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EFFECT OF COMPRESSION AND EXTENSION ON THE ELECTRICAL, MECHANICAL PROPERTIES AND TSDC OF RUBBER-POLYMER COMPOSITES

A THESIS SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN PHYSICS (SOLID STATE)

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" EFFECT OF COMPRESSION AND EXTENSION ON THE ELECTRICAL, MECHANICAL PROPERTIES AND TSDC OF RUBBER-POLYMER COMPOSITES"

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CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGMENT.	I
ABSTRACT.	II
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE SURVEY.	
1.1. Introduction.	1
1.2. Theoretical background.	3
1.2.1. Electrical properties of polymeric materials.	3
1.3. Conduction mechanism in polymers.	4
1.3.1. Electronic conduction.	5
1.3.2. Ionic conduction.	5
1.3.3. Schottky effect.	6
1.3.4. Poole-Frenkel effect.	7
1.3.5. Hopping mechanism.	8
1.3.6. Tunneling mechanism.	9
1.3.7. Space charge limited current (SCLC).	10
1.4. Dielectric properties.	10
1.4.1. Types of polarization.	11
1.4.1.1. Introduction.	11
1.4.1.2. Electronic polarization.	12
1.4.1.3. Ionic polarization.	12
1.4.1.4. Orientational polarization.	12
1.4.1.5. Maxwell-Wagner polarization.	13
1.4.2. Dielectric relaxation properties.	15
1.4.3. Dielectric constant.	15
1.4.4. Frequency dependence of the dielectric constant.	16
1.4.5. Frequency dependence of conductivity and dielectric constant.	16
1.4.6. Temperature dependence of the dielectric constant.	17
1.4.7. Carrier mobility.	18
1.4.8. Drift current density.	18
1.4.9. Dielectric behavior of composites.	19
1.5. Mechanical properties of composites.	23
1.5.1. Hardness of rubber composites.	23
1.5.2. Tensile strength of rubber composites.	24
1.5.3. Stress-Strain relation.	25
1.5.4. The kinetic theory of rubber elasticity.	32

1.6. Thermally stimulated currents.	33
1.6.1. Mechanisms responsible for thermally stimulated depolarization	
current.	33
1.7. Literature survey.	
1.7.1. Electrical and mechanical properties.	36
1.7.2. Dielectric properties.	51
1.8. Aim of work.	54
CHAPTER 2 : EXPERIMENTAL WORK.	
2.1. Materials used in this work.	55
2.1.1. Acrylonitrile butadiene rubber (NBR).	55
2.1.1.1. Effect of varying the acrylonitrile butadiene ratio.	56
2.1.2. Ingredients.	58
2.1.2.1. Fillers and reinforcements.	58
a. Carbon black.	58
b. Barium titanate (BaTiO ₃)	59
2.1.2.2. Vulcanizing or curing agents.	60
2.1.2.3. Accelerators.	60
2.1.2.4. Activators.	60
2.1.2.5. Antioxidants and antiozonantes.	61
2.2. Preparation of samples.	61
2.3. Experimental measurements.	63
2.3.1. Dielectric measurements.	63
2.3.2. Current-Voltage measurements.	64
2.3.3. Mechanical measurements.	65
2.3.4. Thermally stimulated depolarization current measurements (TSDC).	67
CHAPTER 3: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION.	
Introduction	69
3.1. Effect of SRF filler loading on the ac electrical properties of NBR	
vulcanizates.	70
3.1.1. Effective dielectric constant (filler dependence).	74
3.1.2. Frequency dependence.	77
3.1.3. Temperature dependence of the dielectric constant and dielectric	
loss.	82
3.2. Dc electrical properties of carbon black loaded rubber.	87
3.2.1. SRF contents.	87
3.2.2. The current-voltage characteristics.	89
3.3. Mechanical properties of rubber composites.	96
3.3.1. Theoretical tensile stress-strain relations for rubber.	98
3.3.2. The method for determining the knee-point strain.	100

3.4. Conductive elastomer materials as strain sensitive sensor.	105
3.4.1. Frequency dependence properties of compressed samples.	119
3.4.2. Effect of Uniaxial extension on the dc electrical conductivity.	126
3.4.3. Influence of compressive stress on the thermally stimulated	
depolariztion current of SRF/NBR composites.	134
Conclusions	140
References	143

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ABSTRACT

Polymer composites are one group of the new approaches for the preparation of new materials from existing polymers. One obvious advantage is that it requires a lower cost relative to the production of new polymers. It is also possible to produce a range of materials with properties completely different from those of composite constituents.

The present study is concerned with acrylonitrile butadiene rubber (NBR), loaded with a 20% barium titanate (BaTiO₃) and vulcanized with sulphur. The blend is loaded with different concentrations of carbon black; semi-reinforcing furnace (SRF) N770.

All tested samples are prepared under the same conditions according to the standard methods. The main idea of this study is to observe the effect of compression and extension on the physical properties of these composites.

From studying the effect of SRF black concentration on the dielectric constant, ε ', and the ac electrical conductivity, σ_{ac} , at different frequencies for uncompressed NBR/BaTiO₃ vulcanizates, it was noticed that, ε ' is increased with the increase of SRF black content. It is also interesting to know that, at certain concentration of SRF blacks, ε ' and σ_{ac} reach extremely high values as a result of interfacial polarization between carbon black particles and the NBR chains.

The values of the aspect ratio which are chosen to fit the experimental permittivities with the calculated one from Tsangaris equation depend on the volume fraction of SRF carbon black.

A small change in ε is noticed for samples loaded with SRF>30 phr with frequency at room temperature for uncompressed samples. The strong low frequency dispersion that characterizes the frequency dependence of the dielectric constant of NBR/BaTiO₃ loaded with SRF black may be due to the hierarchy of barriers to the carrier diffusion. The observed dispersion can be explained without assuming any particular type of barrier.

From the temperature dependence of the dielectric constant and dielectric loss for uncompressed samples, it was found that for samples loaded with SRF≤40 phr, there is a smooth increase in the dielectric constant, while those with SRF≥50 phr, there is a peak in the dielectric constant and a step in the dielectric loss. The positions of the peak and the step shift to higher temperatures as the measuring frequency increased (except for samples loaded with 100 phr of SRF black).

The volume resistivity of uncompressed samples decreases at its percolation threshold and maintains low values after percolation. The percolation threshold is about 30 phr of SRF black. The resisitivity of NBR composites decreased over 7 orders of magnitude as the concentration of carbon black increased.

In the current density-electric field measurements for uncompressed samples, it was found that in the higher field regions all samples exhibit linear current field characteristics. The conduction mechanism in these composites is found to be of the Poole-Frenkel type.

From the mechanical measurements, it was found that as the filler loading increases, the relative tensile strength increases and the elongation at break decreases.

It was also found from the calculations of knee-point strain that the knee-point strain depends on both the elastic modulus and SRF carbon black content. The knee-point strain decreases with the increase of both elasticity modulus and SRF contents.

The pressure plays important factor that affect the behavior of these composites. When pressure is applied on these composites, a percolation path is easily formed which causes a drastic fall in resistivity even when the volume fraction of filler apparently increases compared with the unpressurized composites.

Two main mechanisms competing with each other could be observed due to the effect of pressure on both ac electrical resisitivity and the dielectric constant. The first one is the breakdown of carbon black network into small aggregates, which results in a significant reduction in the total number of conduction paths and dipoles. The second mechanism is the orientation of carbon black aggregates in the direction of the strain.

The calculated values of relative pressure coefficient of dielectric constant show a constant value with the variation of SRF loading to a certain level and after which a sharp increase is detected.

The percolation concentration, ϕ_c , increases appreciably with the applied pressure indicating the aggregation effects of carbon black particles on the rubber matrix.

A last factor is the orientation effects of SRF particles/or aggregates in the direction of compression in addition to the factors mentioned before is considered to describe the strong low frequency dispersion that characterizes the frequency dependence of the dielectric constant of SRF-loaded BaTiO₃/NBR.

The dc conductivity measured along the strain direction shows a decrease in its values with increasing the elongation for all tested samples except samples loaded with 80 and 100 phr of SRF black.

It was noted from the values of the activation energy E_{ν} , that the ionic transport is the responsible mechanism of TSDC at different compressive stresses for both pure NBR and 30 SRF/NBR samples. The values of the activation energy decrease with compressive stress.