Degradative Effect of I.R radiations on the Constituents of Bitumen

Abstract

Sample of natural bitumen were taken from bitumen well in Agbabu town in Odigbo Local Government of Ondo State. These samples were separately irradiated with ultraviolet, infrared and X-ray radiations for a period of seven hours. Part of the sample was withdrawn at interval of One, Three and Seven hours. The withdrawn sample was later separated into maltene and asphaltene fractions. The maltene fraction was further separated into saturated, aromatic and polar fraction. The saturated and aromatic fractions were subjected to gas chromatography analysis. The Saturated and aromatic profiles of the bitumen were found to vary with the period of irradiation. Both the amount of saturated and aromatic compounds in the bitumen decreased with the period of irradiation. Thus, the radiations were found to have a degradative effect on the composition of bitumen.

Keywords: Bitumen, radiations, Gas Chromatography, degradative effect

Introduction

The greatest use of bitumen is in paving and road building, particularly flexible pavements. Examples of such areas of usage are in Highways Street and driveways, airfields, Parking areas, service (petrol) stations and industrial floors among several others [1]. Bitumen is thermoplastic as it consistency or degree of hardness varies with temperature. On exposure to different radiation, bitumen behaves in a different manner which will affect it quality. Bitumen is very sensitive to any form of radiation which leads to a degradative effect on its constituent thereby affect its usefulness for engineering purposes. [2]

Materials and Methods

The bitumen used for the degradation experiments were collected from one of the observatory wells in Agbabu, Ondo State, Nigeria. Agbabu is one of the major towns located in the Nigerian natural bitumen belt and the place where bitumen was first discovered in Nigeria (Adegoke, 2000) [3]. The raw natural bitumen

obtained from Agbabu was purified as described by the method employed by Olabemiwo *et al* (2008) .The Chemicals used for this research are products of BDH Limited which includes iso – octane (2,2,4-trimethylpentane) [4]

Irradiation of Bitumen Samples

Dry Petri dish (Pyrex) was weighed and 10g of purified natural bitumen was put on it. Thin layer of the natural bitumen was formed on the petri dish. The petri dish containing the purified natural bitumen was subjected to different radiations(wavelength) for a period of Seven hours at interval of One, Three and Seven hours respectively. Some of the irradiated sample was withdrawn into petri dish at interval of One, Three and Seven hours to be analyzed. From the withdrawn irradiated sample, 0.6g of it was carefully and accurately weighed into a beaker and $20cm^3$ of iso – octane was added to precipitate out the Asphaltene component. Filtration process of the solution was now carried out by making use of filter paper. From the filtration process, two components were obtained which was residue and filtrate. The residue is asphaltene and filtrate is maltene. The Maltene was collected into a sample bottle while the asphaltene was washed about five times with 20ml iso – octane. By the method employed by Olabemiwo et al (2008) using Column Chromatography, maltene fraction which is the filtrate was separated into saturated hydrocarbons, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbon and polar compounds.

Analysis of Gas Chromatographic

The gas chromatographic analysis used was 5890 series (Hewlet Packard) that is equipped with flame ionization detector. The stationary phase used for the analysis is a fused – silica capillary column coated with 0.25m film of HP-5. For hydrocarbons that are saturated, about 3µL of sample was injected. The column temperature started at 60^0C, held for 2minutes isothermally and then increased to 200^0C at the heating rate of 10^oC/min for 20minutes. It was held at this temperature for 2munutes and then increased to 320^0C at the heating rate of 12^0C for 5minutes. The carrier gas used was nitrogen at a pressure of 30 psi. At pressure of 22 and 28 psi, Hydrogen and air were introduced respectively. 300^0C and 320^0C were used for Injector and detector temperature respectively.

The column temperature was held for 2minutes at about 70^0C column temperature for the aromatic hydrocarbons and later increase to 250^0C at heating rate of 15^0C for 20minutes.It was held at 260^oC for 6 minutes isothermally and then increased to 320^0C for 6mnutes at heating rate of 15^0C and it was at this temperature for 10minutes. Nitrogen, which is the carrier gas for this experiment was used at a pressure of 35psi. At a pressure of 25 and 30 psi, hydrogen and air was introduced

respectively. At temperature of 300 and 320^{0}C was when injector and temperature was used respectively and the sample of injected volume is 2µL. By making use of the standards supplied by the Gas Chromatography equipment manufacturer, Calibration curves for the standard and aromatic hydrocarbon were prepared.

Result and discussion

Gas Chromatography result of the saturated and aromatic fraction of irradiated bitumen with infrared.

Table 1: Aliphatic Hydrocarbon Profile of Bitumen Irradiated with Infra – red Radiation

PAH	AMOUNT (g/mg)			
	RAW BT	IRO 1 SAT	IRO 3 SAT	IRO 7 SAT
C_{11}	304.33	371.745	227.238	194.829
C_{12}	3.7772	2.5146	1.5918	2.3541
C_{13}	37.3414	25.7805	56.4245	24.6311
C_{14}	4.4330	2.99145	1.7349	3.1931
C_{15}	45.1838	32.5694	19.69	27.9708
C_{16}	4.1187	2.7674	1.6251	2.6861
C_{17}	6.6893	5.0672	2.8083	4.3397
C_{18}	4.0167	3.3583	1.9249	2.7063
C_{19}	3.9041	2.9776	1.7255	2.5150
C_{20}	8.9376	9.1302	5.0815	6.2955
C_{21}	3.9808	6.6905	3.5853	4.0090
C_{22}	11.4659	8.1386	6.0837	6.2387
C_{23}	2.2465	2.2687	1.2912	1.6358
C_{24}	115.834	40.9511	40.6723	50.120
C_{25}	5.9590	6.3874	4.9352	5.5857
C_{26}	39.1534	25.049	16.561	17.788
C_{27}	10.5277	13.1155	8.0830	9.3792
C_{28}	7.3891	17.6333	4.0959	4.9437
C_{29}	1.0401	0.8327	0.7083	0.7928
C_{30}	1.8928×10^{-5}	-	-	$9.16933 * 10^{-5}$
TOTAL PAH'S	**620.4383**	**579.9684**	**405.8604**	**372.0145**

Table 2: Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbon Profile of bitumen irradiated with infra – red

PAH	AMOUNT (g/mg)			
	RAW BT	**IRO 1 SAT**	**IRO 3 SAT**	**IRO 7 SAT**
Napthalene	0.7122	0.1160	0.12459	0.11831
Acenapthylene	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Acephathene	0.0083	0.01394	0.005290	0.00575
Fluorine	0.1980	0.08268	0.06521	0.026631
Phenathrene	0.12949	0.07757	0.062855	0.02038
Anthracene	0.02884	0.02988	0.010598	0.00679
Fluoranthene	0.02289	0.012464	0.006254	0.00255
Pyrene	0.01795	0.03190	0.01187	0.006787
Benzo(a) anthracene	-	0.01750	0.0085474	0.0031555
Chrysene	-	0.01833	0.07822	0.002763
Benzo (b) fluoranthene	0.02399	0.003922	-	$7.858 * 10^{-4}$
Benzo (k) fluoranthene	0.10900	-	-	0.0010659
Benzo (b) pyrene	0.0000	-	-	0.0000
Indeno (1,2,3 – cd)	0.08438	-	-	-
Dibenzo (a,h) anthracene	-	-	-	-
Benzo (g,h,i)	0.0246	-	-	-
TOTAL PAH'S	**1.3596**	**0.4041**	**0.3734**	**0.1949**

Bitumen samples irradiated with Infra – red radiations

Saturated Fractions: The total amount in g/kg of the aliphatic hydrocarbons was found to decrease as the period of exposure of the bitumen to ultraviolet radiation increases. This can be contributed to cracking and recombination of product. The irradiation of bitumen brought about the cracking of some higher molecular mass hydrocarbons to lower molecular mass radicals.[5]

Aromatic Fractions: The total amount in g/kg of the polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons was found to decrease as the period of exposure of the bitumen to infra-red radiation increases. Benzo (a) anthracenes and chrysene which were absent in the control sample appeared after irradiation with infra-red radiations. Indeno (1, 2, 3-cd) pyrene and Benzo (g, h, i) perylene which were present in the control sample disappeared after irradiation with infra-red radiations. Acenaphthylene , Benzo (a) pyrene and Dibenzo (a, h) anthracene were absent in the control and irradiated sample. Benzo (b) fluoranthene which was present after one hour of irradiation disappeared after three hours of irradiation. Benzo(k) fluoroanthene which was present in the control sample disappeared after three hours of irradiation and later reappeared in minimal amounts of seven hours if irradiation.

Conclusion

The Gas Chromatogram result for Aromatic fraction of bitumen irradiated with infrared radiation respectively shows that the total number of polycyclic hydrocarbons decreases as the time of irradiation is increases. This reduces the quality of bitumen used for construction purposes. Therefore, bitumen to be used for construction or any other purposes should not be exposed for radiation. Hence, Gas chromatography analysis shown that bitumen consists of Sixteen Polycyclic hydrocarbon and these are responsible for the quality of bitumen.

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Appendix

Definition of abbreviation

PAH: Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbon

RAW BT: Raw Bitumen

IRO SAT 1: Saturated fraction of bitumen irradiated with infrared for one hour

IRO SAT 3: Saturated fraction of bitumen irradiated with infrared for three hours

IRO SAT 7: Saturated fraction of bitumen irradiated with infrared for Seven hours