Impact of o-Aryl Halogen Effects on Ethylene Polymerization:

Steric vs Electronic Effects

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1. Experimental section

1.1 General Considerations

All chemicals were commercially sourced, except those whose synthesis is described. All experiments were carried out under a dry nitrogen atmosphere using standard Schlenk techniques or in a glove-box. Deuterated solvents used for NMR were dried and distilled prior to use. ¹H and ¹³C NMR spectra were recorded by a JNM-ECZ600R or JNM-ECZ400R spectrometer at ambient temperature unless otherwise stated. The chemical shifts of the ¹H and ¹³C NMR spectra were referenced to the residual solvent; Coupling constants are in Hz. Mass spectra were obtained by the Analytical Center of Anhui University. Elemental analysis was performed by the Analytical Center of Anhui University. Molecular weight and molecular weight distribution of the polymers were determined by gel permeation chromatography (GPC) with a PL 210 equipped with one Shodex AT-803S and two Shodex AT-806MS columns at 150 °C using trichlorobenzene as a solvent and calibrated with polystyrene standards. Differential scanning calorimetry (DSC) was performed by a DSC Q2000 from TA Instruments. Samples were quickly heated to 150 °C and kept for 5 min to remove thermal history, then cooled to -50 °C at a rate of 10 K/min, and finally reheated to 150 °C at the same rate under a nitrogen flow (50 mL/min). The maximum points endotherm (heating scan) were taken as the melting temperature (T_m) .

1.2 Procedure for the Synthesis of Arylamines A1-A4.



2-Amino-5-methylbenzoate (1.66 g, 10.0 mmol, 1.0 equivalent) was added to tetrahydrofuran in an N₂ atmosphere, followed by the addition of phenylmagnesium bromide (15 mL, 30.0 mmol, 1.0 eq) at 0 °C. The reaction was allowed to proceed at room temperature for two hours. Next, it was quenched with NH₄Cl solution and ethyl acetate was added. The ethyl acetate layer was washed three times with water (3 x 200 mL) and dried with anhydrous magnesium sulfate for 30 minutes. Subsequently, a white powder was obtained by ethanol precipitation. The obtained white powder (2.89 g, 2 mmol, 1.0 equivalent) was added successively to trifluoroacetic acid (0.60 mL, 8 mmol, 4.0 equivalent) and triethylsilane (0.64 mL, 4 mmol, 2.0 equivalent) at 0 °C for a reaction time of 4 hours. After the reaction, the mixture was dissolved in ethyl acetate and the pH was adjusted to 7 using NaHCO₃. The ethyl acetate layer was washed three times with 200 mL of water, dried with anhydrous magnesium sulfate for 30 minutes, and recrystallized with ethanol to obtain white powder (A1).



A mixture of 2-halogenated-4-methylaniline (10.0 mmol, 1.0 eq) and diphenylmethanol (1.84 g, 10 mmol, 1.0 eq) was heated to 120 °C. After the mixture was melted, a concentrated hydrochloric acid (1.0 mL) solution of dissolved anhydrous zinc chloride (0.68 g, 5 mmol, 0.5 equivalent) was added to the mixture and the temperature was raised to 160 °C. After 30 minutes of reaction at 160 ° C, the mixture was cooled to room temperature and dissolved in dichloromethane (200 mL). The dichloromethane layer was washed with water (3×200 mL) and dried with anhydrous magnesium sulfate for 30 minutes. White powder (A2-A4) was obtained by recrystallization with ethanol.



A1(1.53 g, 66%): A1 is known ¹.



A2 (2.58 g, 89%): A2 is known ².



A3 (2.25 g, 75%): ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 7.36 – 7.29 (m, 4H, Ar-*H*), 7.28 (d, *J* = 1.6 Hz, 1H, Ar-*H*), 7.24 (d, *J* = 1.3 Hz, 1H, Ar-*H*), 7.16 – 7.01 (m, 5H, Ar-*H*), 6.39 (s, 1H, Ar-*H*), 5.47 (s, 1H, -C*H*-), 3.95 – 3.12 (*br*, 2H, -N*H*₂), 2.13 (s, 3H, -C*H*₃). ¹³C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 142.00, 138.38, 130.45, 129.48, 129.16, 128.66, 127.83, 126.85, 120.25, 52.71 (-*C*H-), 20.51 (-*C*H₃). APCI-MS (m/z): calcd for C₂₀H₁₉ClN⁺: 308.1201, Found, 308.1195, [M+H]⁺



A4 (2.78 g, 93%): A4 is known ³.

1.3 Procedure for the Synthesis of Ligands L1-L4.



The condensation of arylamines A1-A4 (2 mmol, 1.0 equivalent) and acenaphthenone (1 mmol, 0.5 equivalent) was performed using the template method. To the reaction system, 2 mL of acetic acid dissolved in $ZnCl_2$ (1.0 equivalent) was added to the arylamines and acenaphthenone acetate solution (10 mL), and the mixture was reacted at 90 °C for four hours. At the end of the reaction, the yellow solid powder was obtained by filtration and ether washing. The yellow powder was dissolved in 40 mL of dichloromethane. Then, 10% potassium oxalate solution was added and stirred at room temperature for one hour. Afterward, the dichloromethane layer was washed with water (3 × 20 mL) and dried with anhydrous magnesium sulfate for 30 minutes. Finally, the yellow powder (L1-L4) was obtained by ethanol precipitation.



L1 (0.48 g, 70%). ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 8.12 – 7.62 (m, 2H, Ar-*H*), 7.17 – 7.00 (m, 14H, Ar-*H*), 6.96 – 6.76 (m, 13H, Ar-*H*), 6.72 – 6.46 (m, 3H, Ar-*H*), 5.83 (s, 2H, -C*H*-), 2.36 (s, 6H, -C*H*₃). ¹³C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 161.90 (*C*=N), 147.91, 146.90, 147.91, 146.90, 143.10, 142.62, 140.90, 134.45, 134.05, 133.81, 131.97, 130.57, 130.49, 130.35, 130.27, 129.86, 129.64, 129.54, 128.80, 128.18, 128.08, 128.05, 127.89, 127.70, 127.50, 126.98, 126.86, 126.69, 125.79, 125.73, 123.71, 123.44, 121.79, 117.93, 117.20, 116.66, 76.83, 52.48 (-CH-), 52.09 (-CH-), 21.45 (-CH₃), 20.85 (-CH₃). APCI-MS (m/z): calcd for C₅₂H₄₁N₂⁺: 693.3265, Found, 693.3242, [M+H]⁺



L2 (0.50 g, 68%). ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 8.02 – 7.59 (m, 3H, Ar-*H*), 7.35 – 7.27 (m, 2H, Ar-*H*), 7.17 (td, *J* = 13.1, 7.3 Hz, 8H, Ar-*H*), 7.03 – 6.31 (m, 16H, Ar-*H*), 6.13 – 5.94 (m, 1H, Ar-*H*), 5.86, 5.80 (s, s, 2H, -C*H*-), 2.33 (s, 6H, -C*H*₃). ¹³C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 164.29 (*C*=N), 149.68, 142.53, 141.64, 141.46, 141.27, 141.01, 140.47, 137.46, 137.06, 136.90, 135.35, 135.21, 134.87, 134.47, 134.41, 133.97, 131.77, 130.04, 129.87, 129.74, 129.65, 128.99, 128.80, 128.41, 128.21, 127.95, 127.83, 127.55, 127.36, 126.99, 126.30, 125.93, 125.31, 125.00, 122.47, 114.39, 114.20, 52.59 (-*C*H-), 21.45 (-*C*H₃). APCI-MS (m/z) : calcd for C₅₂H₃₉F₂N₂⁺ : 729.3076, Found, 729.3068, [M+H]⁺



L3 (0.45 g, 68%). ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 7.73, 7.59 (s, s, 2H, Ar-*H*), 7.23 – 7.06 (m, 13H, Ar-*H*), 6.92 (d, J = 7.5 Hz, 4H, Ar-*H*), 6.83, 6.77 (s, s, 2H, Ar-*H*), 6.64 (dt, J = 14.7, 6.9 Hz, 1H, Ar-*H*), 6.41 – 6.27 (m, 6H, Ar-*H*), 6.03 (t, J = 7.4 Hz, 2H, Ar-*H*), 5.79, 5.74 (s, s, 2H, -*CH*-), 2.32 (s, 6H, -*CH*₃). ¹³C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl3) δ 164.37 (*C*=N), 144.54, 142.75, 142.30, 140.87, 140.31, 136.25, 134.21, 130.13, 129.79, 129.72, 129.64, 129.55, 129.19, 128.78, 128.75, 128.61, 128.39, 128.28, 128.21, 128.16, 128.00, 127.59, 127.50, 127.00, 126.94, 126.36, 126.30, 125.91, 125.08, 122.83, 122.22, 121.85, 52.80 (-*C*H-), 52.17 (-*C*H-), 21.18 (-*C*H₃). APCI-MS (m/z) : calcd for C₅₂H₃₉Cl₂N₂⁺ : 761.2485, Found, 761.2470, [M+H]⁺



L4 (0.55 g, 78%). ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 7.74, 7.60 (s, s, 2H, Ar-*H*), 7.43, 7.39 (s, s, 2H, Ar-*H*), 7.25 – 7.17 (m, 5H, Ar-*H*), 7.18 – 7.04 (m, 6H, Ar-*H*), 6.95 (d, *J* = 7.6 Hz, 5H, Ar-*H*), 6.84 (s, 1H, Ar-*H*), 6.68, 6.57 (s, s, 2H, Ar-*H*), 6.35 (q, *J* = 7.3 Hz, 5H, Ar-*H*), 6.10 (t, J = 7.5 Hz, 2H, Ar-*H*), 5.81, 5.74 (s, s, 2H, -C*H*-), 2.34 (s, 6H, -C*H*₃). ¹³C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 164.52 (*C*=N), 164.05 (*C*=N), 145.91, 143.31, 142.97, 142.26, 136.05, 135.08, 134.63, 131.86, 131.41, 130.36, 130.21, 129.92, 129.86, 129.74, 129.63, 129.08, 128.93, 128.77, 128.44, 128.24, 128.06, 127.64, 127.49, 127.08, 126.39, 126.33, 125.97, 125.24, 123.09, 112.08, 111.72, 52.86 (-CH-), 52.38 (-CH-), 21.08 (-CH₃). APCI-MS (m/z): calcd for C₅₂H₃₉Br₂N₂⁺: 851.1455, Found, 851.1457, [M+H]⁺

1.4 Procedure for the Synthesis of Complexes Ni1-Ni4.



In a nitrogen atmosphere, a mixture consisting of 0.2 mmol of ligand and an equivalent amount of (DME)NiBr₂ was introduced into 10 mL of methylene chloride. This mixture was then stirred at room temperature for an extended period of time, overnight, resulting in a noticeable deepening of the solution's color. Following the completion of the reaction, the solvent was partially evaporated under reduced pressure. Subsequently, the remaining mixture was diluted with 20 mL of anhydrous ether, leading to the formation of an orange-red solid precipitate. The solids were then separated through filtration, washed thoroughly with ether, and finally dried under vacuum conditions to yield the desired Ni1-Ni4 compounds.



Ni1 (0.14 g, 65%), IR: C=N (1621 cm⁻¹). MALDI-TOF-MS (m/z): calcd for C₅₂H₄₀BrN₂Ni: 829.1728, Found, 829.1714, [M-Br]⁺. Elemental analysis: calc. for C₅₂H₄₀Br₂N₂Ni: C, 68.53; H, 4.42; N, 3.07. Found: C, 68.47; H, 4.23; N, 3.11.



Ni2 (0.15 g, 78%), IR: C=N (1628 cm⁻¹). MALDI-TOF-MS (m/z): calcd for C₅₂H₃₈BrF₂N₂Ni: 865.1540, Found, 865.1519, [M-Br]⁺. Elemental analysis: calc. for C₅₂H₃₈Br₂F₂N₂Ni: C, 65.93; H, 4.04; N, 2.96. Found: C, 65.89; H, 4.07; N, 2.91.



Ni3 (0.17 g, 87%), IR: C=N (1625 cm⁻¹). MALDI-TOF-MS (m/z): calcd for C₅₂H₃₈BrCl₂N₂Ni: 897.0949, Found, 897.0944, [M-Br]⁺. Elemental analysis: calc. for C₅₂H₃₈Br₂Cl₂N₂Ni: C, 63.71; H, 3.91; N, 2.86. Found: C, 63.64; H, 3.96; N, 2.81.



Ni4 (0.20 g, 90%), IR: C=N (1623 cm⁻¹). MALDI-TOF-MS (m/z): calcd for C₅₂H₃₈Br₃N₂Ni: 984.9939, Found, 984.9927, [M-Br]⁺. Elemental analysis: calcd for C₅₂H₃₈Br₄N₂Ni: C, 58.41; H, 3.58; N, 2.62. Found: C, 58.23; H, 3.64; N, 2.65.

1.5 A General Procedure for Ethylene Polymerization.

In a standard experimental procedure, a 350 mL thick-walled glass pressure vessel underwent drying for 2 hours in a hot air circulation oven maintained at 60 °C. Once it cooled to room temperature, 40 mL of toluene and 200 equivalents of Et₂AlCl were introduced into the vessel in a nitrogen-rich environment. Following this, 2 µmol of a Ni(II) catalyst dissolved in 1 mL of CH₂Cl₂ was injected into the polymerization system using a syringe. With vigorous stirring at 350 RPM, the reactor was pressurized to maintain a constant 6 atm of ethylene. After a duration of 10 minutes, the pressurized reactor was depressurized, and the resulting polymer was precipitated in ethanol. Subsequently, the polymer was filtered, and then dried at 50 °C for a minimum of 24 hours under vacuum conditions.

2.1 ¹H and ¹³C NMR of the Synthetic Compounds.



Figure S1. ¹H NMR spectrum of A3 in CDCl₃ (400 MHz, 20 °C).



Figure S2. ¹³C NMR spectrum of A3 in CDCl₃ (400 MHz, 20 °C).



Figure S3. ¹H NMR spectrum of L1 in CDCl₃ (400 MHz, 20 °C).



Figure S4. ¹³C NMR spectrum of L1 in CDCl₃ (400 MHz, 20 °C).



Figure S6. ¹³C NMR spectrum of L2 in CDCl₃ (400 MHz, 20 °C).



Figure S7. ¹H NMR spectrum of L3 in CDCl₃ (400 MHz, 20 °C).



Figure S8. ¹³C NMR spectrum of L3 in CDCl₃ (400 MHz, 20 °C).



Figure S9. ¹H NMR spectrum of L4 in CDCl₃ (400 MHz, 20 °C).



Figure S10. ¹³C NMR spectrum of L4 in CDCl₃ (400 MHz, 20 $^{\circ}$ C).

2.2 MS of A3 and L1-L4.



Figure S11. APCI-MS of A3.



Figure S12. APCI-MS of L1.



Figure S13. APCI-MS of L2.



Figure S14. APCI-MS of L3.



Figure S15. APCI-MS of L4.

2.3 MS of Complexes Ni1-Ni4.



Figure S16. MALDI-TOF-MS of Ni1.



Figure S17. MALDI-TOF-MS of Ni2.



Figure S18. MALDI-TOF-MS of Ni3.



Figure S19. MALDI-TOF-MS of Ni4.



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Figure S20. ¹H NMR spectrum of the polymer from table 1, entry 5 (C₆D₆, 70 °C, 400 MHz).



Figure S21. ¹H NMR spectrum of the polymer from table 1, entry 6 (C₆D₆, 70 °C, 400 MHz).



Figure S22. ¹H NMR spectrum of the polymer from table 1, entry 8 (C₆D₆, 70 °C, 400 MHz).



Figure S23. ¹H NMR spectrum of the polymer from table 1, entry 9 (C₆D₆, 70 °C, 400 MHz).



Figure S24. ¹H NMR spectrum of the polymer from table 1, entry 10 (C₆D₆, 70 °C, 400 MHz).



Figure S25. ¹H NMR spectrum of the polymer from table 1, entry 11 (C₆D₆, 70 °C, 400 MHz).



90 1.85 1.80 1.75 1.70 1.65 1.60 1.55 1.50 1.45 1.40 1.35 1.30 1.25 1.20 1.15 1.10 1.05 1.00 0.95 0.90 0.85 0.80 0.75 0.70 0.65 f1 (ppm)



2.5 DSC and GPC of Representative Polymers.



Figure S27. DSC of the polymer from table 1, entry 1.



Figure S28. DSC of the polymer from table 1, entry 2.



Figure S29. DSC of the polymer from table 1, entry 3.



Figure S30. DSC of the polymer from table 1, entry 4.



Figure S31. DSC of the polymer from table 1, entry 5.



Figure S32. DSC of the polymer from table 1, entry 6.



Figure S33. DSC of the polymer from table 1, entry 7.



Figure S34. DSC of the polymer from table 1, entry 8.



Figure S35. DSC of the polymer from table 1, entry 9.



Figure S36. DSC of the polymer from table 1, entry 10.



Figure S37. DSC of the polymer from table 1, entry 11.



Figure S38. DSC of the polymer from table 1, entry 12.



Figure S39. GPC of the polymer from table 1, entry 1.



Figure S40. GPC of the polymer from table 1, entry 2.



Figure S41. GPC of the polymer from table 1, entry 3.



Figure S42. GPC of the polymer from table 1, entry 4.



Figure S43. GPC of the polymer from table 1, entry 5.



Figure S44. GPC of the polymer from table 1, entry 6.



Figure S45. GPC of the polymer from table 1, entry 7.



Figure S46. GPC of the polymer from table 1, entry 8.



Figure S47. GPC of the polymer from table 1, entry 9.



Figure S48. GPC of the polymer from table 1, entry 10.



Figure S49. GPC of the polymer from table 1, entry 11.



Figure S50. GPC of the polymer from table 1, entry 12.

3. Reference

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