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Deformation & failure behaviour of semi-crystalline polymers: role of crystallinity and strain hardening

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Introduction

Deformation and failure behaviour of polymers is important for engineering applications. For semi-crystalline polymers, temperature and flow history of processing can influence the type of deformation/failure behaviour. A qualitative distinction in deformation types:

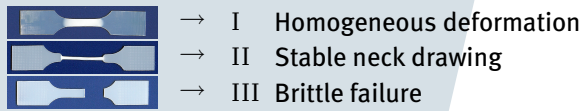


Figure 1: 3 types of deformation/failure of polyethylene.

Objective: Rationalize the observed influence of processing conditions on the deformation/failure behaviour.

Analytical approach

Simple neo-Hookean approach for true stress [1]:

$$\sigma_t = \sigma_y + G_R \left(\lambda^2 - \frac{1}{\lambda} \right)$$

gives an engineering stress:

$$\sigma_{eng} = \frac{\sigma_y}{\lambda} + G_R \left(\lambda^2 - \frac{1}{\lambda} \right)$$

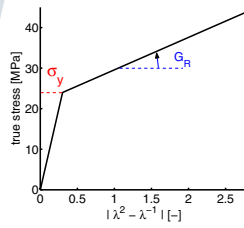


Figure 2: True stress.

Considerer's analysis

Considerer's condition for necking is met when at yield $\frac{d\sigma_{eng}}{d\lambda} < 0$. Figure 3 visualizes a transition from homogeneous deformation to necking for $\sigma_y/G_R > 3$.

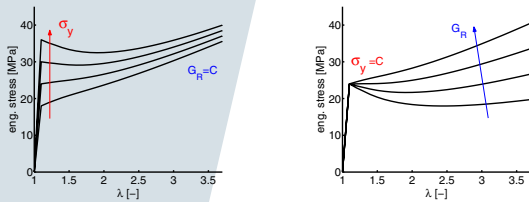


Figure 3: Engineering stress: necking is induced by an increase in σ_y (left) or a decrease in G_R (right).

Neck stability

Minimum value of λ_n in the neck to meet 2^{nd} consider's condition for stable necking [2]:

$$\frac{\sigma_y}{G_R} = \lambda_n^2 + \frac{2}{\lambda_n}$$

Stress equilibrium (defining: $\sigma_{break} = \kappa_t \sigma_y$) gives a draw ratio at break, λ_b :

$$\frac{\sigma_y}{G_R} = \frac{\lambda_b^2 - \frac{1}{\lambda_b}}{\kappa_t - 1}$$

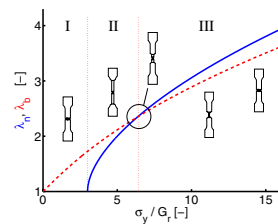


Figure 4: 3 regions of deformation/failure:

- I: Homogeneous
- II: $\lambda_n < \lambda_b$, Stable necking
- III: $\lambda_n > \lambda_b$, Necking rupture or brittle failure

Experimental results

Influence of thermal history

Thermal history:

- Quenched (Q)
- Slowly cooled (SC)
- Annealing of quenched samples (A)

Materials & crystallinity

	M_w	Q	A	SC
PET	76.000	0%	30%	43%
PE1	70.000	68%	77%	77%
PE2	210.000	68%	73%	74%

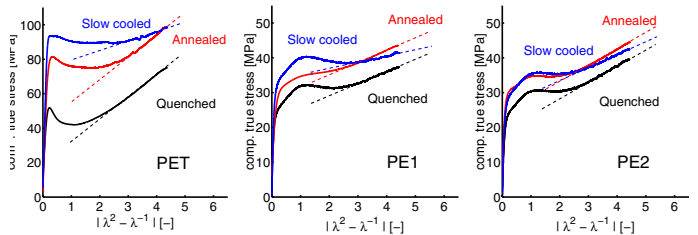


Figure 5: Compressive true stress-strain behaviour.

Influence on intrinsic behaviour:

- Annealing: crystallinity & lamellae thickness \uparrow = yield stress \uparrow
- Cooling rate \downarrow = disentanglement of (short) chains upon crystallization = strain hardening \downarrow

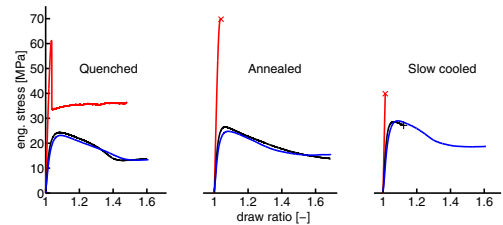


Figure 6: Macroscopic tensile behaviour (PET, PE1, PE2)

Influence on macroscopic deformation/failure:

Transition region II \rightarrow III:

- PET: due to increase in yield stress
- PE1: due to decrease in strain hardening
- PE2: no transition due to less disentanglement and higher strength of molecular weight

Influence of orientation

Transition region II \rightarrow I

- Extrusion \rightarrow low orientation \rightarrow homogeneous (region I)
- Injection \rightarrow high orientation \rightarrow low λ at break in region I

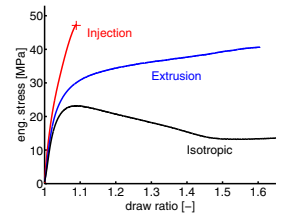


Figure 7: Deformation PE2.

Conclusions

- Strain hardening depends on chain entanglement density and orientation
- Yield stress depends on crystallinity/lamellae thickness
- Both can influence the deformation/failure behaviour

References:

- [1] HAWARD, R.N., Polymer, 28, 1485 (1987)
- [2] VINCENT, P.I., Polymer, 1, 7 (1960)