Ring-opening Polymerization Reaction Mechanism of ε-Caprolactone Catalyzed by Bis(dibenzoylmethanato) zirconium(IV) Using PM3 Semi-Empirical Method

Muhammad Yusuf†*, Ahmad Nasir Pulungan†, Rizki Dwi Irmala Sari‡, Dinda Prihatini Fitri Amne‡, Rahmayani Siregar‡, Mawaddatur Rahmah‡

†Departement of Chemistry Universitas Negeri Medan Jl. Willem Iskandar Pasar V Medan Estate, Medan 20221, Indonesia
‡Fresh graduated, Department of Chemistry, Universitas Negeri Medan, Jl. Willem Iskandar Pasar V Medan Estate, Medan, Indonesia, 20221

*myusuf@unimed.ac.id

Abstract. Polycaprolactone (PCL) is a semi-crystalline polymer and belongs to a biodegradable plastic. PCL also can naturally degrade, has a high degree of adjustment with other polymer, and has great mechanical and thermal properties. By using the Lewis acid catalyst, PCL can be yielded through the ring opening polymerization (ROP) of caprolactone (e-CL). The objective of this study was to explore the most likely reaction mechanism of the ROP of e-CL using bis(dibenzoylmethanato) zirconium(IV) chloride as a catalyst. Here, the Hyper Chem 8.0 program was performed to compute the monomer molecule, intermediate molecules, and polymer molecule. The program can be launch on the Windows 07 systems. The method used was the PM3 semi-empirical method. This program also used to show the results of optimized structures. The calculation results show that to generate PCL required bis(dibenzoylmethanato) zirconium (IV) catalyst. The ROP reaction mechanism of e-CL can be occurs through direct coordination e-CL on the Zr complex. After that, deprotonation and insertion monomer. Last step was chain propagation of the e-CL.

Keyword. Bis(dibenzoylmethanato) zirconium(IV) chloride, PM3 semi-empirical method, reaction mechanism, polycaprolactone (PCL).

1. Introduction
Due to its advantages in the medicinal fields and packaging, poly(ε-caprolactone) (PCL) and the other natural polymer has been extensively studied for use in a variety of field [1–4]. In the biomedical field, PCL can be used as a drug delivery system. In the packaging field, PCL can be used as an environmentally friendly packaging [1–3].

Ring Opening Polymerization (ROP) technique is commonly used to synthesize polymers and this technique can also be used to synthesize polyester. Ring Opening Polymerization (ROP) of cyclic esters can be performed using cationic, anionic, active monomeric, enzymatic, and organocatalytic methods [1], [2], [5]. Many studies of ROP have been carried out using various catalysts or metal
initiators. The metals are transition [1], [6], aluminum metal [7], and lanthanide [8]. In ROP, the most commonly used catalysts are complex compounds.

In the academia and the catalyst industry, complex compound is still also widely used until today as catalyst for ROP of cyclic esters including for ε-caprolactone (ε-CL). In these complex compounds, transition metals are used as the central atom. Some transition metals that are commonly used as the central atom include zirconium [1], [6], zinc, cuprum [9], copper [10] and titanium [11]. Apart from using transition metals, compounds with the element Sn are also widely used as catalysts in ROP [12-13].

This research will study the mechanism of ε-CL ring opening polymerization reaction using bis(dibenzoylmethanato) zirconium(IV) chloride (bis(dbzm)Zr) catalyst. The method of proof is carried out using computational calculations. The result will be obtained in the form of energy from the optimized structural geometry. The lower the energy obtained, the more likely it is to occur when laboratory experiments are carried out [5]. The results of these calculations will be input for various researchers to conduct further research at the experimental level.

2. Materials and Method
The ROP of ε-CL mechanism can be predicted using semi empirical method (PM3). The method serves to calculate the geometry, energy, reaction profiles, and some stationary points (reactants, complexes, intermediate and products). These molecules are calculated in the Hyperchem 8.0 software which operated on the Windows operating system [1], [14–16]. Zr atoms are used as metal center in the bis(dbzm)Zr catalyst. Meanwhile, C, H, and O atoms are used as non-metal atoms in the complex compounds. In our previous research the semi empirical method is general and effective in predicting geometry and minimum energy. The procedure is performed using an RMS gradient of 0.1 kcal/(Åmol) with a maximum cycle around 2767. The calculation of the minimum energy confirms the characteristics of the reactant, intermediate and dimer ε-CL product [5].

3. Results and Discussion
In the Figure 1, the ROP mechanism of the cyclic ester using bis(dbzm)Zr as the catalyst has been described. In the diagram, the Zr atom acts as a metal in the complex, while the ε-caprolaktone acts as an ester monomer.

![Figure 1. The ROP mechanism of the ε-CL using bis(dbzm)Zr as the catalysts](image-url)
There are four steps for further explanation of the ROP mechanism from Figure 1:

1. **Complex:** The first stage namely ε-CL monomer and bis(dbzm)Zr complexes perform the weak complexation. The mechanism can be formed due to the coordination interaction among ε-CL and the catalyst of bis(dbzm)Zr complex. The bis(dbzm)Zr complex undergoes electrophilic attack by the ε-CL carbonyl group resulting in complex compound.

2. **Intermediate 1:** The second stage is the formation of the four-membered ring intermediate state (Int1). The ε-CL carbonyl group finds a new bond between the Zr atom and the oxygen atom. The monomer deprotonation also occurs so that the Hdbzm ligand becomes free.

3. **Intermediate 2:** The third stage is to form a second intermediate state with five-membered ring (Int2). In this stage, the monomer insertions occur. The Int2 can be reached by making coordination bond of Zr atom (Int1) with the oxygen atom on the carbonyl group of ε-CL. Next, Int2 becomes open to form a linear ε-CL.

4. **Dimer product:** The final step as a result of the ring opening is the formation of the dimer ε-CL product via the monomer insertion. The propagation can occur again and polymerization continues. The optimized molecular structure which involved in the ε-CL polymerization using PM3 calculations described in Figure 2.
We have observed the energy of complex, intermediate, and dimer using the PM3 Semi-Empirical approach. The energy value at 0 kJ/mol represents the bis(dibzm)Zr energy. Furthermore, the energy value of int-1, linear ε-CL, and dimer are above of the bis(dibzm)Zr energy i.e 260.52 kJ/mol, 365.08 kJ/mol and 265.28 kJ mol, respectively. Next, the energy value of complex and int-2 are on under the bis(dibzm)Zr energy i.e -225.11 kJ/mol and -54.12 kJ mol, respectively.

The comparisons of energy value between the complex, intermediate state, and product were also discussed in this investigated. We have found that the ε-CL linear has the higher energy value compared with other molecule. It is due to the ε-CL linear has electron lone pair on its oxygen atom. Meanwhile, the dimer has also electron lone pair on its oxygen atom. However, because the open chain is longer, its energy value is more stable. The energy changes of the molecules which involved in the ε-CL polymerization reaction catalyzed by bis (dbzm) Zr describes in the Figure 3.

Figure 2. The Optimized molecular structure which involved in the ε-CL polymerization using PM3 calculations.
4. Conclusion

The ROP of $\varepsilon$-CL with bis(dibzm)Zr as a catalyst have been investigated using PM3 semi empirical method. The energy of $\varepsilon$-CL linear molecules is higher than other compounds due to the presence of electron lone pairs of oxygen atoms in the $\varepsilon$-CL linear molecules. The same thing with the int1 molecules and dimer product, the energy is higher than bis(dibzm)Zr. In contrast, the energies of int2 and complex molecules are lower than bis(dibzm)Zr. This is because the $\varepsilon$-CL monomers in the molecule have lost their electron lone pair on the its oxygen atom.

References
[1] Yusuf M, Roza D, Nurfajarani, Gunawan H, and Dari N, 2019 Synthesis of bis(β-diketonato)zirconium (iv) chloride as a catalyst in the ring opening polymerizations of $\varepsilon$-caprolactone Rasayan J. Chem. 12, 4 p. 2132–2140.
[2] Gea S et al., 2010 Biodegradable Composites Based on Poly ( $\varepsilon$-Caprolactone ) and Bacterial Cellulose as a Reinforcing Agent J. Biobased Mater. Bioenergy 4, 4 p. 384–390.
[3] Ridwan, Wirjosentono B, Tamrin, and Rihayat T, 2019 Preparation of Chitosan PCL/PLA Nanocomposite Blended With Bentonite From Aceh, Indonesia Rasayan J. Chem. 12, 4 p. 1935–1941.
[4] Nurfajarani, Pulungan A N, Yusuf M, Tampubolon M D, and Bukit N, 2020 The Effects Of Sodium Hydroxide Concentrations on Synthesis Of Carboxymethyl Cellulose From Bacterial Cellulosa The Effects Of Sodium Hydroxide Concentrations on Synthesis Of Carboxymethyl Cellulose From Bacterial Cellulosa in Journal of Physics: Conference Series 1485 p. 012055.
[5] Yusuf M, Dari N, and Utama E, 2020 PM3 Semi-Empirical Method on the Ring Opening Polymerization of ε-Caprolactone Using Bis (Benzoyl trifluoroacetone) Zirconium(IV) Chloride as catalyst in Journal of Physics: Conf. Series 1462 p. 012054.

[6] Dobrzenski P, 2007 Mechanism of ε-caprolactone polymerization and ε-caprolactone/trimethylene carbonate copolymerization carried out with Zr(Acac)4 Polymer (Guildf). 48 p. 2263–2279.

[7] Liu Y, Dong W S, Liu J Y and Li Y S, 2014 Living ring-opening homo- and copolymerisation of ε-caprolactone and L-lactide by cyclic β-ketiminato aluminium complexes Dalt. Trans. 43 p. 2244–2251.

[8] Iker Del Rosal, Romuald Poteaua and, L M, 2011 DFT study of the Ring Opening Polymerization of ε-caprolactone by grafted lanthanide complexes: 1 — Effect of the grafting mode on the reactivity of of borohydride complexes Dalt. Trans. 40 p. 11211–11227.

[9] Mnqobi Zikode, Stephen O Ojwach, Matthew P Akerman, 2016 Bis(pyrazolylmethyl)pyridine Zn(II) and Cu(II) complexes: Molecular structures and kinetic studies of ring-opening polymerization of ε-caprolactone J. Mol. Catal. A Chem. 413 p. 24–31.

[10] Posada F, Mac M A, Movilla S, Misicone G Pietro, P D.,and Hurtado J J, 2018 Polymers of ε-Caprolactone Using New Copper (II) and Zinc (II) Complexes as Initiators: Synthesis , and Structures, X-ray Crystal Polymers (Basel). 10, II p. 1–14.

[11] Gökalp Yağmur, Asgar Kayan, 2018 Synthesis and characterization of Ti- / Zr-diphenylpropanedione complexes and their application in the ring opening polymerization of ε-caprolactone Synthesis and characterization of Ti- / Zr-diphenylpropanedione complexes and their application in the ri J. Turkish Chem. Soc. Sect. A 5, 3 p. 1095–1104.

[12] Zaman F, Rooh G, Srisittipokakun N, Ahmad T, Khan I, Shoaib M, Rajagukguk J, Kaewkhao J. Comparative investigations of gadolinium based borate glasses doped with Dy3+ for white light generations. Solid State Sciences. 2019 Mar 1;89:50-6.

[13] Arcana I M, Hasan M, Anggraini S D, Febrianti A A, and Ardana A, 2009 Structure and Properties of Polymers Prepared by by Polymerization of 2,2-Dimethyl-1,3-Propanediol and ε-Caprolactone Monomer ITB J. Sci. 41, 2 p. 78–87.

[14] Yusuf M, Dahniar, D R, and Damanik M, 2019 Ab initio method on the mechanism of acetalization of 2-methoxybenzaldehyde using halogen acid catalysts Asian J. Chem. 31, 5 p. 982–986.

[15] Yusuf M, Roza D, and Nasution A K, 2017 Acetalization of 2-Hydroxybenzaldehyde mechanism using halogen acid catalysts based on ab initio methods in AIP Conference Proceedings 1904 p. 020055–1.

[16] Hypercube Inc, 2020, Hyperchem 7 release, http://www.chemistry-software.com/pdf/Hyperchem_full_manual.pdf (acces October 1, 2020). p. 1–248.

Acknowledgement
These studies were financial supported by Hibah DRPM Kemenristek/BRIN RI (No.190/SP2H/AMD/LT/DRPM/2020).