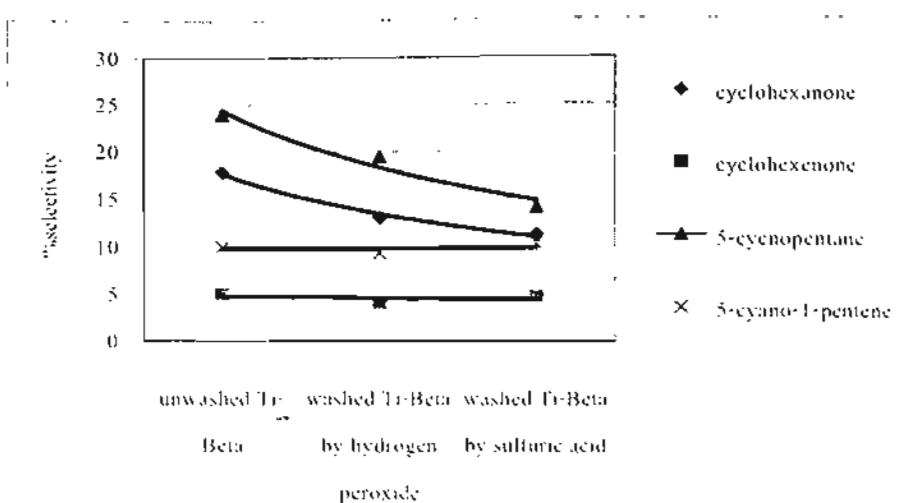
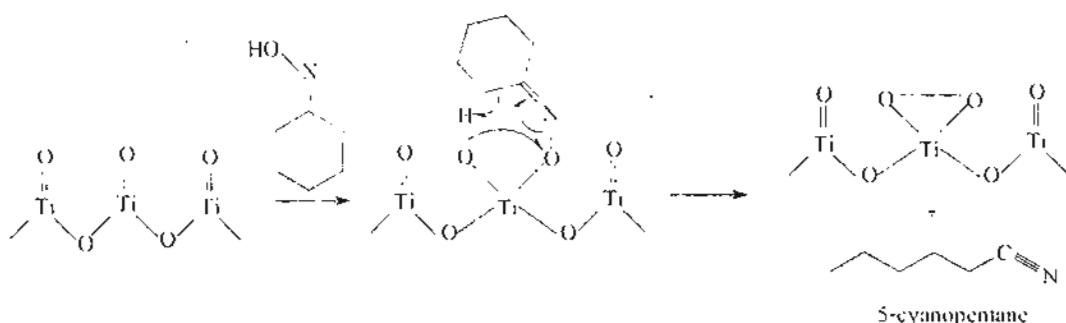
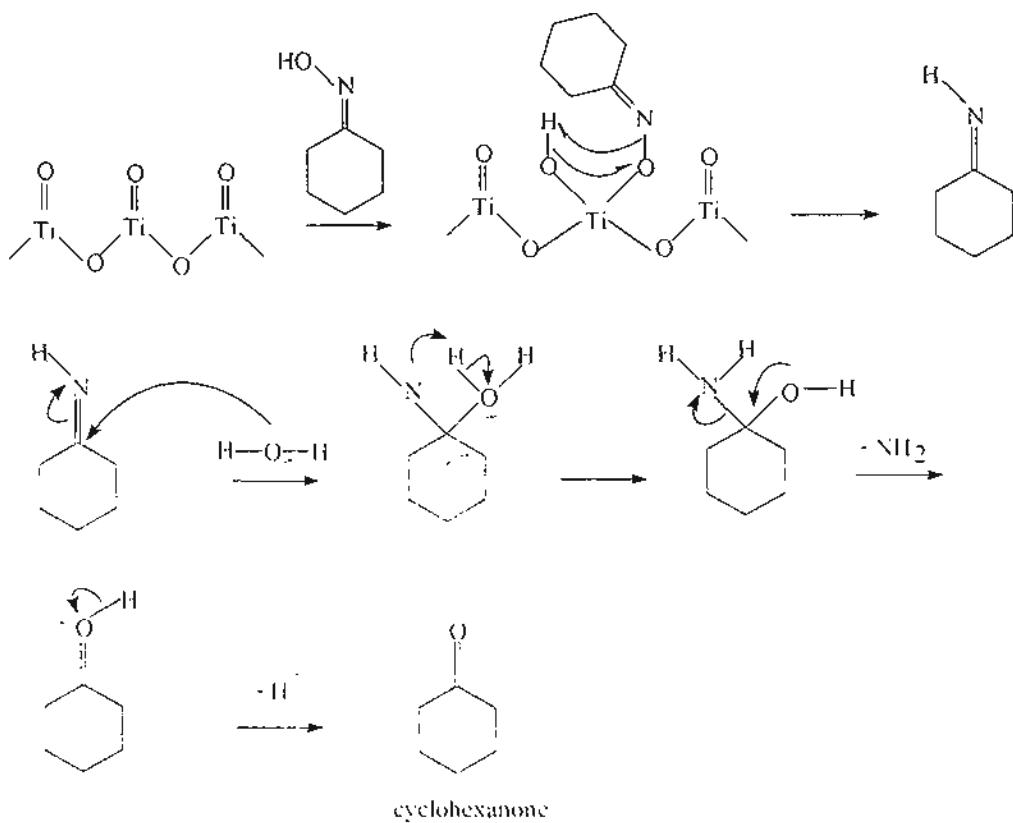


Figure 2.47 Selectivity of by-product over unwashed Ti-Beta and washed Ti-Beta by hydrogen peroxide and washed Ti-Beta by sulfuric acid as catalyst.

Reaction condition: temperature; 350 °C, pressure; 1 atm, W/F; 13.6 g_{adust} h mol⁻¹ _{rxn,cat}, diluent; butanol, carrier gas; N₂, time on stream; 90 min

It was also found from Figure 2.47 that the selectivity of cyclohexanone and 1-cyanopentane were particularly decreased after washing Ti-Beta with hydrogen peroxide and sulfuric acid while no significant change in cyclohexenone and 5-cyano-1-pentene yield was observed. This was implied that cyclohexanone and 5-cyanopentane were probably promoted by non-framework titanium species, while the non-framework titanium species has no effect on cyclohexenone and 5-cyano-1-pentene yield. It can be concluded that not only framework titanium species could possibly promote 5-cyanopentane and cyclohexanone as discussed earlier in section 2.3.2.2 but the non-framework titanium species can largely promote those products as postulated below:





Therefore, the selectivity of caprolactam over washed Ti-Beta by sulfuric acid is higher than that washed Ti-Beta by hydrogen peroxide and unwashed Ti-Beta, respectively. The framework titanium species and non-framework titanium species gives low selectivity of caprolactam, as compared to Brønsted acid sites and silanol sites. It is concluded that the product selectivity depends largely on type of active sites.

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CHAPTER 3

AMMOXIMATION OF CYCLOHEXANONE BY
TITANIUM-CONTAINING ZEOLITE

3.1 Objectives

To understand the necessary factors for large-scale production. To obtain a suitable condition for the maximum yield of product such as temperature, titanium species, and effect of solvent. To obtain the alternative choice of ammonia resource for easier operating process.

3.2 Catalytic testing

Ammoximation reaction was carried out at 60 °C in a 10 ml stirred reactor using 0.04 grams titanium zeolite. Typically, 0.38 grams of cyclohexanone was added to 0.73 grams of ammonia solution (28%w/w) and 0.53 grams of hydrogen peroxide solution (30%w/w) in water or acetic acid 2.4 ml. The molar ratio of feed used in the ammoximation reaction was as follows: ketone: NH₃: H₂O₂ = 1:1.5:1.2. After a period of time, the reaction was stopped by removing heat and 4 ml of 2-propanol was added to the reaction mixture to make a single-phase solution.

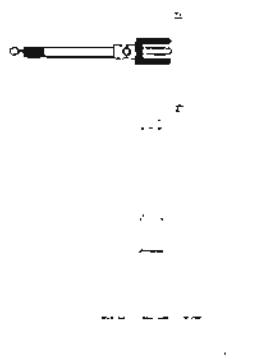


Figure 3.1 Ammoximation Reactor (Batch)

The solution was filtered and analyzed by gas chromatography using 3800 Gas Chromatograph, Varian, with capillary DB-FFAP column (30 m). 1.5 μ l of liquid sample was injected to the injection port (200 °C) of gas chromatography using split ratio of 200. The separation temperature was started at 110 °C for 6 minutes. Then, the temperature was raised to 170 °C with rate of 20 °C/min and hold at that temperature for 12 minutes. Helium was used as carried gas at a flow rate at 28.1 cm/sec.

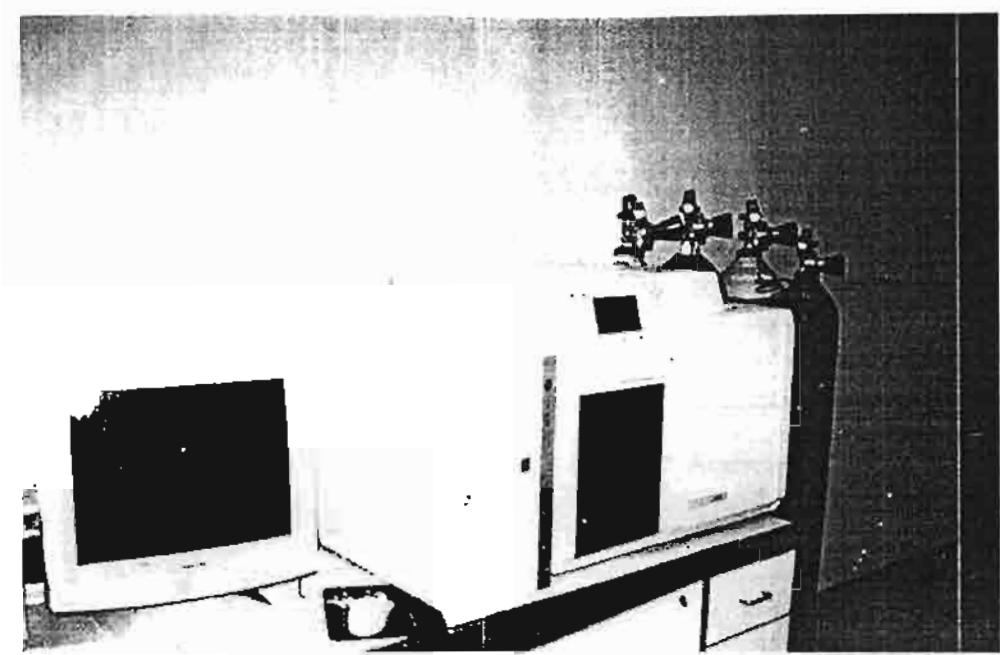


Figure 3.2 3800 Gas Chromatograph, Varian

The structure of products generated in the reaction using acetic acid as solvent was also analyzed by gas chromatography-mass spectrometer (PTT Research and Technology Institute Petroleum Authority of Thailand) using the same column and condition.

3.3 Result and discussion

3.3.1 Effect of Solvent

The conversion and selectivity from the reaction using water and acetic acid as solvent are shown in Figure 3.3 and 3.4 respectively.

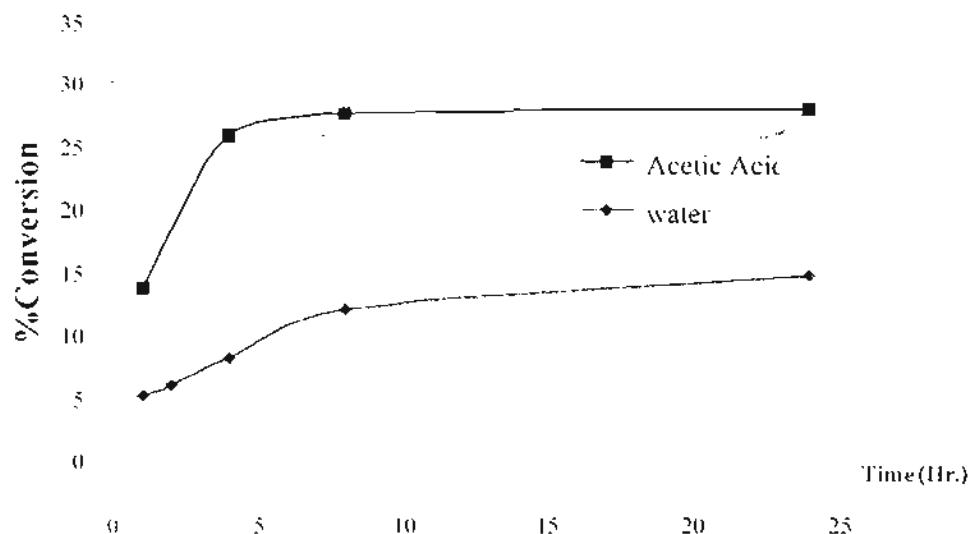
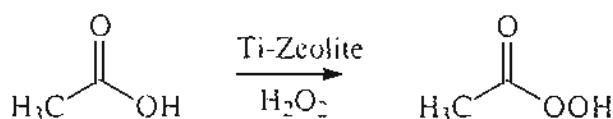


Figure 3.3 The conversion of reaction using water and acetic acid as solvent. *Reaction condition: Temperature 60 °C, Cyclohexanone 0.38 grams, ammonia solution (28% w/w) 0.73 grams and hydrogen peroxide solution (30% w/w) 0.53 grams, Solvent 2.4 ml, TS-1 0.04 grams, Reaction Time 1, 2, 4, 8, 24 hours*

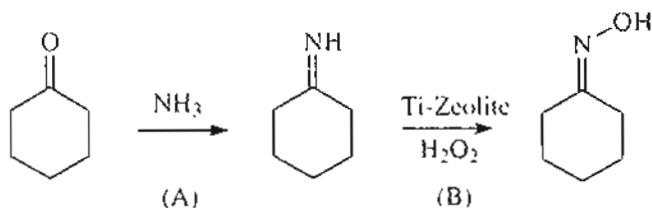
The study on effect of solvent shows that the reaction using acetic acid as solvent produce higher yield of cyclohexanone oxime than that using water. This can be attributed to the fact that, in the reaction using acetic acid, peracetic acid can be generated. Acetic acid can readily react with hydrogen peroxide to form peracetic acid. This has been previously reported in the oxidation of cyclohexane using Ti-Zeolite as catalyst [31].



Peracetic acid can further react with titanium active sites in the framework of zeolite producing relatively more stable active sites than those generated from hydrogen peroxide. The peracetic acid can facilitate a stable complexation with the framework titanium active sites, as compared with the hydrogen peroxide. This is because the peracetic acid is more hydrophobic

than the hydrogen peroxide, and can be regarded as a soft ligand. Consequently, the complexation with a soft ligand is relatively more stable causing a higher amount of active sites available for the reaction. Additionally, the complexation with soft ligand possesses a better oxidizing activity due to the higher electron density of the active sites. This leads to an improved activity to produce cyclohexanone oxime.

Moreover, the enhanced activity in the reaction using acetic acid can be resulted from the enhanced formation of cyclohexanone imine. Since the aminoxidation reaction proceeds via the condensation of cyclohexanone (A) with ammonia to produce cyclohexanone imine, followed by the oxidation (B) of cyclohexanone imine to cyclohexanone oxime [15], the condensation (A) of cyclohexanone with ammonia in acetic acid would be favored, as compared to the reaction using water. This is because rate of cyclohexanone imine formation is facilitated at pH approximately 4.5 or in the presence of acid as catalyst [32]. Therefore, the yield of cyclohexanone imine in the reaction using acetic acid as solvent is higher than that using water. As cyclohexanone imine is increased, the oxidation of cyclohexanone imine is also accelerated, resulting in a higher yield of cyclohexanone oxime in the reaction using acetic acid, as compared to that using water. The reaction pathway can be illustrated as follows:



The vaporization of ammonia during the reaction could also be another factor influencing a reduced activity for the reaction using water, as compared to that using acetic acid. In the reaction using acetic acid as solvent, ammonia was trapped in the liquid phase as ammonium acetate. However, the reaction using water as solvent, ammonia can be vaporized leading to a lower concentration of ammonia in the liquid phase. Consequently, a lower yield of cyclohexanone oxime was generally observed. It can be then concluded at this stage that, the formation of peracetic acid and the enhanced production of cyclohexanone imine are responsible for the higher activity in the reaction using acetic acid, as compared to the reaction using water as solvent which is limited by the vaporization of ammonia.

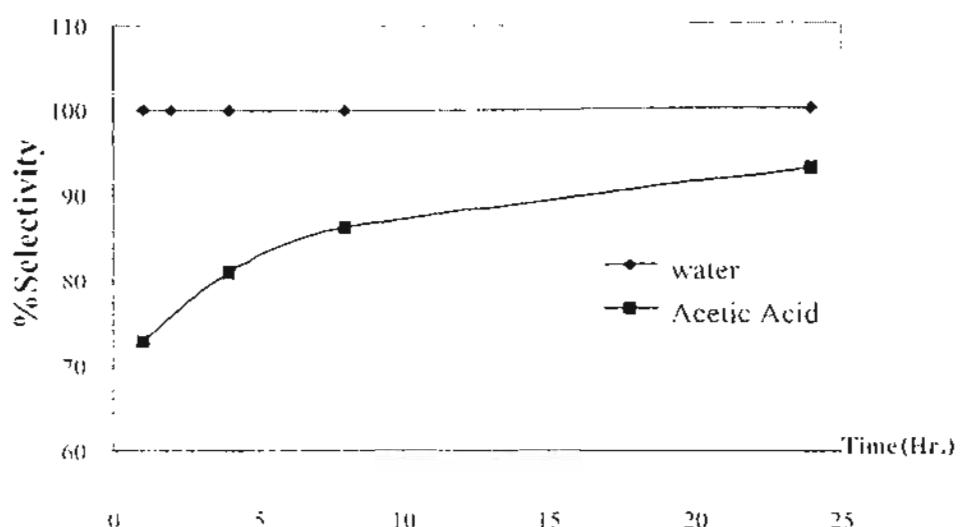
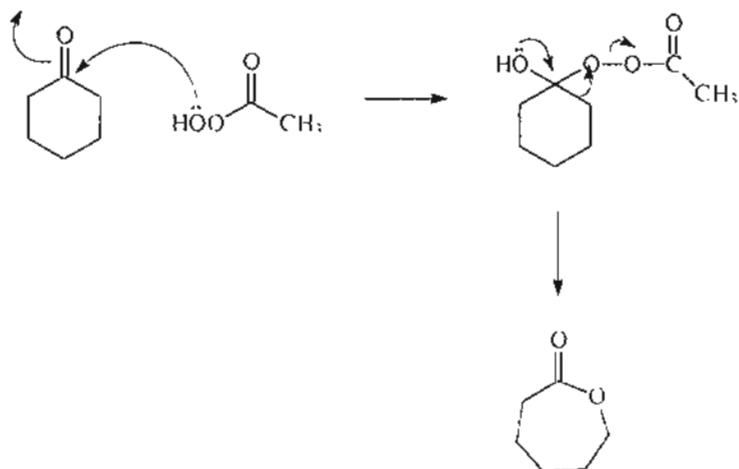


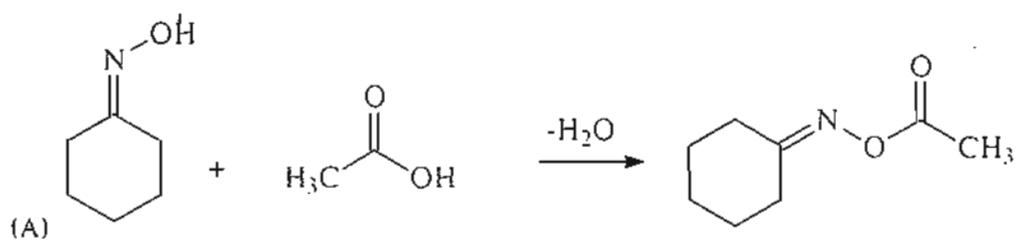
Figure 3.4 The selectivity of cyclohexanone oxime in the reactions using water and acetic acid as solvent. Reaction condition: Temperature 60°C , Cyclohexanone 0.38 grams, ammonia solution (28%w/w) 0.73 grams and hydrogen peroxide solution (30%w/w) 0.53 grams, Solvent 2.4 ml. TS-1 0.04 grams, Reaction Time 1, 2, 4, 8, 24 hours.

Although, the reaction using acetic acid as solvent produces higher amounts of products than that using water, selectivity of cyclohexanone oxime in the reaction using acetic acid as solvent was lower than that using water. This is due to the fact that the reaction using acetic acid as solvent produces by-products. Gas Chromatography-Mass Spectrometer results (Figure G.2 and G.3) show that one of the by-product is caprolactone and the other is acetyl cyclohexanone oxime. The first is formed by "Baeyer-Villiger Rearrangement" where cyclohexanone react directly with peracetic acid in the presence of acid as catalyst [33]. The mechanism for the formation of caprolactone is illustrated, as below:

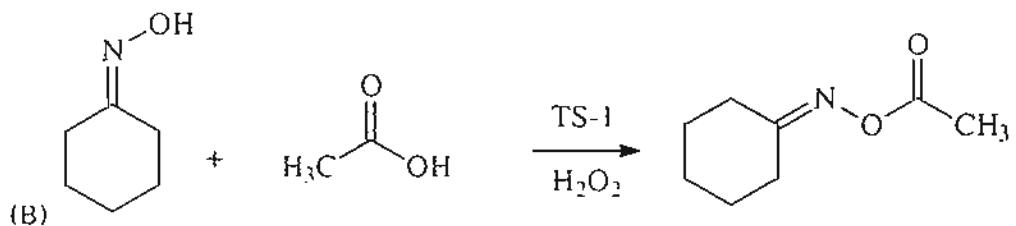


As TS-1 possesses the medium pore size (5.5 \AA), a product with molecular size larger than its pore size cannot be generated internally. Therefore it is unlikely that caprolactone is generated in the pore of TS-1 because caprolactone, a seven membered ring, is relatively larger than the pore size of TS-1. It may be concluded that caprolactone was generated homogeneously in the liquid phase without aid of TS-1. In contrast, the Baeyer-Villiger rearrangement was not observed in the reaction using water as solvent because no peracetic acid was present and hydrogen peroxide alone cannot promote this reaction. Thus, no caprolactone was generated in the reaction using water as solvent.

The second by-product appears to be acetyl cyclohexanone oxime. The results from the Gas Chromatography-Mass Spectrometer (Figure G.3) shows that the seconded by-product contains acetyl group and have a molecular fragmentation in a manner similar to the cyclohexanone oxime. The acetyl cyclohexanone oxime could be possibly generated from a simple condensation of cyclohexanone oxime and acetic acid (A) or oxidative coupling of cyclohexanone oxime with acetic acid (B) in the presence of titanium zeolite as catalyst, as follows.

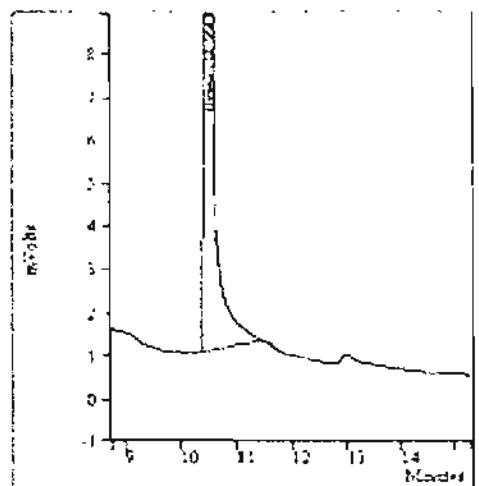


Path A: Condensation of cyclohexanone oxime and acetic acid

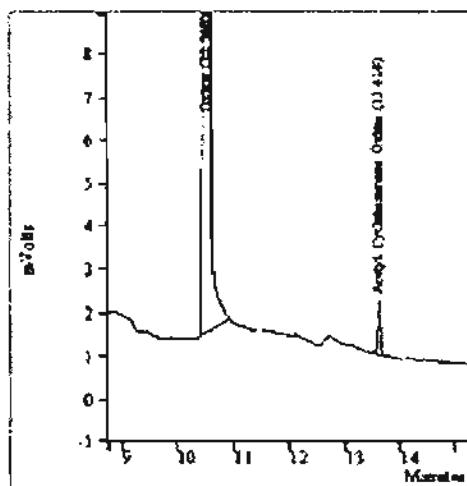


Path B: Oxidative coupling of cyclohexanone oxime with acetic acid

In order to verify the above possibilities, the reaction of cyclohexanone oxime with acetic acid was then tested to prepare acetyl cyclohexanone oxime. The path A was tested by heating and stirring cyclohexanone oxime with acetic acid without hydrogen peroxide and TS-1 for 4 hours. While path B was tested in the presence of hydrogen peroxide and TS-1. It was found that acetyl cyclohexanone oxime cannot be generated in the reaction for path A. However, the reaction for path B produce notably amounts of acetyl cyclohexanone oxime [Figure 3.5].



(A)



(B)

Figure 3.5 Gas chromatograms of acetyl cyclohexanone oxime synthesis from path A and B

Consequently, it is likely that acetyl cyclohexanone oxime was generated by the oxidative coupling of cyclohexanone oxime with acetic acid in the presence of titanium-containing zeolite and hydrogen peroxide.

On the other hand, no peracetic acid was present in the reaction using water as solvent. Therefore no caprolactone and acetyl cyclohexanone oxime was generated. Conclusively, selectivity of cyclohexanone oxime in the reaction using water as solvent is considerably high.

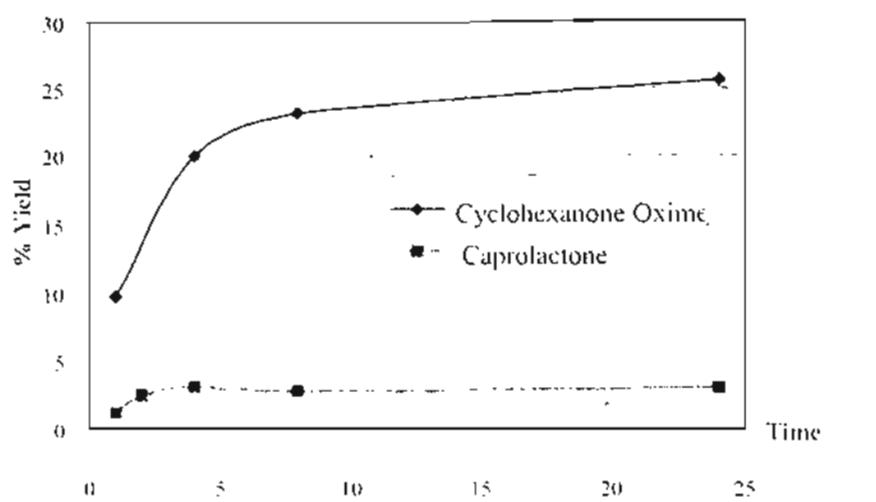
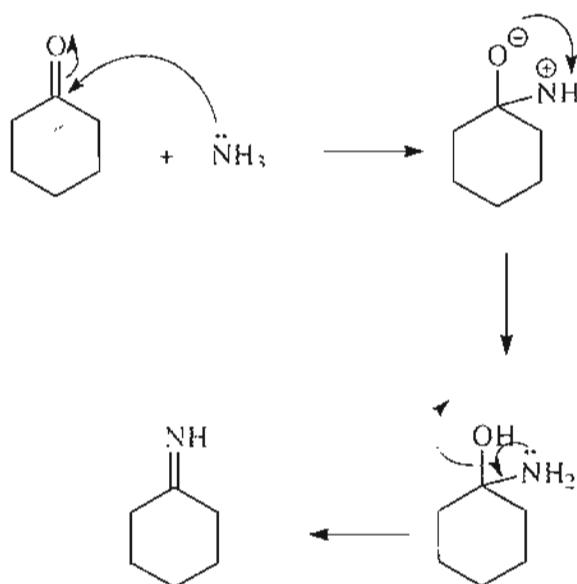


Figure 3.6 The yield of cyclohexanone oxime and caprolactone from the reaction using acetic acid as solvent. *Reaction condition: Temperature 60 °C, Cyclohexanone 0.38 grams, ammonia solution (28%w/w) 0.73 grams and hydrogen peroxide solution (30%w/w) 0.53 grams, Solvent 2.4 ml, TS-1 0.04 grams, Reaction Time 1, 2, 4, 8, 24 hours.*

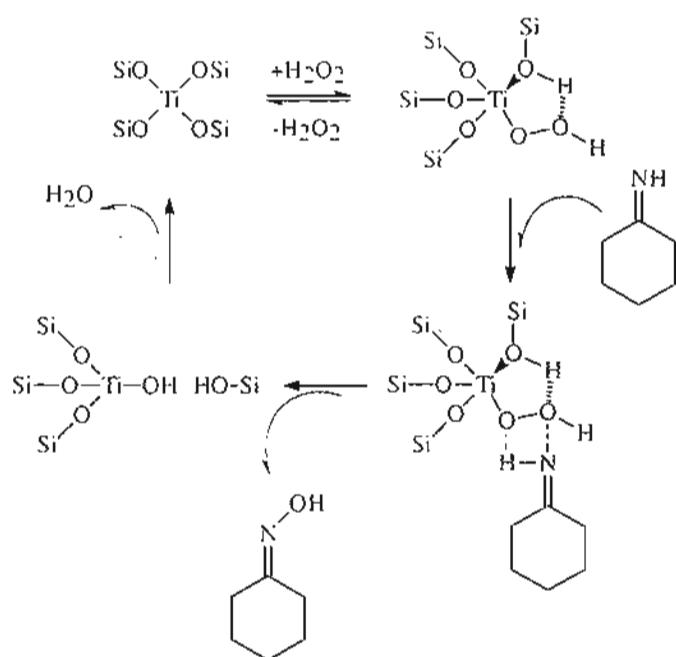
From the Figure 3.4, it was shown that the selectivity of cyclohexanone oxime in the reaction using acetic acid as solvent was increased with time. It can be explained that at the beginning of the reaction, rate of ammoximation was limited by competitive formation of caprolactone via Baeyer-Villiger Rearrangement. This is because the ammoximation reaction is a multi-step reaction. Caprolactone formation, on the other hand, is a single step reaction. The direct reaction of cyclohexanone and peracetic acid could readily compete with the condensation of cyclohexanone and ammonia. Therefore, the initial selectivity of cyclohexanone oxime is low. After a period of time, (Figure 3.6), the cyclohexanone oxime was increased while the formation of caprolactone was slightly changed. This can be attributed to the fact that cyclohexanone was converted to cyclohexanone imine and subsequently cyclohexanone oxime resulting in reduced concentration of cyclohexanone in the system. In consequence, the rate of caprolactone formation would be decreased with time and the selectivity of cyclohexanone oxime was increased.

3.3.2 Mechanistic Study

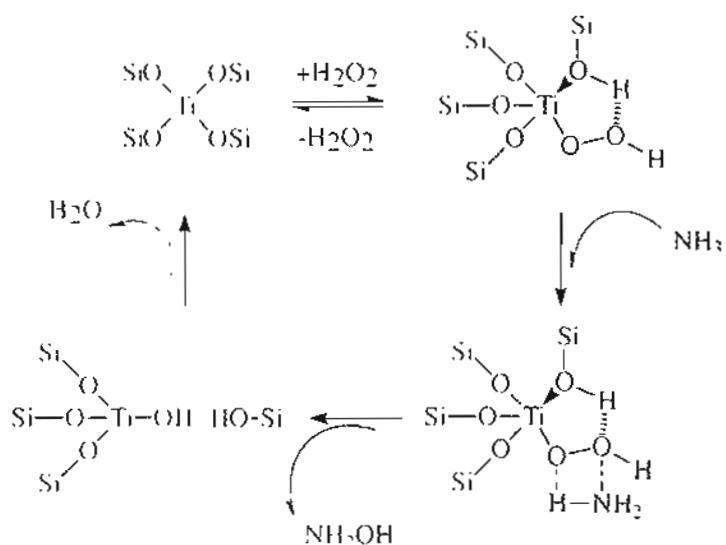
In the mechanistic point of view, it was suggested that [15] ammoximation produce via condensation of cyclohexanone with ammonia to produce cyclohexanone imine in the presence of acid as shown.



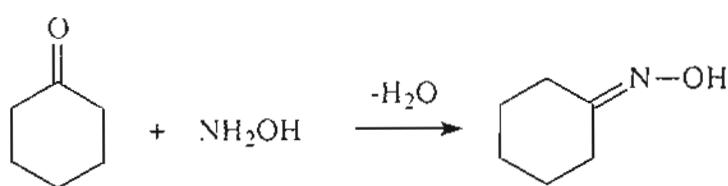
Then cyclohexanone imine will react with the active site, generated from the reaction of framework titanium in the zeolite and hydrogen peroxide or peracetic acid, to produce cyclohexanone oxime as shown.



Although, the results from the reaction using acetic acid, suggests that the reaction proceeds via condensation of cyclohexanone with ammonia as discussed above, other report [29] suggested that the reaction may well proceed via the oxidation of ammonia over titanium zeolite to form primarily hydroxylamine as shown:



After that, hydroxylamine can readily react with cyclohexanone to produce cyclohexanone oxime as shown.



These two possibilities can be tested by changing the order of reagent addition. The reaction of ammonia with only cyclohexanone (test I) was carried out for 2 hours prior to addition of TS-1 and hydrogen peroxide. This can be employed to test hypothesis that ammoximation was promoted via condensation of cyclohexanone with ammonia.

On the other hand, the hypothesis that ammoximation proceeds via the oxidation of ammonia to produced hydroxylamine (test II) was tested by the reaction of only ammonia with catalyst and hydrogen peroxide. After 2 hours, the catalyst was filtrated and cyclohexanone was

added. The mixture was allowed to react for about 4 hours. The results are shown in Table 3.1 and 3.2.

Table 3.1 The yield of cyclohexanone oxime generated from hypothesis of cyclohexanone condensation and typical reaction

	%Yield of Cyclohexanone oxime	
	Water	Acetic Acid
Typical Reaction	8.1	20.8
Tested Reaction I	7.4	14.9

Note: Reaction condition: Temperature 60°C . Cyclohexanone 0.38 grams, ammonia solution (28%w/w) 0.73 grams and hydrogen peroxide solution (30%w/w) 0.53 grams, Solvent 2.4 ml, TS-1 0.04 grams, Reaction Time 4 hours.

Table 3.2 The yield of cyclohexanone oxime generated from hypothesis of ammonia oxidation and typical reaction

	%Yield of Cyclohexanone oxime	
	Water	Acetic Acid
Typical Reaction	8.1	20.8
Tested Reaction II	1.7	0.27

Note: Reaction condition: Temperature 60°C . Cyclohexanone 0.38 grams, ammonia solution (28%w/w) 0.73 grams and hydrogen peroxide solution (30%w/w) 0.53 grams, Solvent 2.4 ml, TS-1 0.04 grams, Reaction Time 4 hours.

From the result in Table 3.1 and 3.2, it is shown that when ammonia is allowed to react with catalyst in the presence of acetic (test II), cyclohexanone oxime cannot be observed. While, cyclohexanone oxime can be only formed via the condensation of cyclohexanone with ammonia (test I). This is can be explained that, when acetic acid is used as solvent, ammonia was protonated i.e. as ammonium acetate and cannot be readily oxidized to hydroxylamine. On the other hand, the condensation of cyclohexanone with ammonia to form cyclohexanone imine is

facilitated in the presence of acetic acid (test I). Synergistically, a better interaction of cyclohexanone imine with the hydrophobic acid site, formed by complexation of peracetic acid with the framework titanium, would enhance the cyclohexanone imine oxidation and subsequently the formation of cyclohexanone oxime. Whilst the interaction of ammonia with the active site is then inhibited in test II and no hydroxylamine can be produced. Conclusively, in the reaction using acetic acid as solvent, only the pathway proceeded via the condensation of cyclohexanone with ammonia is responsible for the formation of cyclohexanone oxime.

In the reaction using water as solvent, on the other hand, cyclohexanone oxime can be formed by both mechanisms but mainly via condensation of cyclohexanone and ammonia as show in Table 3.3 and 3.4. Ammonia was not readily protonated in reaction using water as solvent. Hence, it can directly react with the active sites to produce hydroxylamine (test II). Additionally, cyclohexanone can react with ammonia to produce cyclohexanone imine which was subsequently oxidized to produce cyclohexanone oxime. Since the yield of cyclohexanone oxime produce in test I is similar to the typical reaction, but the considerably less is observed in test II, the condensation of cyclohexanone and ammonia appears to be a major pathway. This may be accounted for the fact that TS-1 is a hydrophobic framework (non polar framework) and the interaction between cyclohexanone imine with framework is relatively better than the interaction with ammonia (a higher polar reactant). In consequence, the rate of hydroxylamine production would be lower than the rate of imine oxidation.

3.3.3 Effect of Water

According to the above discussion, it is clear that the condensation of cyclohexanone with ammonia is essential for the ammoximation. This step could be interfered by the presence of water and pH of the solution. The effect of water can be investigated by adding zeolite A (a water adsorbent) into the system. From Figure 3.7 and 3.8, it was clearly shown that the yield and selectivity of cyclohexanone oxime was increased with the amount of zeolite A added.

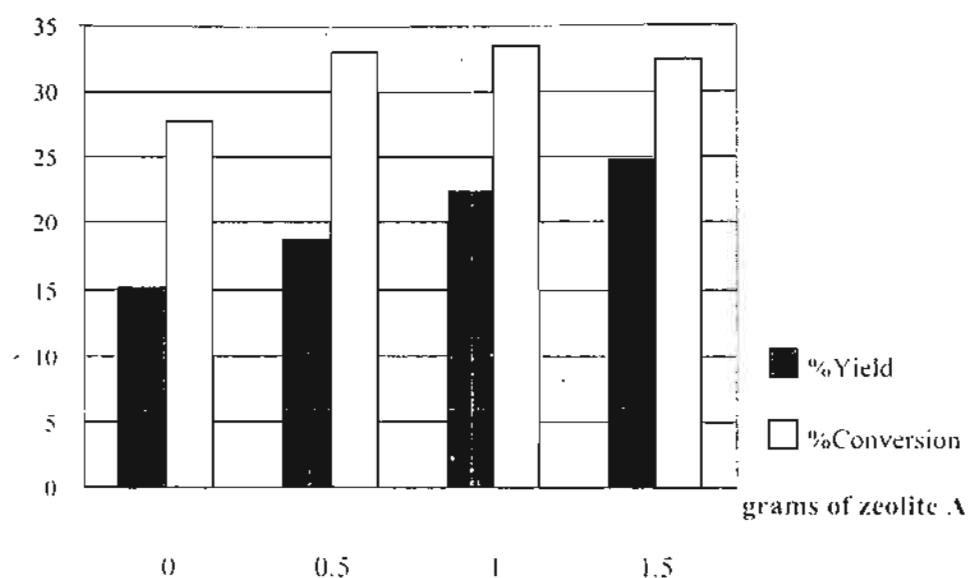
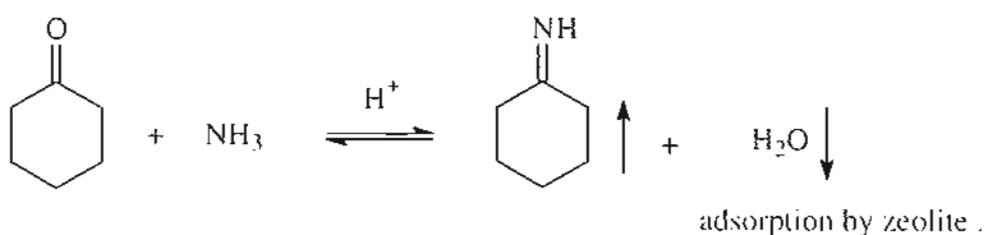


Figure 3.7 The yield and conversion of ammoximation reaction with addition of zeolite A.

Reaction condition: Temperature 60 °C, Cyclohexanone 0.38 grams, ammonia solution (28%w/w) 0.73 grams and hydrogen peroxide solution (30%w/w) 0.53 grams, Acetic Acid 2.4 mL, TS-1 0.04 grams, Reaction Time 4 hours. Added 0.5, 1.0 and 1.5 g of zeolite A

It can be explained that the increase in cyclohexanone oxime yield was resulted from the decrease in water in the reaction system. The zeolite A can adsorb water and the condensation reaction of ammonia with cyclohexanone can be promoted. More cyclohexanone imine can be obtained when water was removed from the system. Accordingly, higher yield of cyclohexanone oxime can be expected.



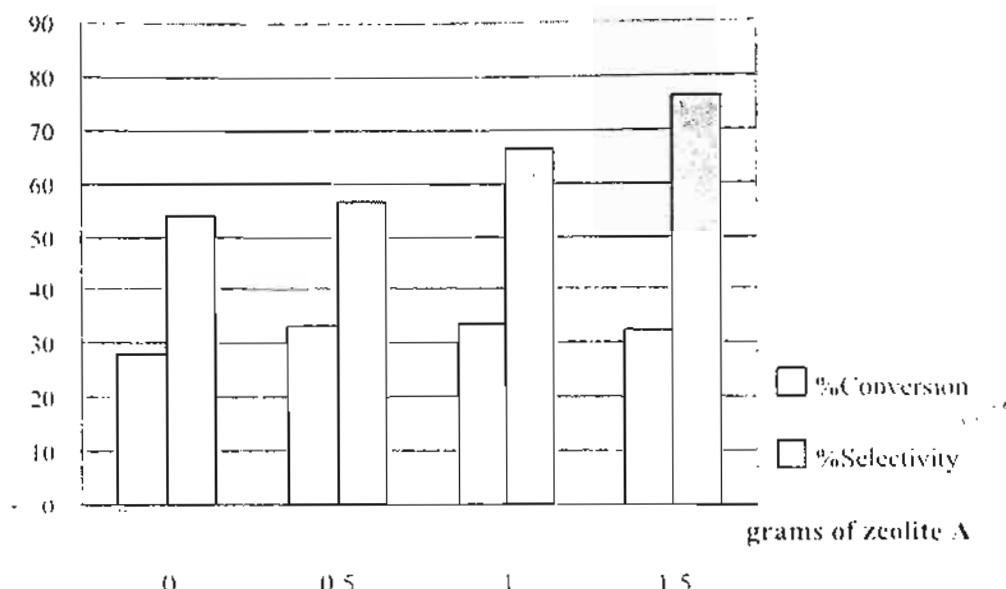


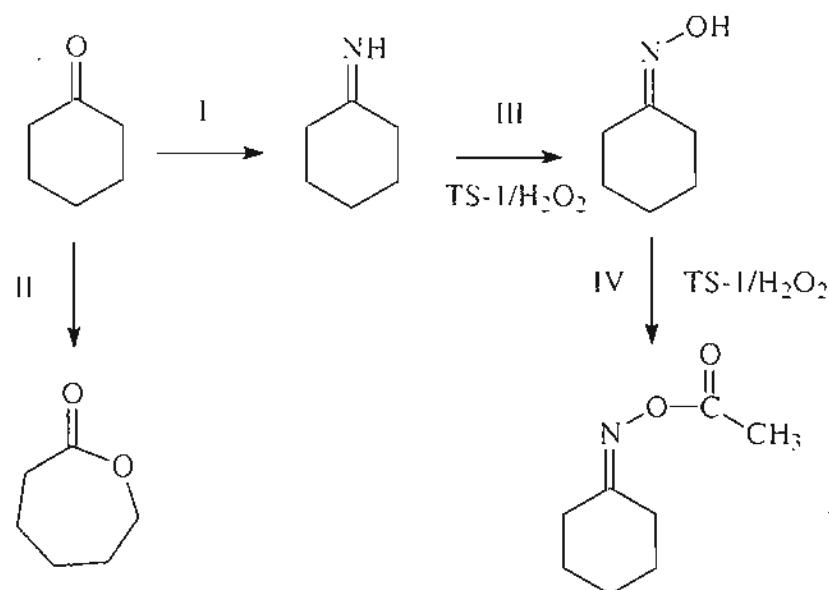
Figure 3.8 The conversion and selectivity for ammoniation reaction with addition of zeolite A.

Reaction condition: Temperature 60⁰C, Cyclohexanone 0.38 grams, ammonia solution (28% w/w) 0.73 grams and hydrogen peroxide solution (30% w/w) 0.53 grams, Acetic Acid 2.4 ml, TS-1 0.04 gram, Reaction Time 4 hours, Added 0.5, 1.0 and 1.5 g of zeolite A

Moreover, the yield of caprolactone (by-product) was decreased when zeolite A was added. This is probably because caprolactone was formed from cyclohexanone. The addition of zeolite A promotes the condensation of cyclohexanone (I) with ammonia to produce a higher yield of cyclohexanone imine, which is then oxidized to form cyclohexanone oxime. Accordingly, peracetic acid is largely consumed by oxidation process. The direct reaction of peracetic acid with cyclohexanone (II) was subsequently reduced as the more cyclohexanone imine was generated. Therefore, a higher selectivity of cyclohexanone oxime was obtained when zeolite A was added.

As more cyclohexanone oxime was generated when zeolite A was added, a higher yield of acetyl cyclohexanone oxime could be expected. Surprisingly, the yield of acetyl cyclohexanone oxime (by-product) was also decreased when added zeolite A. It can be explained that the formation of acetyl cyclohexanone oxime was inhibited by competitive formation of cyclohexanone oxime. This is because when zeolite A was added, a higher amount of

cyclohexanone imine was promoted. The rate of cyclohexanone imine oxidation to cyclohexanone oxime was then increased when the higher concentration of cyclohexanone imine was attained. The reaction of active sites with cyclohexanone imine is favored over that with cyclohexanone oxime because the interaction between the hydrophobic titanium framework (suggested in section 3.3.1) with cyclohexanone imine would be stronger than the interaction with cyclohexanone oxime. The oxidative coupling of cyclohexanone oxime with acetic acid is then limited. Therefore, the formation of acetyl cyclohexanone oxime is low. The reaction pathway was shown as follows:



Conclusively, the low water concentration (such as in the reaction using acetic acid as solvent) is ideal for the ammonium reaction. This is because a lower concentration of by-products and a higher yield of cyclohexanone oxime were obtained. Additionally, it can be seen from the result that the condensation of cyclohexanone with ammonia is the essential step. Therefore, the high concentration of ammonia could be promoted the condensation of cyclohexanone and the higher yield of cyclohexanone oxime could be expected.

3.3.4 Effect of Pore Size

Influence of pore size is studied by the reaction using large pore zeolite, Ti-Beta, as catalyst, compared to that using TS-1. The conversion from the reaction using zeolite Ti-Beta and TS-1 as catalysts in acetic acid are shown in Figure 3.9.

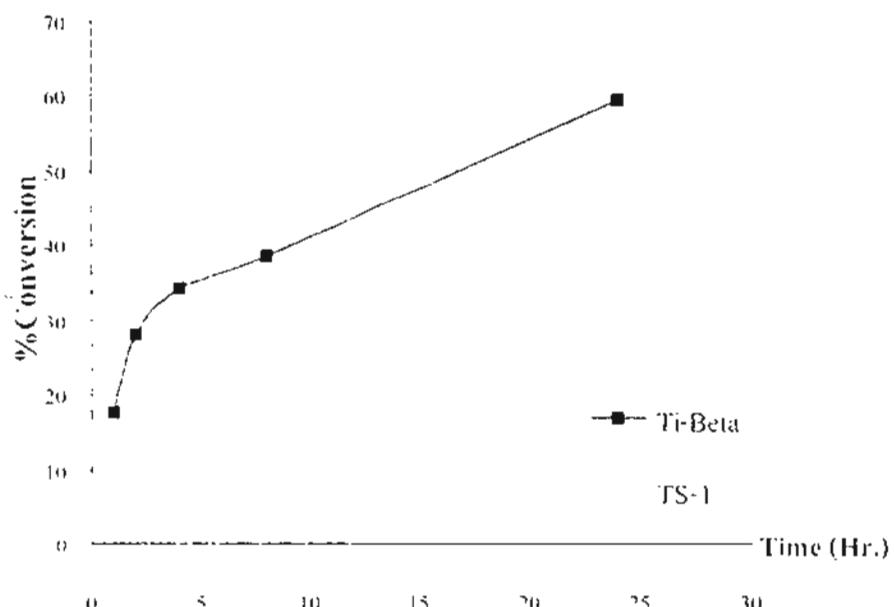
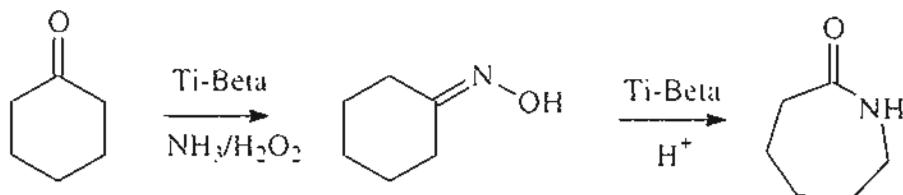


Figure 3.9 The conversion of cyclohexanone, reaction in acetic acid. *Reaction condition: Temperature 60 °C, Cyclohexanone 0.38 grams, ammonia solution (28%w/w) 0.73 grams and hydrogen peroxide solution (30%w/w) 0.53 grams, Acetic Acid 2.4 ml. Reaction Time 1, 2, 4, 8 and 24 hours, Ti-Beta and TS-1 0.04 grams as catalyst.*

From the result, it was shown that conversion of cyclohexanone in reaction using Ti-Beta is higher than that using TS-1. It can be explained that the diffusion of the reactant into the pore of zeolite Ti-Beta is faster than that of TS-1. This is because Ti-Beta has a larger pore size (6.4-7.6 Å) than TS-1 (5.5 Å). Additionally, The crystallite size of TS-1 is larger than Ti-Beta leading to a difficulty for cyclohexanone and cyclohexanone oxime to enter and leave the pore, respectively. Therefore, in the case of zeolite Ti-Beta, reactant can diffuse faster to react with the active sites leading to the high activity for ammoximation.

However, the "Beckmann Rearrangement" of cyclohexanone oxime to produce caprolactam can be observed from the reaction using zeolite Ti-Beta in the presence of acetic acid. This is concluded from the observed low selectivity of cyclohexanone oxime and significant increase in yield of caprolactam in the reaction using zeolite Ti-Beta, particularly at high

residential time. The cyclohexanone oxime produced primarily, can possibly be activated by trace of acid sites within the framework of zeolite Ti-Beta and undergoes rearrangement to form caprolactam.



The subsequent formation of caprolactam promotes the formation of cyclohexanone oxime leading to the high conversion of cyclohexanone. Moreover, at the high residential time, the yield of caprolactam was particularly increased resulting in the low concentration of cyclohexanone oxime in the system. This is because, as the concentration of cyclohexanone oxime was increased with time, the rate of caprolactam formation was also increased. However, the formation of cyclohexanone oxime, at high residential time, was limited by the lack of oxidizing agent. So, only the rearrangement of cyclohexanone oxime takes place at high residential time, leading to the reduction of cyclohexanone oxime. Consequently, the selectivity of cyclohexanone oxime was reduced as shown in Figure 3.10.

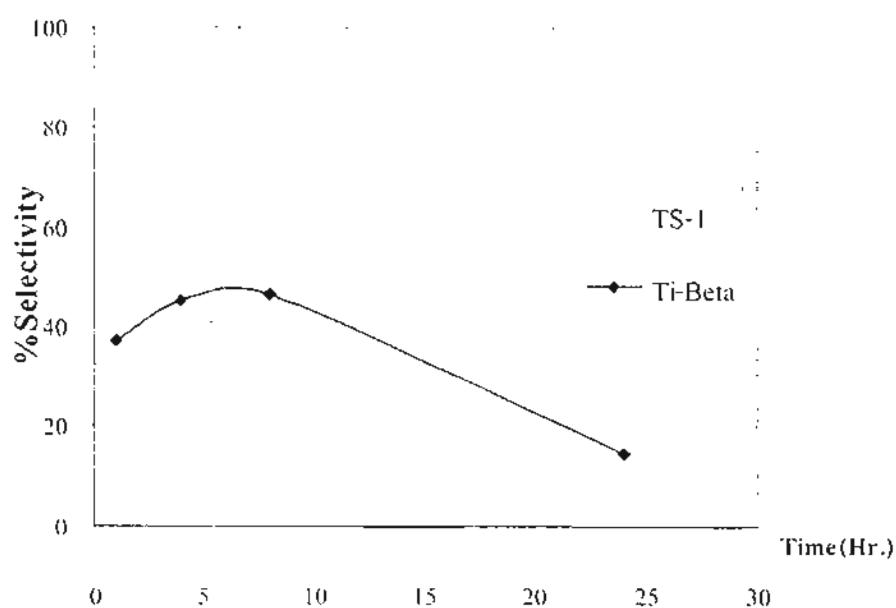


Figure 3.10 The selectivity of cyclohexanone oxime, reaction in acetic acid. *Reaction condition: Temperature 60 °C. Cyclohexanone 0.3796 grams, ammonia solution (28%w/w) 0.7253 grams and hydrogen peroxide solution (30%w/w) 0.5261 grams, Acetic*

Acid 2.4 ml, Reaction Time 1, 2, 4, 8 and 24 hours, Ti-Beta and TS-1 0.04 grams as catalyst.

This is not the case for the reaction using TS-1 as catalyst, because TS-1 has no acid site and TS-1 has a medium pore (5.5 Å) which is smaller than the molecular diameter of caprolactam. Therefore, the caprolactam cannot be generated in the pore of TS-1 leading to the high selectivity of cyclohexanone oxime throughout the residential time.

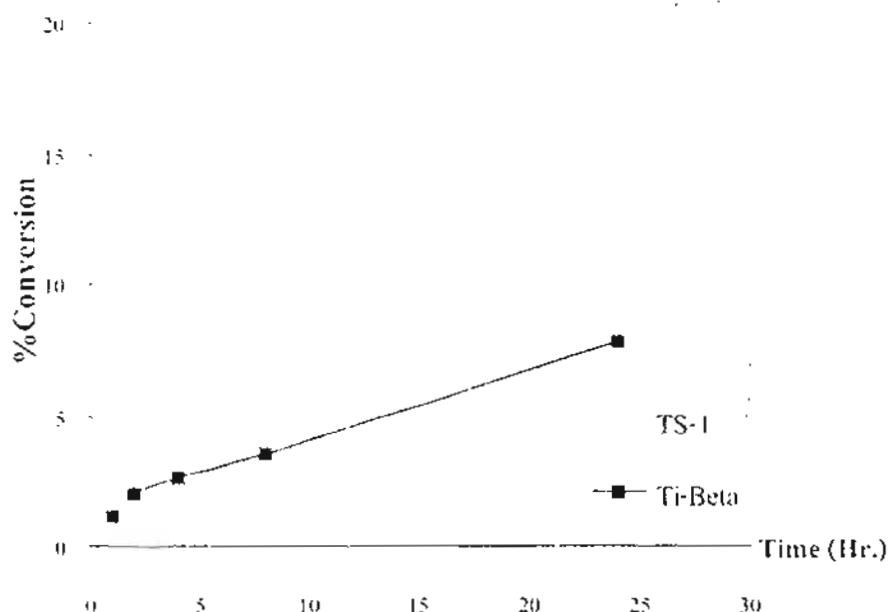


Figure 3.11 The conversion of cyclohexanone, reaction in water. Reaction condition: Temperature 60 °C, Cyclohexanone 0.38 grams, ammonia solution (28% w/w) 0.73 grams and hydrogen peroxide solution (30% w/w) 0.53 grams, Water 2.4 ml, Reaction Time 1, 2, 4, 8 and 24 hours, Ti-Beta and TS-1 0.04 grams as catalyst.

The affect of pore size is also investigated in the reaction using water as solvent. The result is shown in Figure 3.11. It is shown that products from the reaction using zeolite Ti-Beta, as catalyst in water, is lower than that using TS-1 as catalyst which is resulted from the lower titanium content in zeolite Ti-Beta, as compared to TS-1. Additionally, the formation of caprolactam (via rearrangement) which promoted the formation of cyclohexanone oxime was not observed in water. This is because in the reaction using water as solvent, water would readily reduce the acidity of the zeolite by strong adsorption on the trace acid sites. Conclusively, the

effect of pore size cannot be virtually evaluated in the reaction using water as solvent, as it appears that the effect of titanium content play an important role in this system.

The effect of pore size can also be seen from the increased formation of caprolactone in the reaction using zeolite Ti-Beta as catalyst, as shown in Table 3.3.

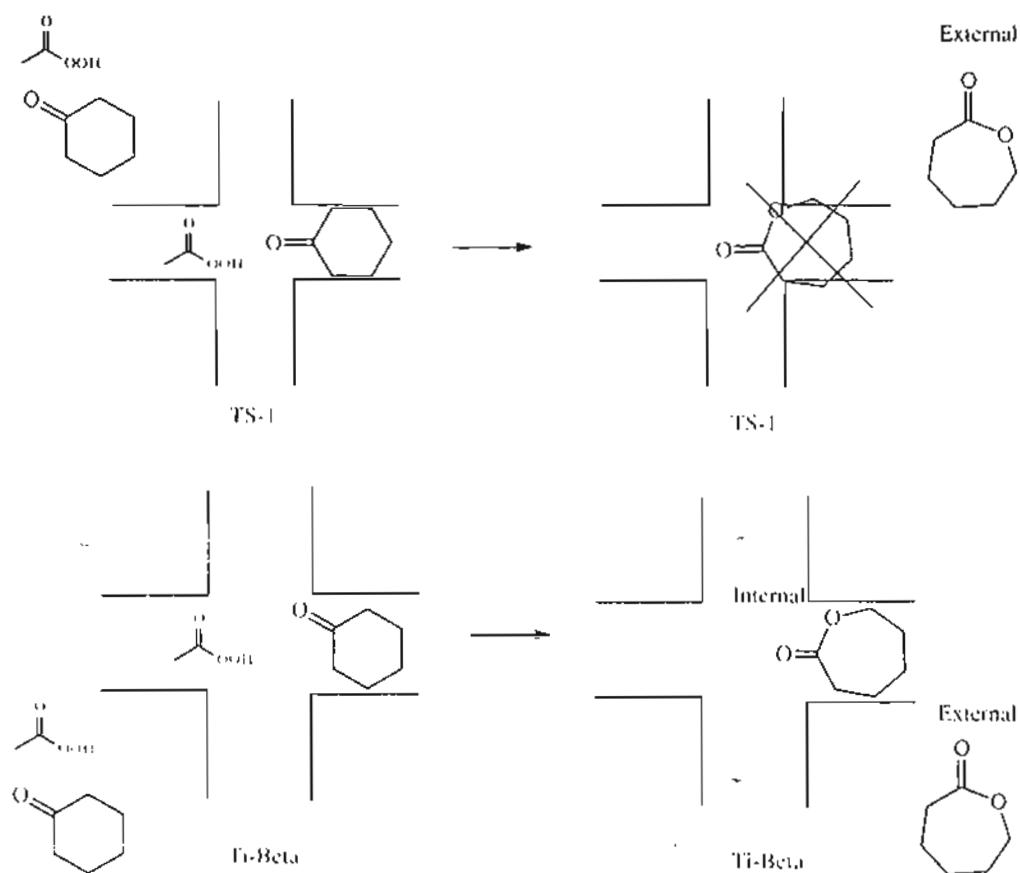
Table 3.3 The yield of caprolactone in ammoniation reaction using TS-1 and zeolite Ti-Beta as catalyst

Catalyst	% Yield of Caprolactone
TS-1	3.2
Ti-Beta	4.1

Reaction condition: Temperature 60°C. Cyclohexanone 0.38 grams, ammonia solution (28% w/w) 0.73 grams and hydrogen peroxide solution (30% w/w) 0.53 grams. Acetic Acid 2.4 ml.

Reaction Time 4 hours, Ti-Beta and TS-1 0.04 grams as catalyst.

From the above discussion (section 3.3.1). It was concluded that caprolactone was generated homogeneously in liquid phase without aid of TS-1. This is because of the fact that TS-1 possesses the medium pore size (5.5 Å). caprolactone with molecular size larger than its pore size cannot be generated internally. Therefore caprolactone was produced only external pore of zeolite. However, the result from the reaction using zeolite Ti-Beta (Table 3.3) shows that the large pore zeolite can promote higher yield of caprolactone with high selectivity. This is suggested from the fact that zeolite Ti-Beta possesses a large pore size (7.6 Å). Caprolactone can be both generated on the external surface and in the pore of the zeolite as illustrated below;



Peracetic acid was locally generated by the active sites within the pore. There would readily be a higher concentration of peracetic acid in the pore of zeolite and the formation of caprolactone within the pore can be facilitated, as compared to the external surface of the zeolites. This leads to the observed higher yield of caprolactone in the reaction using zeolite Ti-Beta as catalyst.

Since caprolactone which is a by-product in the ammoximation, is a valuable industrial chemicals. The study on synthesis of caprolactone was further investigated. Reaction for synthesis of caprolactone was tested by reacting cyclohexanone with hydrogen peroxide in acetic acid using TS-1 and Ti-Beta as catalyst for 4 hours. The results are shown in table 3.4.

Table 3.4 The yield and conversion for the synthesis caprolactone using TS-1 and zeolite Ti-Beta as catalyst

Catalyst	% Yield of Caprolactone	% Conversion of Cyclohexanone
TS-1	5.7	8.8
Ti-Beta	45.9	46.0

Reaction condition: Temperature 60 °C, Cyclohexanone 0.38 grams, hydrogen peroxide solution (30%w/w) 0.53 grams, Acetic acid 2.4 ml, Reaction Time 4 hours, Ti-Beta and TS-1 0.04 grams as catalyst.

The results are consistent with the observed higher yield of caprolactone in ammoximation using Ti-Beta as catalyst. This is confirmed that the "Baeeyer-Villiger Rearrangement" is not only generated by homogeneous reaction but also by the catalysis over titanium containing zeolites. It is also shown that Ti-Beta is an effective catalyst for the formation of caprolactone.

3.3.5 Effect of the Titanium Species

As it can be seen from the above results [page 52] that titanium content of zeolites play a significant role in oxidation activity, the effect of titanium species was further investigated in Ti-Beta. After the titration of dealuminated zeolite Beta, titanium is expected to replace the position of aluminium in the tetrahedral units. Nevertheless, titanium tetrachloride can diffuse into the pore of zeolite, and deposit to form a non-framework titanium, which results in an increased titanium content of the zeolite [Table Table 2.1 in part 1]. Therefore, titanium can be present in zeolite as two species, the framework titanium (tetrahedral form) and the non-framework titanium. The catalytic property of these two species was evaluated by the reaction using zeolite Ti-Beta before and after washing out of the non-framework as catalyst. Yield and conversion of reaction using zeolite Ti-Beta before and after washing with sulfuric acid show in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5 The yield and conversion for the reaction using Ti-Beta before and after washing by sulfuric acid

Catalyst	Si/Ti Ratio	% Yield of Cyclohexanone Oxime	% Conversion of Cyclohexanone
Ti-Beta (unwashed)	36	4.3	5.2
Ti-Beta (washed)	47	15.5	34.2

Reaction condition: Temperature 60°C, Cyclohexanone 0.38 grams, ammonia solution (28% w/w) 0.73 grams and hydrogen peroxide solution (30% w/w) 0.53 grams, Acetic acid 2.4 ml, Reaction Time 4 hours, Ti-Beta 0.04 grams as catalyst.

From the result, it was shown that the reaction using zeolite Ti-Beta before washing with sulfuric acid produces much lower yield of cyclohexanone oxime than the washed zeolite Ti-Beta. It can be suggested that the reduced activity of zeolite Ti-Beta before washing with sulfuric acid may well derive from the blockage of pore by the non-framework titanium. This is evident by a reduced surface area of zeolite Ti-Beta before washing with sulfuric acid (Table 2.2 in part I). Blockage by titanium in the pore of zeolite results in a difficulty for cyclohexanone to diffuse and react with the active sites in pore of zeolite, leading to the observed low activity of the zeolite Ti-Beta before washing with acid, as compared to the zeolite Ti-Beta after washing. Therefore, the zeolite with high titanium content would not be an effective catalyst, if the titanium species are present as the non-framework titanium. It seems clear that, the non-framework titanium has no activity to catalyze the reaction, but inhibit the diffusion of the reaction. The reaction was catalyzed only by the framework titanium (tetrahedral form).

3.3.6 Influence of Contact Time

In the large-scale production, the higher yield of cyclohexanone oxime is required. Contact time, in the other words, the amounts of catalyst concentration, would affect the activity, selectivity and operation cost. In order to verify the influence of contact time, the reactions using various amount of catalyst were tested in the reaction using acetic acid as solvent. The results are shown in Figure 3.12 and 3.13.

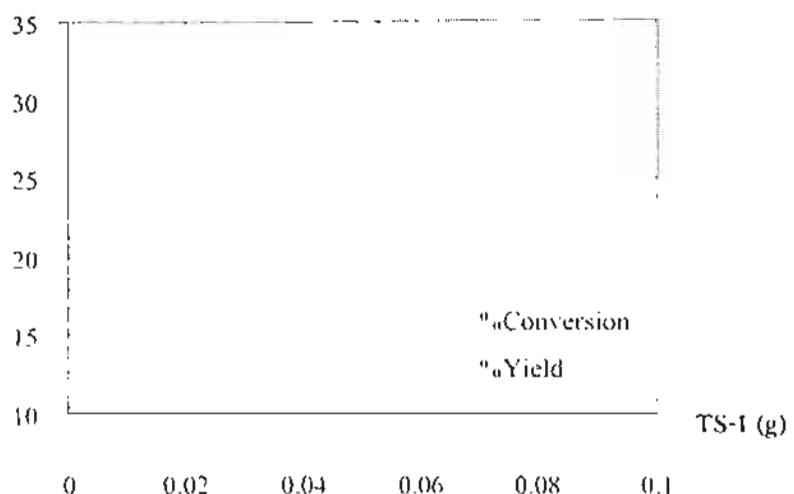


Figure 3.12 Effect of contact time on the conversion of cyclohexanone and yield of cyclohexanone oxime. *Reaction condition: Temperature 60 °C. Cyclohexanone 0.38 grams, ammonia solution (28%w/w) 0.73 grams and hydrogen peroxide solution (30%w/w) 0.53 grams. Acetic Acid 2.4 ml. Reaction Time 4 hours, TS-1 0.02, 0.04 and 0.08 grams as catalyst.*

The result from Figures 3.12 shows that the increased amount of TS-1 in the reaction leads to an increase in cyclohexanone oxime formation. This is because cyclohexanone have a higher possibility to react with active sites and higher yield of product can be obtained.

The conversion, however, seem not to be significantly changed when the catalyst was increased from 0.04 gram to 0.08. It may be resulted from the reaction approaching saturation kinetics. Therefore the higher amount of catalyst does not help to promote higher conversion. On the other hand, it leads to an increase in operation cost.

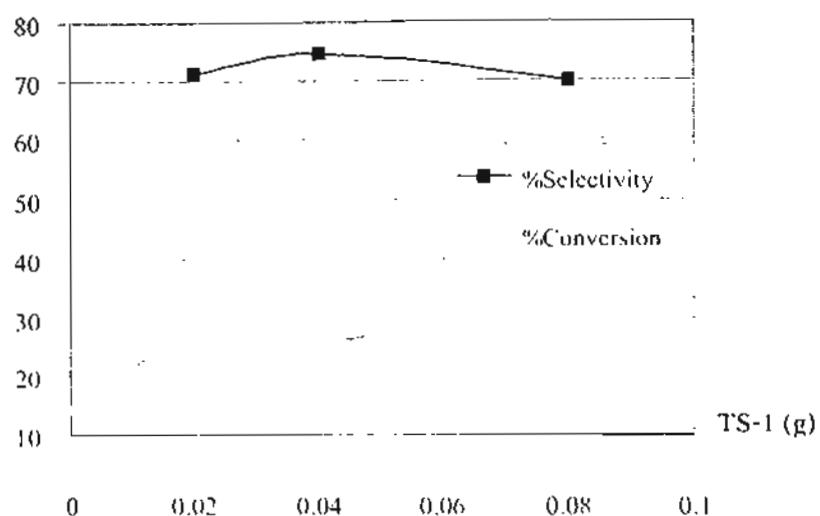
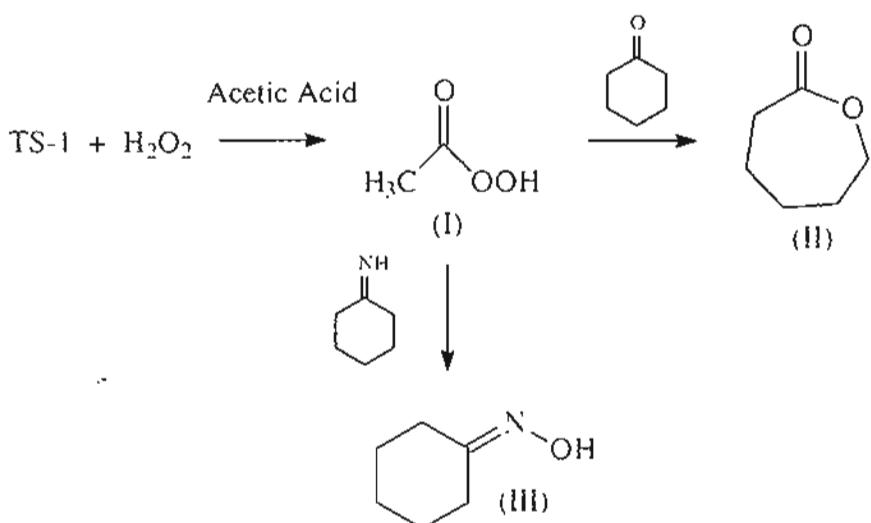


Figure 3.13 Effect of contact time on the conversion of cyclohexanone and selectivity of cyclohexanone oxime. Reaction condition: Temperature 60°C . Cyclohexanone 0.38 grams, ammonia solution (28%w/w) 0.73 grams and hydrogen peroxide solution (30%w/w) 0.53 grams, Acetic Acid 2.4 ml, Reaction Time 4 hours, TS-10.02, 0.04 and 0.08 grams as catalyst.

In general, selectivity of a product would be changed when the conversion was increased. This depends on the activity for the formation of each product. If the conversion of the by-product was increased, a low selectivity of the designed product could be observed. However, if the by-product was formed homogeneously or was not generated from catalytic system, the increase in the amounts of catalyst could promote only the catalyzed products and suppress the formation of the by-products. In this case, selectivity would be increased at high contact time. However, above are not the case for ammoximation reaction since the selectivity of cyclohexanone oxime was not significantly changed. This is because major by-product in ammoximation (caprolactone) (II) was generated from reaction of cyclohexanone with the primary product, peracetic acid (I). Additionally, peracetic acid can react with the cyclohexanone imine to form the main product, cyclohexanone oxime (III). As the catalyst was increased, more peracetic acid can be obtained. Consequently, yield of both cyclohexanone oxime and caprolactone can be increased. Therefore, the selectivity was not significantly changed when catalyst was increased.



3.3.7 Effect of Pressure

The reaction using water as solvent confronts with the loss of ammonia by vaporization. Reaction under pressure could be an alternative choice for this problem. The results of reaction under pressure are shown in Table 3.6.

Table 3.6 The yield of cyclohexanone oxime and conversion of cyclohexanone for the reaction at atmospheric pressure and under pressure

Reactor	% Yield of Cyclohexanone Oxime
Reaction at atmospheric pressure	8.1
Reaction at 10 Bar of N ₂ *	8.8

Reaction condition: Temperature 60°C, Cyclohexanone 0.38 grams, ammonia solution (28%w/w) 0.73 grams and hydrogen peroxide solution (30%w/w) 0.53 grams, Water 2.4 ml, Reaction Time 4 hours, TS-1 0.04 grams as catalyst.

** up scale to total mixture 200 ml*

From Table 3.6, it was shown that the reaction under pressure gives a slightly improved activity, as compared to the reaction at atmospheric pressure. This can be attributed to the fact that, under pressure, ammonia can be dissolved in the liquid phase slightly better than the reaction at atmospheric pressure. However, the vapor pressure of ammonia is so high (26.35 bar) that the

pressure used for testing the effect of pressure (10 bar) shows fairly improvement in the solubility of ammonia. Therefore, a small change in activity can be observed. Accordingly to the limitation of the experiment, the higher activity could be obtained if the higher pressure (30 bar) can be applied.

3.3.8 Effect of Ammonium Salts

From the fact that ammonia in reaction using water as solvent can vaporize to the gas phase leading to a low concentration of ammonia in liquid phase, an alternative for solving this problem is the use of the ammonium salts as reagent. In the reaction using acetic acid as solvent, ammonia was trapped in the liquid phase as ammonium acetate. This indicates an ability of ammonium acetate to serve as reagent. Accordingly, other ammonium salts could be used as the reagent in the reactions using water and acetic acid as solvent. The results are shown in Table 3.7.

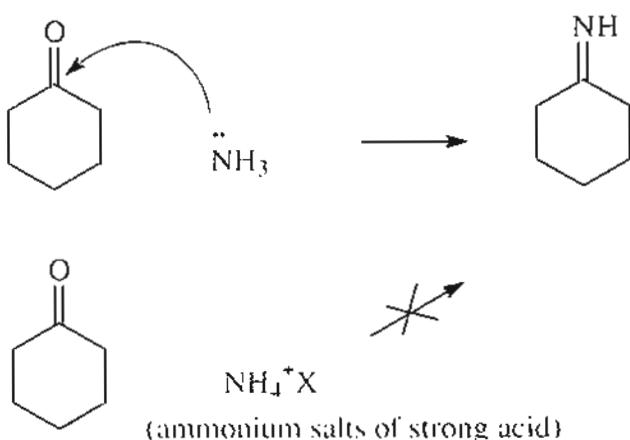
Table 3.7 The yield of cyclohexanone oxime from the reaction using ammonium salts as reactant

Ammonium Salts		% Yield of Cyclohexanone Oxime	
		Water	Acetic Acid
Ammonia Solution	NH ₃ OH	8.1	20.8
Ammonium Acetate	NH ₄ (OCOCH ₃)	0.68	21.5
Ammonium Carbonate	(NH ₄) ₂ CO ₃	6.3	8.3
Ammonium Citrate	(NH ₄) ₂ HC ₆ H ₅ O ₇	0.47	6.6
Ammonium Oxalate	(NH ₄) ₂ (COO) ₂	trace	1.8
Ammonium Chloride	NH ₄ Cl	trace	trace
Ammonium Sulfate	(NH ₄) ₂ SO ₄	trace	trace

Reaction condition: Temperature 60 °C, Cyclohexanone 0.38 grams, hydrogen peroxide solution (30%w/w) 0.53 grams, Solvent 2.4 ml, Reaction Time 4 hours, TS-1 0.04 grams as catalyst.

From the Table 3.7, it was revealed that ammonium salts of strong acid such as, ammonium oxalate, ammonium chloride and ammonium sulfate, cannot be used as reagent in both reaction using acetic acid and water as solvent. This is because the K_a of the conjugated acid of ammonium salts is high. Consequently the ammonia was strongly protonated by the conjugated acid, leading to deactivation of the lone pair electrons. The protonated ammonia is not efficient

for both condensation with cyclohexanone to produce cyclohexanone imine and oxidation to hydroxylamine.



In the case of using ammonium acetate as a reagent, the reaction using ammonium acetate shows relatively high activity than ammonia solution in the system that using acetic acid as solvent. This can be derived from the low concentration of water in system when ammonium acetate was used. The condensation of cyclohexanone with ammonia can be facilitated in the reaction with low water content, as discussed in section 3.3.3. However, in the reaction using water as solvent, the use of ammonium acetate shows lower activity than ammonia solution. This can be resulted from the fact that ammonium acetate could be highly dissociated in the water than in acetic acid. Accordingly, ammonia was mostly present in a protonated form. The lone pair electrons of ammonia could be deactivated and the reaction with cyclohexanone to form cyclohexanone imine was inhibited. Consequently, no cyclohexanone oxime can be formed in the reaction using water as solvent, when ammonium acetate was employed.

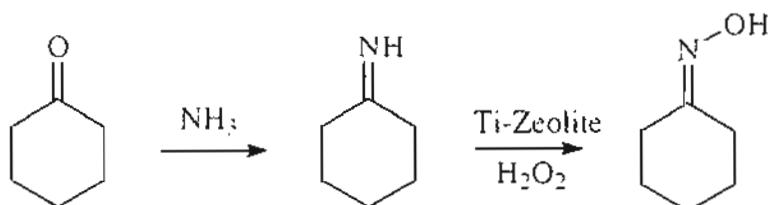
In the case of using ammonium citrate as reagent, the above explanation can be applied for an observed low activity in the reaction using water as solvent. However, in the reaction using acetic acid, ammonium citrate shows a lower activity, as compared with ammonium acetate. It can be explained that ammonium citrate is a hydroxy polyacid. Therefore, it can be highly dissociated in acetic acid, as compared to ammonium acetate. In consequence, reactivity for the reaction with cyclohexanone to generate cyclohexanone imine is relatively lower than the reaction using ammonium acetate.

In the case of using ammonium carbonate as reagent, a relatively higher yield of cyclohexanone oxime can be obtained in both reaction using acetic acid and water as solvent.

This is because ammonium carbonate is an ammonium salt of a weak acid, carbonic acid. It can be readily decomposed to give ammonia at reaction temperature. However, in the reaction using acetic acid as solvent, yield of cyclohexanone oxime was lower than that expected. This may be resulted from the fact that ammonium carbonate reacts vigorously with acetic acid used as solvent, producing carbon dioxide, ammonia and exhaust heat. Under this circumstance, the vaporization of carbon dioxide may well lead to the loss of ammonia. This could reduce the rate of condensation with cyclohexanone, resulting in a lower production of cyclohexanone oxime. In the case of the reaction using water as solvent, it was shown that the activity of ammonium carbonate is somewhat similar to the reaction using only the ammonia solution. This is because ammonium carbonate can be gradually decomposed to give ammonia and the reaction can proceed in the same manner as that using ammonia solution.

3.3.9 Effect of Ammonium Acetate Concentration

From the mechanism,



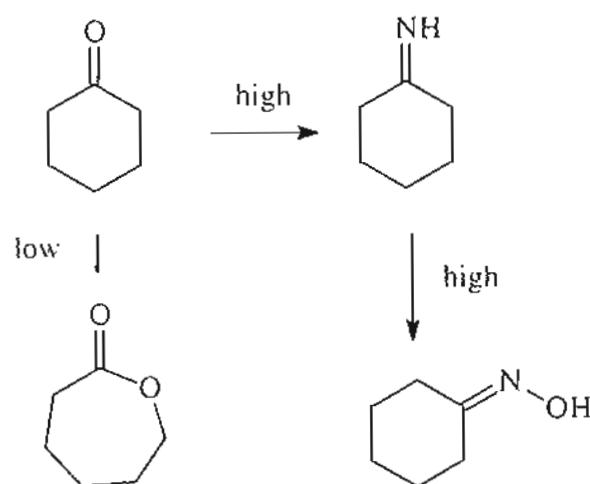
It was suggested earlier [section 3.3.2] that, cyclohexanone imine could be a key intermediate of the reaction. Accordingly the concentration of ammonium acetate would play an important role in the determination of reaction rate. Influence of excess ammonium acetate was studied in the reaction using acetic acid as solvent and the result is shown in Table 3.8.

Table 3.8 The yield, selectivity and conversion for the reaction using excess ammonium acetate over TS-1 and zeolite Ti-Beta

Catalyst	TS-1		Ti-Beta	
Ammonium Acetate (g)	0.45	1	0.45	1
% Conversion of Cyclohexanone	25.7	56.2	34.2	52.8
% Yield of Cyclohexanone Oxime	20.8	43.7	15.5	48.1
% Selectivity of Cyclohexanone Oxime	81.0	77.8	45.3	91.0
% Yield of Caprolactam	-	-	12.3	-

Reaction condition: Temperature 60 °C, Cyclohexanone 0.38 grams, hydrogen peroxide solution (30%w/w) 0.53 grams, Solvent 2.4 ml, Reaction Time 4 hours, TS-1 and Ti-Beta 0.04 grams as catalyst.

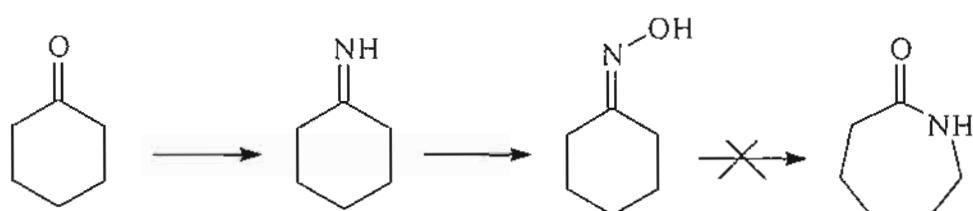
Shows that the reaction using excess ammonium acetate produces higher cyclohexanone oxime than the typical reaction. This is a further evidence confirming that the ammoximation proceeds via condensation of ammonia and cyclohexanone. Additionally, a higher selectivity of cyclohexanone oxime was obtained because the higher amount of ammonium acetate can facilitate the condensation of cyclohexanone with ammonia to produce more cyclohexanone imine, which reduces a probability of cyclohexanone to react directly with peracetic acid to give by-product, caprolactone.



The increase in cyclohexanone oxime could also lead to a higher production of acetyl cyclohexanone oxime. However, acetyl cyclohexanone oxime was found to be low in the reaction using excess ammonium acetate as reagent. This may be resulted from the lower interaction of cyclohexanone oxime with non-polar framework of zeolite, as compared to that of cyclohexanone imine. As more cyclohexanone imine is produced, less probability of cyclohexanone oxime to react with the active site can be limited. Therefore, selectivity of cyclohexanone oxime was improved.

Additionally, the results from Table 3.8 show that in the reaction using zeolite Ti-Beta as catalyst, caprolactam was not produced as co-product when excess ammonium acetate was used. This can be attributed to the fact that high concentration of ammonium acetate would readily reduce trace of acid site in the framework (as discussed in section 3.4), which inhibits the rearrangement of cyclohexanone oxime to produce caprolactam.

However, in the reaction using zeolite Ti-Beta as catalyst, yield of cyclohexanone oxime was lower than that expected (the conversion of cyclohexanone should be higher than the reaction using TS-1 as catalyst). This may be resulted from the fact that the reaction using excess ammonium acetate, rearrangement of cyclohexanone oxime to caprolactam was not promoted (as discussed above). In consequence, there is no thermodynamic driving force for the reaction to proceed forward to the formation of caprolactam. Subsequently, the enhanced activity for ammoximation was not observed. Therefore, the yield of cyclohexanone oxime in the reaction using zeolite Ti-Beta as catalyst is not as high as it would have been.



3.3.9 Effect of Zeolite Deactivation

In industrial processes, catalyst used in the process could be deactivated. The catalyst regeneration contributes higher cost to the product. From the economic point of view, a catalyst with long catalytic lifetime or a catalyst that can be reused without regeneration was expected. In the ammoximation, the catalyst could be deactivated by various factors. They include loss of titanium active site from the framework and the blocking of zeolite pore. In this thesis the reuse of catalyst was investigated and the results are shown in Table 3.9.

Table 3.9 The yield of cyclohexanone oxime and caprolactam generated from the reaction using reused Ti-Zeolite as catalyst

Catalyst	TS-1		Ti-Beta	
	Fresh	Reused	Fresh	Reused
% Conversion of Cyclohexanone	25.7	29.1	34.2	36.2
% Yield of Cyclohexanone Oxime	20.8	19.5	15.5	19.1
% Yield of Caprolactam	-	-	12.3	6.4

Reaction condition. Temperature 60°C. Cyclohexanone 0.38 grams, ammonia solution (28% w/w) 0.73 grams and hydrogen peroxide solution (30% w/w) 0.53 grams. Acetic Acid 2.4 ml. Reaction Time 4 hours, used Ti-Zeolite 0.04 grams as catalyst.

The results show that the activity of TS-1 remains unchanged after use. This implies that there is no deactivation in TS-1. In the case of zeolite Ti-Beta, selectivity of cyclohexanone oxime was improved and yield of caprolactam is diminished in the reaction of used Ti-Beta. This may be resulted from a slightly blocking of zeolite Ti-Beta pore by the products deposited, which inhibits the rearrangement of cyclohexanone oxime to caprolactam. It can be concluded that titanium-containing zeolite can be reused in ammoximation with the same activity as the fresh one. Moreover, in the case of zeolite Ti-Beta, selectivity of cyclohexanone oxime can be improved without change in catalyst activity.

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CHAPTER 4

AMMOXIMATION OF CYCLOHEXANONE USING
TITANIUM-CONTAINING ZEOLITE CATALYST IN
CONTINUOUS PROCESS

4.1 Objectives

To accomplish the cyclohexanone synthesis in continuous process. To obtain suitable conditions for continuous process such as solvent, feed rate, Amount of catalyst and reaction temperature for the optimum yield and selectivity of products. To obtain the long catalytic life time.

4.2 Catalytic testing in continuous process

Continuous stirred tank reactor (CSTR) and plug flow reactor (PFR) are chosen for studying ammoniation of cyclohexanone in continuous process [1]. In CSTR process reaction was carried out at 60 °C in a 50 ml continuous stirred tank reactor (CSTR) using 1.00 grams of TS-1. Typically, 4.25 grams of cyclohexanone was added to 9.125 grams of ammoniasolution (28%w/w) and 6.625 grams of hydrogen peroxide solution (30%w/w) in acetic acid 30 grams. The feed rate(molar/hr.) ratio for continuous process was as follows: substance : $\text{NH}_3 : \text{H}_2\text{O}_2 = 1:1.5:1.2$ control by peristatic pump(GILSON miniplus3).

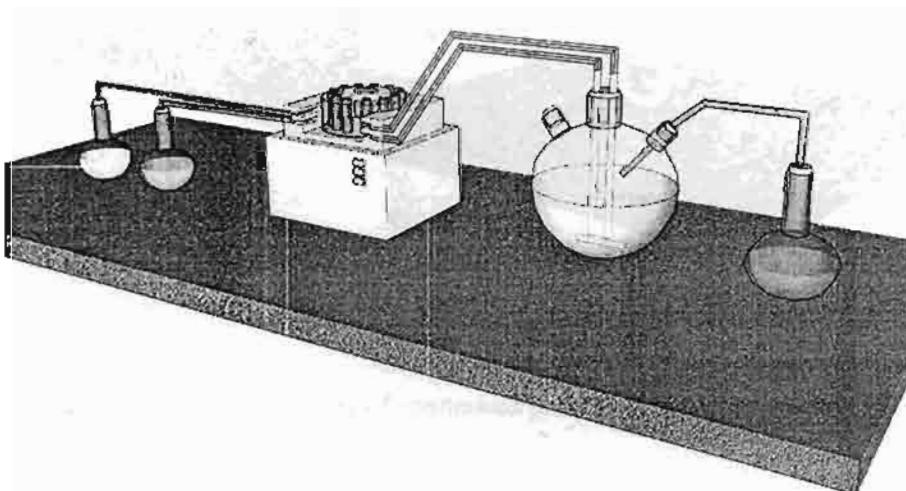


Figure 4.1 Schematic of catalytic testing of continuous process in stirred tank reactor

The schematic diagram of continuous process in a 50 ml continuous stirred tank reactor (CSTR) is shown in Figure 4.1. The contact time is estimate from batch reactor. It is shown in batch process that conversion was reached optimum after 4 hours residence time. Accordingly, retention volume, amount of catalyst and feeding rate were calculated to meet the condition for continuous process. H_2O_2 and a portion of acetic acid were primarily mixed in the first reservoir.

Whilst cyclohexanone, NH_3 and another portion of acetic acid were prepared in the second reservoir. Both reservoir were kept at 5 $^{\circ}\text{C}$ for preventing any reaction and H_2O_2 decomposition. Then the two mixtures were fed at the same flow rate (2x12.5 g./hr.) into CSTR by peristaltic pump (GILSON miniplus3). The feeding ratio for continuous process was as follows: cyclohexanone : NH_3 : H_2O_2 = 1:1.5:1.2 [2]. The CSTR primarily contain all reactant and catalyst and kept at reaction temperature for 4 hours before feeding.

In case of plug flow process, a 20 ml continuous plug flow reactor (PFR) were tested using the same conditions as in the 50 ml continuous stirred tank reactor (CSTR). The schematic diagram of continuous process in a 20 ml continuous plug flow reactor (PFR) is shown in Figure 4.2.

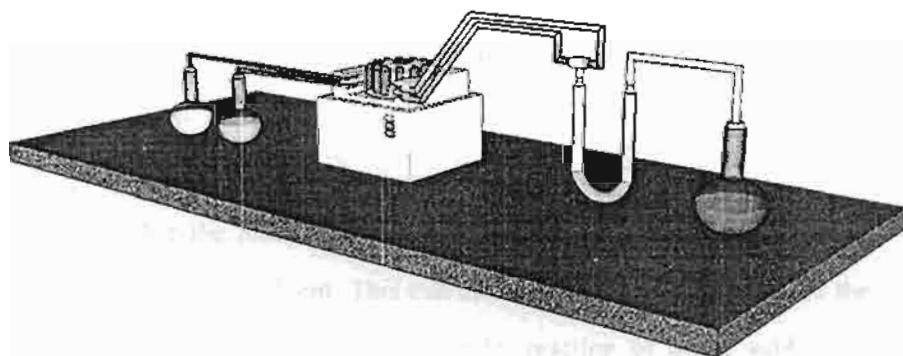


Figure 4.2 Schematic of catalytic testing of continuous process in plug flow reactor

The effluent of the CSTR and the CPFR were collected and analyzed every an hour. The solution was analyzed by gas chromatography using 3800 Gas Chromatography, Varian, with capillary DB-5.625 column (30m x 0.25 μm). Liquid sample 0.2 μl was injected to the injection port (200 $^{\circ}\text{C}$) using split ratio of 200. The separation temperature was started at 100 $^{\circ}\text{C}$ for 4 minutes. Then, the temperature was raised to 200 $^{\circ}\text{C}$ with a heating rate of 20 $^{\circ}\text{C}/\text{min}$. and hold at that temperature for 11 minutes N_2 was used as carrier gas at a flow rate of 28.1 cm/sec.

The structure of products generated in the reaction using acetic acid as solvent was also confirmed by gas chromatography-mass spectrometer using the same column and conditions.

4.3 Result and discussion

4.3.1 Effect of Solvent

The conversion, yield and selectivity from the reaction using acetic acid, water, iso-butanol, ethanol and acetonitrile are shown in Figure 4.3

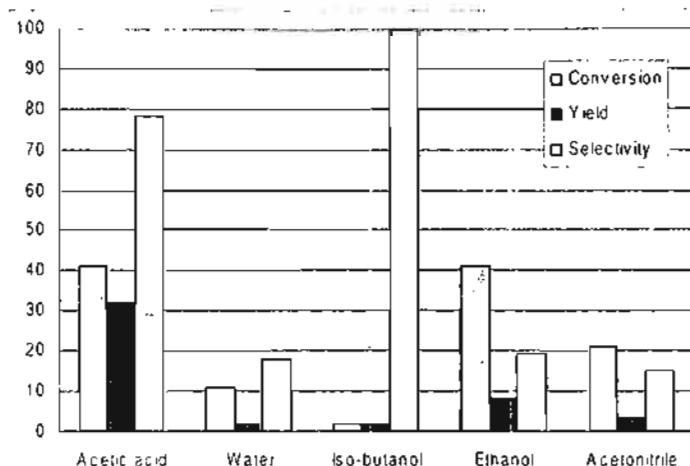


Figure 4.3 Conversion of cyclohexanone with yield and selectivity of cyclohexanone oxime over TS-1 catalyst. Reaction condition : temperature: 60 °C, W/F: 41.26 g_{catalyst} h mol⁻¹ _{reactant}, reaction time 6 hours in batch process

It was shown that the reaction using acetic acid as solvent produce higher yield of cyclohexanone oxime than other solvent. This can be attributed to the fact that, in the reaction using acetic acid, peracetic acid can be generated by reaction of acetic acid and hydrogen peroxide. This has been reported in the first year study, peracetic acid seem as better oxidizing agent leading to higher activity as choosen earlier [2]. In case of hydrophilic solvents namely water, ethanol and acetonitrile, lower yield of cyclohexanone oxime were produced as compared to that using acetic acid as a solvent. This is because these hydrophilic solvents strongly adsorb on the active site. Sorption of reactant, cyclohexanone is inhibited by competitive adsorption of such hydrophilic solvent. The catalytic testing in iso-butanol as solvent also give low yield of cyclohexanone oxime. Nevertheless, by product is not found in the routed using iso-butanol as solvent. This is because iso-butanol is a free radical scavenger and inhibitor for free radical reaction. Therefore, the reaction using iso-butanol as solvent produce higher selectivity of cyclohexanone oxime than other solvent. Accordingly, acetic acid is choosen for ammoximation of cyclohexanone oxime in continuous process.

4.3.2 Effect of Titanium species

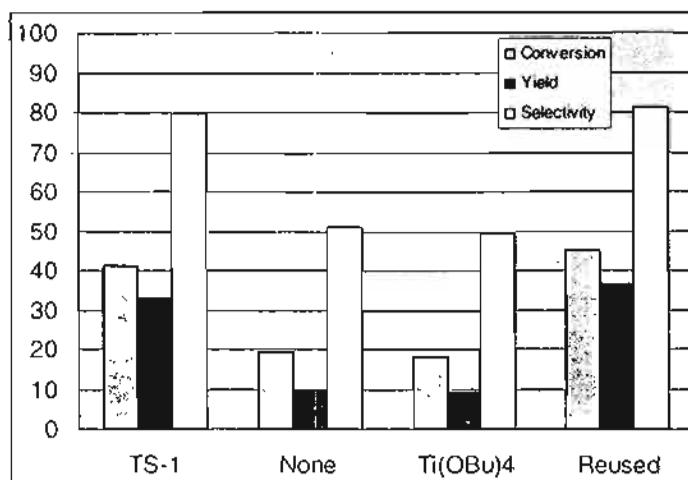


Figure 4.4 Conversion of cyclohexanone with yield and selectivity of cyclohexanone oxime over TS-1 catalyst. Reaction condition : temperature: 60 °C, W/F: 41.26 g_{catalyst} h mol⁻¹_{reaction}, reaction time 6 hours in batch process

From Figure 4.4 a poor selectivity of cyclohexanone oxime was obtained in the reaction without catalyst. In contradiction the presence of TS-1 catalyst leads to a better activity and selectivity of the oxidised products. This is not only because TS-1 can promote the formation of peracetic acid [3] but also due to the presence of active oxidising species formed by the peracetic acid and titanium framework. Hence, the activity towards oxidation is enhanced, as compared to that with out catalyst. When an equivalent mole of tetrabutyl orthotitanate was used instead of TS-1, a similar result to the non-catalysed reaction was also observed. Therefore, it is clear that the enhanced ammoniation activities are mainly derived from neither the homogeneous reaction nor the leached titanium species, if applicable.

4.3.3 Influence of Reactor types

The conversion, yield and selectivity from the reaction in (PFR) and (CSTR) are shown in Figure 4.5

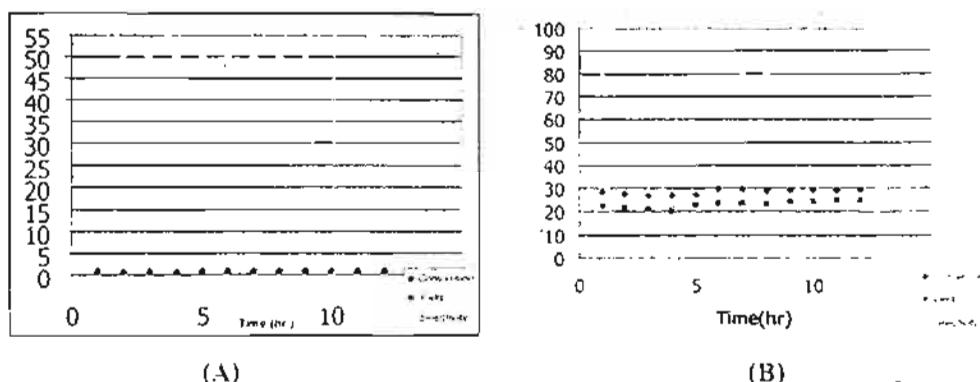


Figure 4.5 Conversion of cyclohexanone with yield and selectivity of cyclohexanone oxime over TS-1 catalyst. *Reaction condition : temperature; 60 °C, W/F; 41.26 g_{catalyst} h mol⁻¹_{reaction}, time of process : 12 hours, (A) = plug flow reactor and (B) = stirred tank reactor*

From Figure 4.5 it is shown that lower yield of cyclohexanone oxime is produced in continuous plug flow reactor (A) as compare to that from continuous stirred tank reactor (B). This is because the ammoniation of cyclohexanone using acetic acid as solvent is a tri-phase system[4]. As the heterogeneous mixture flow through catalyst bed. The sites contact with hydrophobic phase ($\text{H}_2\text{O} + \text{H}_2\text{O}_2$) can not be easily accessed by hydrophilic phase (cyclohexanone) and vice versa. Accordingly, the ammoniation of cyclohexanone is hardly promoted in continuous plug flow reactor. On the other hand, well-mixing can be achieved in continuous stirred tank reactor. higher opportunity of cyclohexanone to react with active site. Accordingly, continuous stirred tank reactor appear to be best suited for ammoniation of cyclohexanone using acetic acid as solvent.

4.3.4 Influence of Retention volume

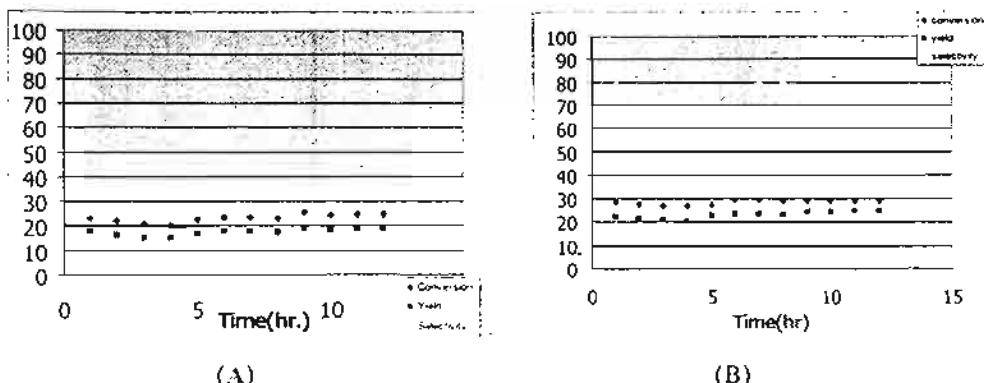


Figure 4.6 Conversion of cyclohexanone with yield and selectivity of cyclohexanone oxime over TS-1 catalyst. Reaction condition : temperature: 60 °C, W.F: 41.26 g_{reactant} h mol⁻¹ reactant, time of process : 12 hours, (A) = 100 ml and (B) = 50 ml

The result from Figures 4.6 shows that the decreased reactor size for catalytic testing leads to a slightly increase in cyclohexanone oxime formation. This is because the reaction in smaller reactor is higher H₂O₂ consumption rate than H₂O₂ decomposition rate. Therefore, the small retention volume can reduced the decomposition rate of H₂O₂ and produce higher yield of product.

4.3.5 Effect of Amount of Catalyst

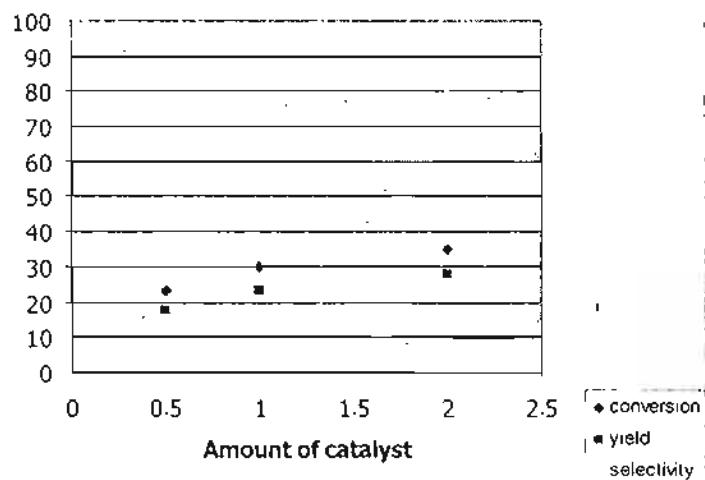


Figure 4.7 Conversion of cyclohexanone with yield and selectivity of cyclohexanone oxime over TS-1 catalyst. Reaction condition : temperature: 60 °C, time of process : 12 hours

The result from Figure 4.7 shows that the increased amount of TS-1 in the reaction leads to an increase in cyclohexanone oxime formation. This is because cyclohexanone have a higher possibility to react with active sites and higher yield of product can be obtained. However the conversion seems to be limited by decomposition of H_2O_2 . This is because high feeding rate is used in this system.

4.3.6 Effect of H_2O_2 concentration

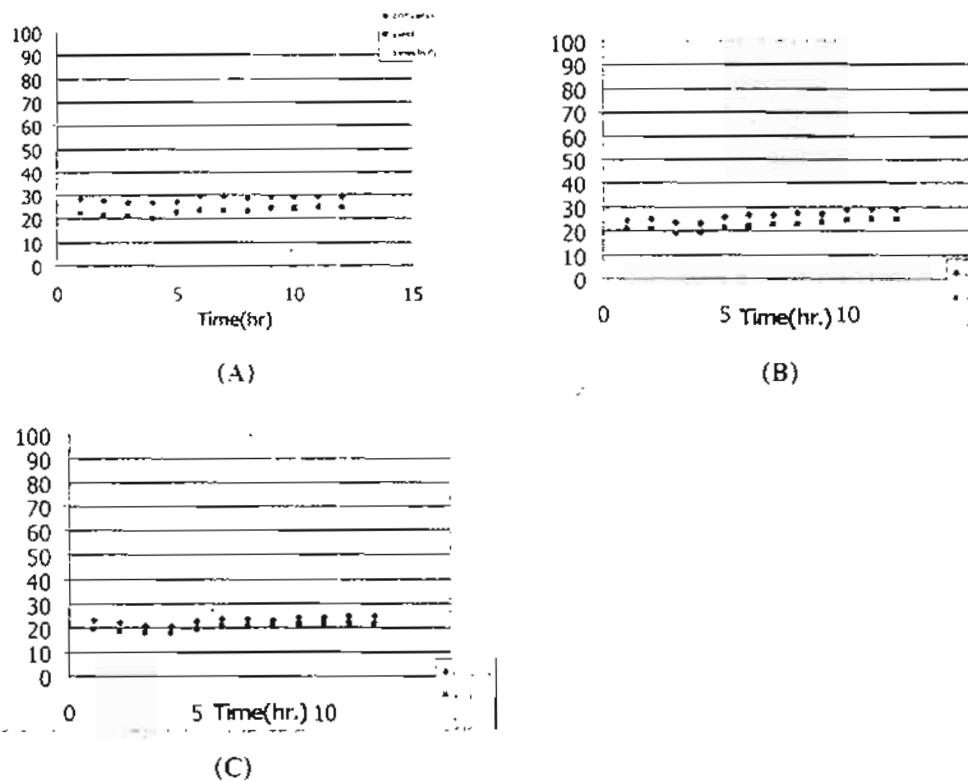


Figure 4.8 Conversion of cyclohexanone with yield and selectivity of cyclohexanone oxime over TS-1 catalyst. Reaction condition : temperature: 60 $^{\circ}C$, W/F: $41.26 \text{ g}_{\text{catalyst}} \text{ h mol}^{-1}_{\text{reaction}}$, time of process : 12 hours . (A) = molar ratio of cyclohexanone/ H_2O_2 : 1/1.2 , (B) = molar ratio of cyclohexanone/ H_2O_2 : 1/0.6 and (C) = molar ratio of cyclohexanone/ H_2O_2 : 1/0.4

The result from Figure 4.8 shows that when the molar ratio of cyclohexanone and hydrogen peroxide is increased, the selectivity of cyclohexanone oxime is raised. This is because the increasing of molar ratio of cyclohexanone and hydrogen peroxide is reduce rate of homogeneous reaction. Accordingly, side products such as aldol condensation and acetyl cyclohexanone oxime[2] are decreased and the suitable molar ratio(1/0.6) of cyclohexanone and

hydrogen peroxide is chosen for ammoniation of cyclohexanone oxime in continuous stirred tank reactor.

4.3.7 Influence of Contact time

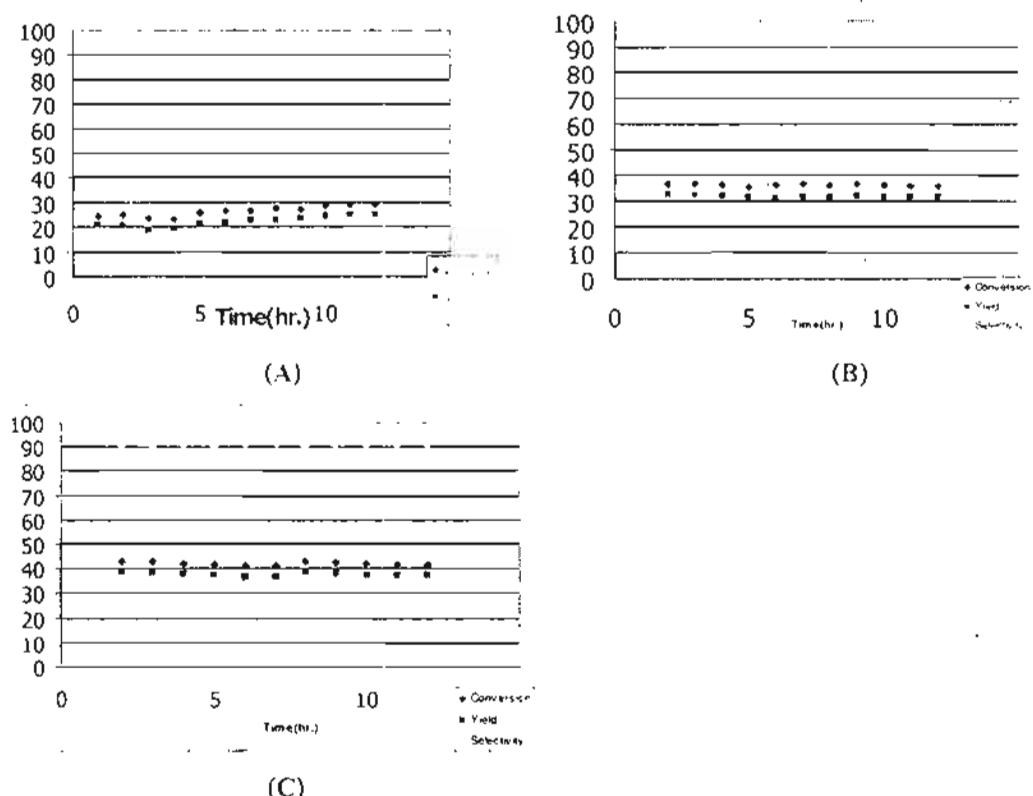


Figure 4.9 Conversion of cyclohexanone with yield and selectivity of cyclohexanone oxime over TS-1 catalyst. Reaction condition : temperature, 60 °C, W/F; $41.26 \text{ g catalyst } h \text{ mol}^{-1} \text{ reactant}$, time of process : 12 hours , (A) = $41.26 \text{ g catalyst } h \text{ mol}^{-1} \text{ reactant}$, (B) = $64.93 \text{ g catalyst } h \text{ mol}^{-1} \text{ reactant}$ (C) = $148.75 \text{ g catalyst } h \text{ mol}^{-1} \text{ reactant}$

Although increase in molar ratio of cyclohexanone oxime and hydrogen peroxide can increase selectivity of cyclohexanone oxime this reduces conversion of cyclohexanone. Accordingly, increase contact time would solve the problem. This could be done by reducing flow rate of the feeds. The result from Figure 4.9 shows that when feeding rate is decreased the conversion of cyclohexanone is raised. Additionally, increase molar ratio of cyclohexanone and hydrogen peroxide also slightly increase selectivity. This is because hydrogen peroxide is consumed in catalytic process, and hence homogeneous is diminished.

The suitable contact time($64.93 \text{ g}_{\text{catalyst}} \text{ h mol}^{-1} \text{ reactant}$) is chosen for ammoniation of cyclohexanone oxime in continuous stirred tank reactor.

4.3.8 Influence of Catalytic life time

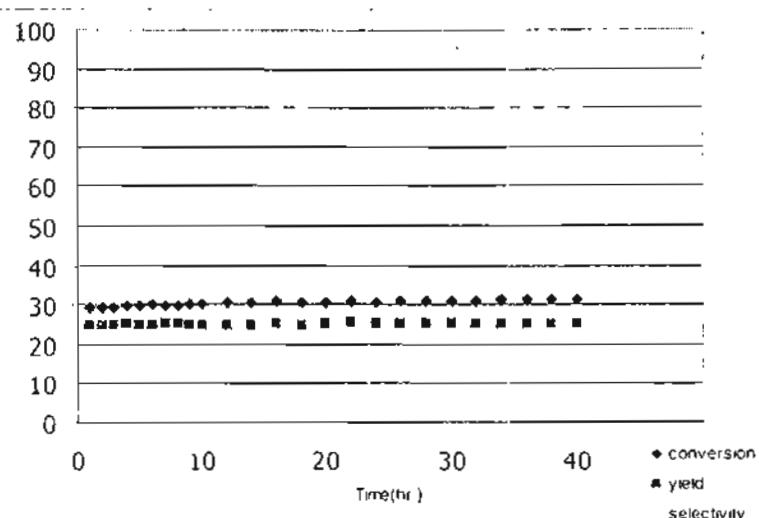


Figure 4.10 Conversion of cyclohexanone with yield and selectivity of cyclohexanone oxime over TS-1 catalyst. Reaction condition : temperature; 60°C , W/F; $41.26 \text{ g}_{\text{catalyst}} \text{ h mol}^{-1} \text{ reactant}$, time of process (40 hours, molar ratio of cyclohexanone/ H_2O_2 ; 1/0.6

The result from Figure 4.10 shows the long life catalytic activity of TS-1 for ammoniation of cyclohexanone. Over 40 hours of testing, the catalyst can promote a steady yield of cyclohexanone oxime. This indicate that of titanium frame work site for catalytic activity, is retained as observed by FT-IR in Figure 4.11.

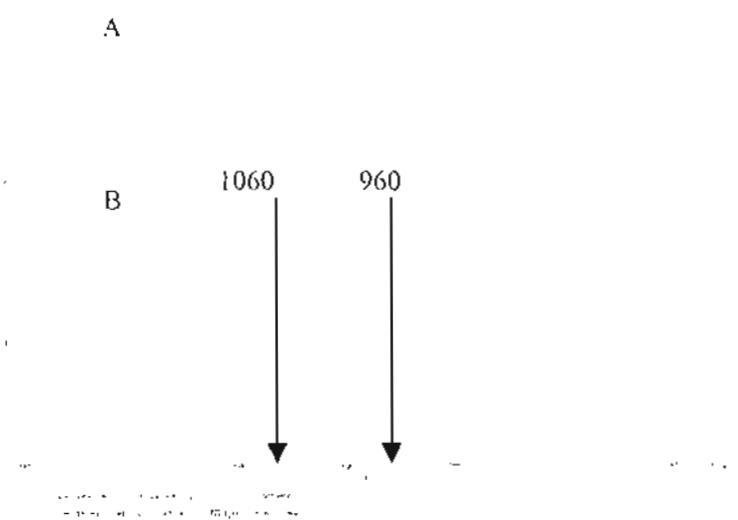


Figure 4.11 Fourier Transformed IR spectra of TS-1 before and after using

It can be seem that after 40 hours testing, TS-1 catalyst exhibit characteristic adsorption of Ti-O-Si at 960 cm^{-1} [5,6,7].

4.3.9 Effect of Titanium framework leaching

In consistantwith the observed long life activity, it can be seem that small amount of Ti was leaching from the catalyst. The silicon and titanium content of zeolites were demtermined by X-ray Fluorescence (XRF). The result are shown in table 4.1

Table 4.1 The determination of silicon and titanium of TS-1 before and after used for 12 hours testing.

Calcining temperature	Silicon/Titanium
Fresh	30.10
550 °C	33.68
575 °C	32.26
600 °C	30.69

It was shown that fresh TS-1 has silicon /titanium ratio of 30.10. Calcining at 550 °C of TS-1, the silicon /titanium ratio increase to 33.68 after using. This suggest lost of titanium active site form titanium framework. When calcining temperature raise to 575 °C and 600 °C the silicon /titanium ratio are decreased to 32.26 and 30.69 respectively. This indicate that leaching of titanium active site is reduce when the temperature for calcination is raise. In other words, active site is more stable when high temperature treatment is applied. However, calcining temperature should not be exceed to 600 °C because Ti framework can be collapsed into inactive octahedral titanium species.

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Suggestion for Future Studies

1. In the ammoniation using acetic acid as solvent, caprolactone, a valuable industrial chemicals, is formed as by-product by “Baeyer-Villiger” rearrangement. The “Baeyer-Villiger” rearrangement should be studied using titanium-containing zeolites as catalyst.
2. The ammoniation using acetic acid as solvent, peracetic acid is formed and served as active oxidizing agent. However, using other solvent showed that there is no direct conclusion of solvent effect from the investigation. Therefore, investigation on effect of other solvent could be studied.
3. Various reactor types for oxidation using titanium containing zeolites such as capillary reactor and chamber of slide reactor should be studied.
4. The interest sulfoxidation using TS-1 as catalyst in oils will be studied.

Output

1. Publication
 - 1.1 Tawan Sooknoi and Veerachai Chitranuwatkul “Ammoniation of cyclohexanone in acetic acid using titanium silicalite-1.” catalyst:Activity and reaction pathway. Journal of Molecular Catalysis A, Chem. 236, 2005. pp. 220-22
2. Manuscript
 - 2.1 Tawan Sooknoi and Pirulh Seehabua “Continuous liquid phase ammoniation of cyclohexanone using titanium containing zeolites catalyst.” Submitted to Applied catalysis A General.
3. M.SC. graduates
 - 3.1 Miss. Umaporn Yangjan Thesis title : Beckmann rearrangement of cyclohexanone oxime.
 - 3.2 Mr. Veerachai Chitranuwatkul Thesis title : Ammoniation of cyclohexanone by Ti-containing zeolites catalyst.
 - 3.3 Mr. Pirulh Seehabua Thesis title : Ammoniation of cyclohexanone using Ti-containing zeolites catalyst in cotinuous Process.



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Ammoximation of cyclohexanone in acetic acid using titanium silicalite-1 catalyst: Activity and reaction pathway

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Abstract

The activity of titanium silicalite (TS-1) and the reaction pathway for the ammoximation of cyclohexanone to produce cyclohexanone oxime were studied using acetic acid as a solvent at 60 °C. The effect of solvent, sources of nitrogen, water content and the active site stability were also evaluated. It was found that, in the reaction using acetic acid as a solvent, the ammoximation of cyclohexanone proceeded mainly via the oxidation of imine, which was primarily formed in situ by the condensation of ketone with ammonia. In addition, the ammonium salts of weak acids, such as acetate, citrate and carbonate, can be used as nitrogen sources for the ammoximation in acetic acid. Water was shown to inhibit the formation of imine, and also prevent the side reactions. Moreover, TS-1 possessed an excellent stability, and can be reused without significant loss of activity.

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Keywords: Ammoximation; Acetic acid; TS-1; Reaction pathway

1. Introduction

Titanium-containing zeolites are found to be efficient catalysts for the selective oxidation of a large number of organic substrates, such as alkanes, alkenes, alcohols, aromatics and phenol [1–5]. The liquid-phase ammoximation of ketone over titanium zeolites to synthesise oxime is another important process attracting industrial interests. As cyclohexanone oxime is the key intermediate for the manufacture of caprolactam through Beckmann rearrangement, the ammoximation of cyclohexanone using NH₃ and H₂O₂ is widely investigated [6–14]. Compared with the current commercial processes, liquid-phase ammoximation of cyclohexanone over titanium-containing zeolites can be carried out in one step, without use of environmentally undesirable chemicals, and only small amounts of by-products formed by homogeneous reactions are obtained [11]. This is because the oxime can only be produced by the reaction of substrate(s) with

titanium active sites, which is previously generated by an interaction of the framework titanium with H₂O₂ [9,13]. A clear clarification of the reaction pathway for this reaction is not only scientifically valuable, but also industrially important.

Since early 1990s, a debate on the reaction pathway for the ammoximation of ketone has widely become interesting. In order to explain the formation of peroxydicyclohexylimine, Thangaraj et al. [6] have proposed a mechanism that the ammoximation proceeds through an unstable intermediate, imine. This mechanism is similar to that reported for the gas-phase ammoximation of cyclohexanone in the presence of NH₃ and O₂ [15], and has been supported by IR spectroscopy which proves the formation of adsorbed imine species on the surface of TS-1 [16]. The imine intermediate is then oxidised by the titanium active sites to an oxime. Despite the restricted diffusion of cyclohexanone and its oxime in the medium pore zeolites, an excellent catalytic performance was observed by several groups using TS-1 [6–8]. This is later drawn into recent conclusion that the reaction proceeds via the oxidation of ammonia to hydroxylamine, which subsequently reacts with the ketone to form a corresponding oxime [12–14].

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In this work, acetic acid that was recently reported to improve the catalytic activity for cyclohexane oxidation [17], was used as a solvent in the ammoximation of cyclohexanone. Comparing with the reaction using water, an enhanced catalytic activity was also observed in the reaction using acetic acid as a solvent. The results from this study also suggest that, in the presence of acetic acid, the reaction pathway was different from the well-accepted pathway that observed in the reaction using water and other nucleophilic solvents. The difference in the reaction mechanism accordingly effects the product selectivity, and the causes of such observation were discussed.

2. Experimental procedure

Na-free TS-1 were synthesised using a procedure modified from that report in literature [18]. Tetrabutyl orthotitanate (2.36 g) was mixed with deionised water at 5 °C, followed by 30% hydrogen peroxide solution (4.29 g) under stirring for 30 min. Then, 25% ammonia solution (8.34 g at 5 °C) was added and stirred. The solution was left overnight at room temperature. The solution was then heated at 80–90 °C for 30 min. Ammonia solution was added until the last solution has just as much weight as before heating. After that this solution was added into the mixture of deionised water (9.36 g), tetrapropylammonium bromine (TPABr, 3.08 g) and Ludox (10.81 g) under vigorous stirring. The mixture was stirred for a day and the final yellow gel with a molar composition of 15 TPABr:3.8 TiO₂:94 SiO₂:2168 H₂O:212 NH₃:12.3 H₂O₂ was loaded in the autoclave and crystallised at 185 °C. After 5 days, the synthetic zeolite was filtered, washed and calcined at 550 °C with a heating rate of 2 °C/min. Calcination was carried out in dry air for 5 h and the sample was left to cool in the furnace under stream of nitrogen. After cooling, the calcined sample was repeatedly washed by 5 M of sulphuric acid until non-framework titanium species cannot be detected by a colour change upon dropping hydrogen peroxide. Finally, the sample was calcined again in air at 550 °C for 4 h. The TS-1 catalyst was then characterised using XRD, XRF, SEM and FTIR. Surface area of the TS-1 catalyst was determined by nitrogen adsorption technique.

Catalytic studies of cyclohexanone ammoximation were carried out in a micro batch reactor (10 ml) using 0.04 g of TS-1. Typically, cyclohexanone (0.38 g) was added to 28% (w/w) ammonia solution (0.73 g) and solvent (2.4 ml). The mixture was then heated to the reaction temperature under vigorous stirring. Finally, 30% (w/w) hydrogen peroxide solution (0.53 g) was added into the mixture. The molar ratio of the feed used in the reaction was as follows: ketone:NH₃:H₂O₂ = 1:1.5:1.2. After a period of time, the reaction was halted by removing heat and quenching in an ice bath. 2-Propanol (4 ml) was then added to homogenise the reaction mixture. The solution was filtered and analysed by GC-FID with DB-FFAP capillary column (0.25 mm × 30 m). The separation temperature was started from 110 to 170 °C

with a heating rate of 20 °C/min. Helium was used as a carrier gas at a linear velocity of 28 cm/s.

3. Results and discussion

3.1. Catalyst characterisation

X-ray diffraction and scanning electron microscope show that TS-1 sample is a well-defined, crystalline microporous material. The TS-1 sample with large and uniform crystallite size (5 μm × 20 μm) was chosen in this study. Although a reduced activity could be expected from the restricted diffusion of cyclohexanone in TS-1 channels, using catalyst with large primary crystals can ensure that the observed catalytic activity was mainly derived from that in the pore of TS-1. The catalyst also showed a characteristic adsorption of tetrahedrally coordinated Ti–O–Si at ~960 cm⁻¹. Elemental analysis by X-ray fluorescence showed that a constant Si/Ti ~26 was obtained after repeatedly washing with 5 M sulphuric acid. The specific surface area of 358 m²/g was obtained by nitrogen adsorption at 77 K.

3.2. Catalytic activity

The ammoximation of cyclohexanone over TS-1 is shown in Fig. 1. It can be seen that the reaction using acetic acid as a solvent give a higher conversion than that using water. As previously discussed elsewhere [17], this can be attributed to the fact that peracetic acid was generated in the reaction using acetic acid as a solvent. The peracetic acid can further react with titanium tetrahedral producing peroxy-complex in a manner similar to that generated from hydrogen peroxide. The fact that the peracetic acid is more hydrophobic than the hydrogen peroxide, the peroxy-complex formed by peracetic acid (a softer ligand) would be relatively more stable. Therefore, higher amounts of active sites are available for the reaction. Additionally, the active site formed by peracetic acid would possess a better oxidising activity due to its higher electron density. These would lead to an improved activity for cyclohexanone conversion when acetic acid was used as a solvent.

3.3. Product selectivity

However, selectivity of cyclohexanone oxime in the reaction using acetic acid as a solvent was lower than that using water. Other products confirmed by GC-MS are 2-oxepanone and acetyl cyclohexanone oxime. The first could be formed by "Baeyer–Villiger Rearrangement" when cyclohexanone react directly with peracetic acid in the presence of acid [19]. As TS-1 possesses the medium pore size (~5.5 Å), it is unlikely that 2-oxepanone, a seven membered ring, is generated in the pore of TS-1. It may be postulated that 2-oxepanone was generated homogeneously in the liquid-phase without aid of TS-1. The second by-product, acetyl cyclohexanone

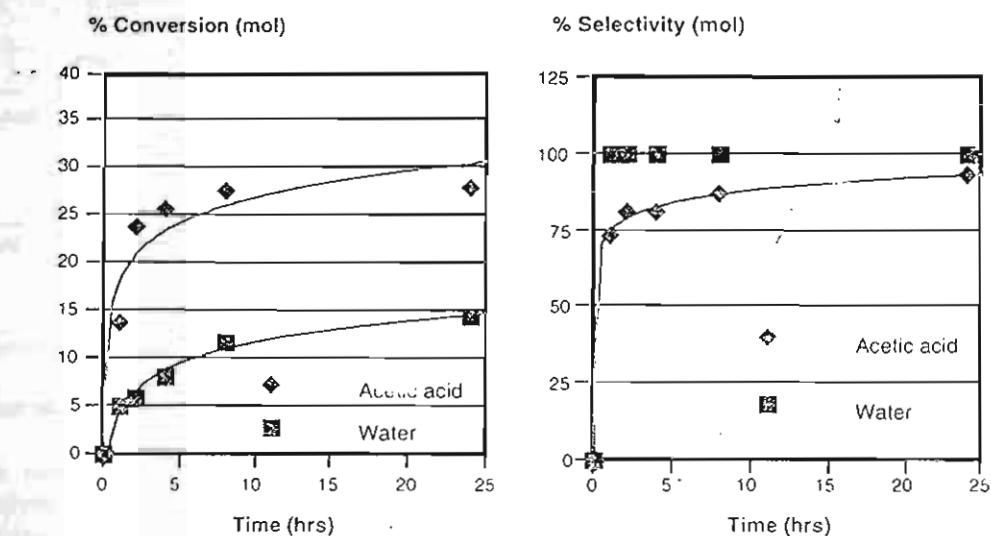


Fig. 1. Conversion of cyclohexanone and selectivity of cyclohexanone oxime from the reaction using acetic acid and water as solvent (reaction condition: at 60 °C, cyclohexanone 0.38 g, ammonia solution (28%, w/w) 0.73 g, hydrogen peroxide solution (30%, w/w) 0.53 g, solvent 2.4 mL, TS-1 0.04 g).

oxime, could be possibly generated either from (i) a simple condensation of cyclohexanone oxime formed in the reaction with acetic acid or (ii) an oxidative coupling of cyclohexanone oxime with acetic acid in the presence of hydrogen peroxide and TS-1. In order to verify the above possibilities, the path (i) was tested by heating and stirring cyclohexanone oxime with acetic acid without hydrogen peroxide and TS-1 for 4 h. While the path (ii) was tested in the presence of hydrogen peroxide and TS-1. It was found that acetyl cyclohexanone oxime cannot be generated by path (i) test. However, the reaction tested for path (ii) produce notably amounts of acetyl cyclohexanone oxime. Consequently, it seems that acetyl cyclohexanone oxime was generated by coupling of cyclohexanone oxime with acetyl radical, which is presum-

ably decomposed from the acetyl peroxy-titanium complex. The acetyl peroxy-titanium species were earlier suggested [17] to be formed by an interaction of tetrahedral titanium with peracetic acid and their decomposition would lead to the generation of active oxidising species [20] as proposed in Fig. 2. Typically, the decomposition of peroxy-titanium species (a) may well be driven by the reaction with hydrogen peroxide to give acetic acid (or water). However, thermal decomposition to give acetyl radical (or hydrogen radical) could also take place. Fig. 3 demonstrates the formation of 2-oxepanone and acetyl cyclohexanone oxime. In addition to the oxidised products, adducts from aldol condensation are also observed from the reaction using acetic acid as a solvent. This is probably due to the decreased pH of the media, which

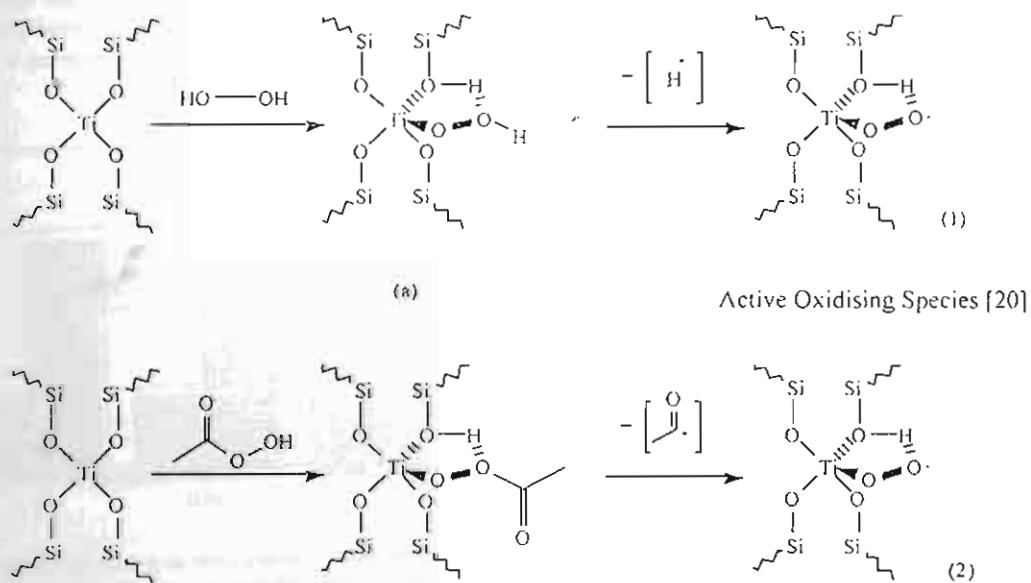


Fig. 2. A proposed reaction pathway for the formation of active oxidising species in the reaction using (1) water and (2) acetic acid as solvent.

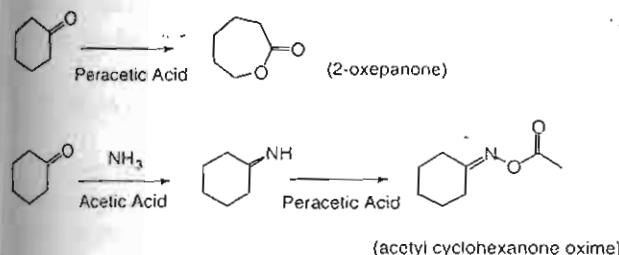


Fig. 3. Formation of 2-oxepanone and acetyl cyclohexanone oxime.

readily promotes acid-catalysed condensation of cyclohexanone.

Despite the conversion was increased by increasing amount of catalysts used, the selectivity of cyclohexanone oxime was not significantly changed (Fig. 4). This is because, in presence of acetic acid, 2-oxepanone (the major by-product) was generated by the homogeneous reaction of cyclohexanone with peracetic acid, as discussed earlier. When the amount of catalyst was increased, more peracetic acid can also be obtained. Therefore, yield of both cyclohexanone oxime and 2-oxepanone would be increased without a marked change in product selectivity.

In the reaction using water as a solvent, peracetic acid was not present and hydrogen peroxide alone is not effective for the Baeyer–Villiger reaction. Therefore, there is no 2-oxepanone and also acetyl cyclohexanone oxime produced. Thus, selectivity of cyclohexanone oxime in the reaction using water as a solvent is considerably high.

3.4. Active sites and its stability

Since peracetic acid, generated in situ from hydrogen peroxide and acetic acid, can be a strong oxidising agent, one may argue that the observed activity may well be derived solely from the homogeneous reaction. Moreover, the strong interaction of peracetic acid with the titanium active sites

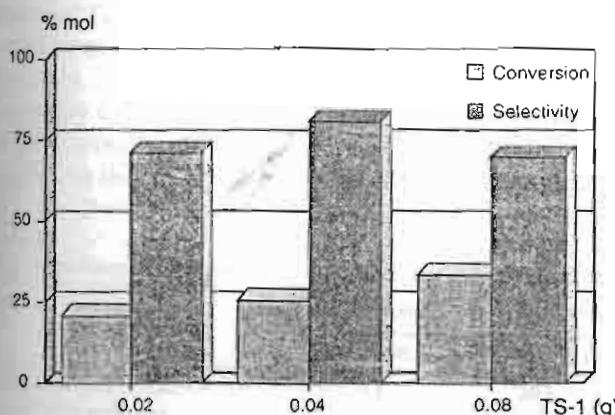


Fig. 4. Effect of catalyst loading on conversion of cyclohexanone and selectivity of cyclohexanone oxime (reaction condition: at 60 °C, cyclohexanone 0.38 g, ammonia solution (28%, w/w) 0.73 g and hydrogen peroxide solution (30%, w/w) 0.53 g, acetic acid 2.4 ml, reaction time 4 h, TS-1 0.02, 0.04 and 0.08 g as catalyst).

Table 1

Conversion of cyclohexanone and yield of products (mol%) from the reactions without catalyst, with tetrabutyl orthotitanate and with reused TS-1 as catalysts

Catalyst	TS-1	None	Ti(OBu) ₄	Reused TS-1
Conversion of cyclohexane	47.8	31.7	31.1	55.3
Yield of cyclohexane oxime	37.8	17.8	22.2	46.1
Yield of 2-oxepanone	/	3.0	4.8	2.9
Aldol products	2.0	4.0	—	1.9
Yield of acetyl cyclohexane oxime	2.5	1.1	1.6	0.9
Yield of coupling products	2.5	3.9	3.5	2.0

Reaction condition: Temperature 60 °C, cyclohexanone 0.38 g, ammonia solution (28%, w/w) 0.73 g and hydrogen peroxide solution (30%, w/w) 0.53 g, acetic acid 2.4 ml, reaction time 6 h, titanium-containing zeolites 0.04 g as catalyst (or equivalent mol of titanium species).

could result in the dissolution of titanium as peroxyo-complex into acetic acid. The leached Ti species may also be responsible for some parts of the observed activity as suggested elsewhere [21]. To verify the above possibility, the ammoximation of cyclohexanone without TS-1 was tested, together with that using tetrabutyl orthotitanate as a catalyst.

From Table 1, it was found that part of the observed activity was also contributed from the homogeneous oxidation by peracetic acid. However, in addition to the oxidised products, adducts from aldol condensation were increasingly promoted. Thus, a poor selectivity of cyclohexanone oxime was obtained in the reaction without catalyst. In contradiction the presence of TS-1 catalyst leads to a better activity and selectivity of the oxidised products. This is not only because TS-1 can promote the formation of peracetic acid [17], but also due to the presence of active oxidising species formed by the peracetic acid and the titanium framework. Hence, the activity towards oxidation is enhanced, as compared to that without catalyst. When an equivalent mole of tetrabutyl orthotitanate was used instead of TS-1, a similar result to the non-catalysed reaction was also observed. Therefore, it is clear that the enhanced ammoximation activities are mainly derived from neither the homogeneous reaction nor the leached titanium species, if applicable.

Although the tetrahedral titanium framework of TS-1 is relatively stable, the strong interaction of peracetic acid with the titanium framework could lead to the leaching of titanium active sites into the solution. This was indeed observed in the oxidation of cyclohexane using acetic acid as a solvent [17]. According to this study, the homogeneous titanium species has no significant effect on the ammoximation of cyclohexanone in acetic acid. Nevertheless, leaching of titanium active sites during the reaction is not preferable and has become one of the major drawbacks for industrial applications. Actually, such circumstance is not the case for the ammoximation of cyclohexanone. No notable amount of dissolved titanium was detected in the solution (by UV-vis adsorption) and when the catalyst was reused without thermal regeneration, the activity of TS-1 is even enhanced (Table 1). The cause of the slightly improved activity of the reused TS-1 cannot be evaluated at this stage. However, a better stability of TS-1 in acetic acid

is probably derived from the presence of nitrogen sources, which would increase pH of the solution and, hence, suppress the dissolution of the framework titanium species.

3.5. Mechanistic study

Unless the reaction pathway proceed via oxidation of ammonia to produce primarily hydroxylamine, the enhanced activity in the reaction using acetic acid may well be resulted from the enhanced formation of cyclohexanone imine. The formation of imine was previously evidenced by an absorption band at $\sim 1653\text{ cm}^{-1}$ when ammonia and cyclohexanone was introduced to Ti-mordenite at 60°C [12]. As the amount of cyclohexanone imine is increased, the oxidation of cyclohexanone imine would also be accelerated, resulting in a higher yield of cyclohexanone oxime in the reaction using acetic acid, as compared to that using water.

From the mechanistic point of view, the condensation of cyclohexanone with ammonia in acetic acid would be favoured because cyclohexanone imine formation is facilitated at pH approximately 4–5 or in the presence of acid catalyst [22]. However, a recent report [14] demonstrated that in the reaction using water, hydroxylamine was primarily formed. These possibilities can be readily tested either by the reaction of ammonia with only cyclohexanone prior to the addition of TS-1 and hydrogen peroxide (test I), or the reaction of only ammonia with catalyst and hydrogen peroxide, followed by catalyst removal and cyclohexanone addition (test II). The test I can be employed to verify the hypothesis that ammonium proceeds via condensation of cyclohexanone with ammonia. On the other hand, the hypothesis for hydroxylamine formation can be demonstrated by the test II.

From Table 2, it shows that cyclohexanone oxime can be only formed in test I when acetic acid is used as a solvent. Thus, the condensation of cyclohexanone with ammonia in homogeneous phase is facilitated in the presence of acetic acid (test I). It is also possible that the cyclohexanone imine could interact with a relatively hydrophobic active site, formed by complexation of peracetic acid and the framework titanium. Therefore, the oxidation of the imine to the oxime could be expected. In contrast, when acetic acid is used as a solvent, ammonia was protonated in test II and may not be readily oxidised to hydroxylamine. Conclusively, in the reaction using acetic acid as a solvent, only the pathway proceeded via the condensation of cyclohexanone with am-

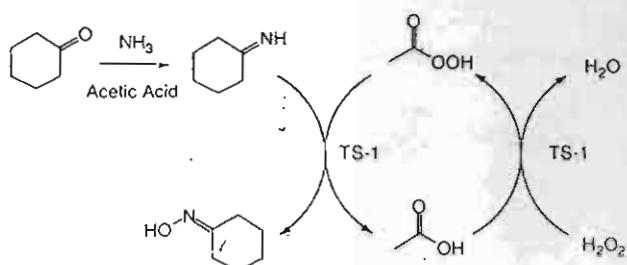


Fig. 5. Proposed reaction pathway for cyclohexanone ammonium using acetic acid as a solvent.

nia should be responsible for the formation of cyclohexanone oxime. Fig. 5 illustrates the reaction pathway, which is proposed from the results observed in this study.

In the reaction using water as a solvent, on the other hand, cyclohexanone oxime can be formed by both tests. Since ammonia was not readily protonated in the reaction using water as a solvent, it can directly react with the active sites to produce hydroxylamine. The observed smaller yield of cyclohexanone oxime in test II may be derived from (i) an incomplete formation of hydroxylamine when the catalyst was removed, and/or (ii) the oxidation of hydroxylamine to nitrite and nitrate species [14] before cyclohexanone was added.

3.6. Ammonium salts as reagents

The fact that the observed catalytic pathway is inconsistent with the previous report when acetic acid is used as a solvent can be accounted for a poor activity of protonated ammonia towards the oxidation. However, such species are readily active for condensation with cyclohexanone. This can be further investigated using various types of ammonium salts as sources of nitrogen. It is reasonable to postulate that in the reaction using acetic acid as a solvent, ammonium acetate is formed. This salt must be able to react with cyclohexanone, which is indeed observed together with other weakly acid salts as shown in Table 3.

When weakly acid salts, such as ammonium acetate, citrate and carbonate, were used as reagent in the presence

Table 2
Yield of cyclohexanone oxime (mol%) from reaction pathway testing

Test	Solvent	
	Water	Acetic acid
Typical reaction	8.1	20.8
Test I (imine pathway)	7.4	14.9
Test II (hydroxylamine pathway)	4.7	0.27

Reaction condition: Temperature 60°C , cyclohexanone 0.38 g, ammonia solution (28%, w/w) 0.73 g and hydrogen peroxide solution (30%, w/w) 0.53 g. Solvent 2.4 ml, TS-1 0.04 g, reaction time: 2 h/4 h (step 1/step 2).

Table 3

Yield of cyclohexanone oxime (mol%) from reaction using ammonium salts as reagent

Reagent	Solvent	
	Water	Acetic acid
Ammonia solution (NH_3OH)	8.1	20.8
Ammonium acetate (NH_4OAc)	0.68	21.5
Ammonium citrate ($(\text{NH}_4)_2\text{HC}_6\text{H}_5\text{O}_7$)	0.47	6.6
Ammonium carbonate ($(\text{NH}_4)_2\text{CO}_3$)	6.3	8.3
Ammonium oxalate ($(\text{NH}_4)_2\text{C}_2\text{O}_4$)	Trace	1.8
Ammonium chloride (NH_4Cl)	Trace	Trace
Ammonium sulphate ($(\text{NH}_4)_2\text{SO}_4$)	Trace	Trace

Reaction condition: Temperature 60°C , cyclohexanone 0.38 g, hydrogen peroxide solution (30%, w/w) 0.53 g, solvent 2.4 ml, TS-1 0.04 g, reaction time 4 h.

of acetic acid, cyclohexanone oxime was indeed generated. Particularly, there is no significant difference between the reaction using ammonia solution and that using ammonium acetate as reagent. This confirms that ammonium salts is quite active for ammonium. A relatively lower activity was observed when ammonium citrate was used as reagent. This is because ammonium citrate is a salt of hydroxy polyacid, therefore it can be somewhat dissociated in acetic acid. Consequently, reactivity for the reaction with cyclohexanone to generate cyclohexanone imine is relatively lower than the reaction using ammonium acetate. For ammonium carbonate, yield of cyclohexanone oxime in the reaction using acetic acid, was lower than that expected. This may be resulted from the fact that ammonium carbonate reacts vigorously with acetic acid producing carbon dioxide, ammonia and exhaust heat. Under this circumstance, a rapid vaporisation of carbon dioxide may well lead to the loss of ammonia. This could reduce the rate of condensation with cyclohexanone resulting in a lower production of cyclohexanone oxime as observed.

On the other hand, in the reaction using water as a solvent, the use of ammonium acetate and citrate show much lower activity than that of ammonia solution. This can be resulted from the fact that ammonium acetate and citrate could be highly dissociated in the water. Accordingly, ammonia is mostly present in a protonated form. The lone pair electrons of ammonia could be deactivated and either the reaction with cyclohexanone to form cyclohexanone imine or the direct oxidation to hydroxylamine were inhibited in the reaction using water as a solvent. Nevertheless, this is not the case for ammonium carbonate. As being a salt of weak carbonic acid, it can be readily decomposed to give ammonia at reaction temperature. Therefore, the activity of ammonium carbonate in water is somewhat similar to the ammonia solution.

The ammonium salts of strong acid such as, ammonium nitrate, ammonium chloride and ammonium sulphate, cannot be used as reagent in both reactions using acetic acid and water as solvent. This is because the K_a of the conjugated acid of ammonium salts is high. Consequently, the salt is highly dissociated, leading to the deactivation of the lone pair electrons of ammonia. Therefore, the strongly protonated ammonia is not efficient for both condensation with cyclohexanone to produce cyclohexanone imine and oxidation to hydroxylamine.

3.7. Effect of water content

According to the above discussion, the condensation of cyclohexanone with ammonia becomes an essential step for ammonium. This step could be notably interfered by the pH of the solution and also by the presence of water. It is expected that less amount of water present in the reaction shall lead to a better activity. As hydrogen peroxide solution was used as an oxidising agent, the presence of water cannot be avoided. Nevertheless, the effect of water can be investigated by adding dried zeolite A (a water adsorbent) into the system.

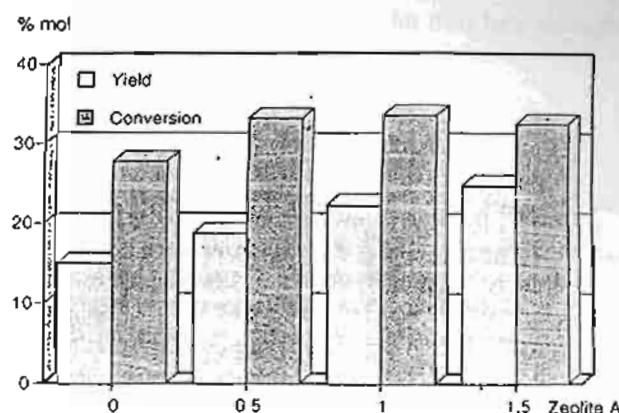


Fig. 6. Effect of water content on the yield of cyclohexanone oxime and conversion of cyclohexanone (reaction condition: at 60 °C, cyclohexanone 0.38 g, ammonia solution (28%, w/w) 0.73 g and hydrogen peroxide solution (30%, w/w) 0.53 g, acetic acid 2.4 mL, TS-1 0.04 g, reaction time 4 h, added 0.5, 1.0 and 1.5 g of zeolite A)

From Fig. 6, it was clearly shown that the conversion of cyclohexanone and the yield of cyclohexanone oxime was increased with the amount of zeolite A added. The zeolite A, which is highly hydrophilic and possesses small pore size, can readily adsorb water. This would facilitate the condensation of ammonia with cyclohexanone to give the corresponding imine since water was removed from the system. As the formation of the imine is promoted, a higher yield of cyclohexanone oxime can be expected. In addition, the yield of 2-oxepanone and acetyl cyclohexanone oxime (by-products) were decreased when zeolite A was added. This is probably because cyclohexanone and peracetic acid are largely consumed by the ammonium process. Hence, the direct reaction of peracetic acid with cyclohexanone or the coupling of cyclohexanone oxime with acetyl radical would be limited. Accordingly, a higher selectivity of cyclohexanone oxime was also obtained when zeolite A was added.

4. Conclusion

Ammonium activity of cyclohexanone is enhanced in the reaction using acetic acid as a solvent. However, selectivity of the corresponding oxime is reduced due to formation of by-products, 2-oxepanone, acetyl cyclohexanone oxime and aldol adducts. Together with the strong oxidising species like peracetic acid, the tetrahedrally coordinated titaniums are active species and they are relatively stable. Leaching of active sites was not observed in this reaction, presumably due to the presence of ammonia in the system. However, further investigation using larger amounts of catalysts or testing in a continuous process should be made to really prove on this. Nevertheless, this study shows that soluble titanium species plays no role in ammonium of cyclohexanone using acetic acid as a solvent.

The mechanistic study shows that there are two possible pathways for the ammonium of cyclohexanone. In the

reaction using water as a solvent, the oxidation of ammonia to produce hydroxylamine, followed by its condensation of cyclohexanone seems to be favoured. However, only the pathway proceeded via the condensation of cyclohexanone with ammonia is responsible for the formation of cyclohexanone oxime in the reaction using acetic acid as a solvent. This also leads to an improved catalytic activity because the formation of cyclohexanone imine, an oxime precursor, is enhanced in presence of acetic acid. In addition, peracetic acid, which is formed *in situ*, can be served as a better oxidising agent, as compared to the hydrogen peroxide alone. However, the reaction using acetic acid as a solvent shows a lower cyclohexanone oxime selectivity because peracetic acid can directly react with the reactant and the product to produce two other by-products, 2-oxepanone and acetyl cyclohexanone oxime, respectively. From the economic point of view, this could be a major obstacle to an industrial development even though high conversion is obtained.

In the reaction using acetic acid as a solvent, it is also evident that the source of nitrogen can be obtained from ammonium salts of the weak acid, such as acetate, citrate and carbonate. These species are active for the formation of imine. However, this is not the case for the reaction using water because the reaction pathway involves ammonia oxidation. The protonated ammonia is inactive for the oxidation to hydroxylamine and the reaction in water can be carried out only with ammonia in slightly basic solution. The presence of water in the reaction using acetic acid does not only inhibit the ammoniation activity, but also facilitate the formation of by-products. Hence, selectivity of cyclohexanone oxime is improved when water is removed from the system.

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