Terms of Address Among Latter-day Saints

Brian J. Fogg
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Growing up as a Mormon in California, I was different from my friends. They knew that I went to church three times each Sunday, that I didn’t drink coffee, and that I didn’t swim on the Sabbath. But they didn’t know about my Latter-day Saint address system. At a very early age I learned to substitute Brother or Sister for Mr. or Mrs when addressing people at church. Although I wasn’t sure about the rationale behind my religious address system, I was fairly adept at code shifting when I moved from secular settings to religious settings and back again.

However, sometimes my code shifting faltered. For example, at eight years of age I worried about what I should call my little league baseball coach, a man who happened also to be a Mormon. Brother Thorup? Mr. Thorup? Neither seemed right. I finally found the best answer: Coach. Despite such happy solutions, occasionally my religious training slipped out. One day in fourth grade I raised my hand and said, "Sister Bondietti, I—" My mistake made me flush. Ms. Bondietti (this was early ’70s; Ms. was in vogue) simply smiled and asked me to continue my question.

The LDS linguistic experience in Utah, where over 50% of the population is LDS, is different—and perhaps more complex—from that for a California Mormon. The Utah Mormons who form a congregation live very close to each other, sometimes within a few blocks. And like people in any society, Utah Mormons go to school with each other, work for each other, and compete against each other. Despite the secularization of what the Mormon pioneers hoped would be a religious utopia, today’s Latter-day Saints, in and out of Utah, have maintained their address system, calling other members of the church by special titles like Brother Smith and Sister Young. This is one reason that the LDS speech community makes for an interesting study in terms of address.
The other reason terms of address are worthy of study in Utah Mormons is that Utah Mormons speak English, a language which requires that terms of address carry an added burden. More than simple attention-getters, terms of address in English indicate the relationship between the dyad—the two people talking—as well as marking the nature of the situation. In many other languages, the intrinsic grammatical features, such as pronouns or verb tenses, perform these functions. In Spanish one might say, "Como esta Usted?" or "Como estas?" depending on the relationship the speakers have, either formal or familiar. French, Japanese, and other languages have similar linguistic markers of power and deference, solidarity and intimacy. In such languages, very little communication happens without defining the speaker-listener relationship. Avoiding address forms in pronominal systems like French or Russian is impossible (Ervin-Tripp "Language" 320). Brown and Gilman write: "In face-to-face address [in French] we can usually avoid the use of any name or title but not so easily the use of a pronoun. Even if the pronoun can be avoided, it will be implicit in the inflection of the verb" (270). Brown and Ford add: "In French, for example, a speaker must choose between two second person singular pronouns; his addressees may be addressed as tu or as vous. In German the comparable forms are du and Sie; in Italian tu and Lei" (380).

Although thou and ye allowed some sort of distinction from the thirteenth to the eighteenth centuries, modern English usage has no equivalent forms. Today's Americans can speak to each other without having to specifically define the dyad relationship. In theory an American could go on this way for years, using no address form and choosing innocuous markers of relative power and solidarity (like tone of voice and diction)—that is, until one member of the dyad lands in a situation that requires a term of address. Then the person must make a decision that has social and often political implications.
It is these two factors—the traditional use of *brother* and *sister* in LDS circles and the lack of intrinsic status markers in modern English—that have led me to my research question: Among Latter-day Saints, who uses what address form to whom, and in what circumstances?
Literature Review

Three studies have pioneered the scholarship in terms of address. The first, a study by Brown and Gilman in 1960, shows how European languages have used terms of T and V, familiar and formal, in the second-person verbs and pronouns. When analyzing pronoun uses of T or V, Brown and Gilman define two pivotal terms: power and solidarity. These terms have become standard in the literature.

According to the Brown and Gilman study, power is evidenced by age, status, and other attributes: "There are many bases of power—physical strength, wealth, age, sex, institutionalized role in the church, the state, the army or within the family" (255). On the other hand, solidarity is a function of familiarity, like-mindedness, and intimacy. Solidarity is usually determined "by such things as political membership, family, religion, profession, sex, and birthplace" ("Eye color does not ordinarily matter nor does shoe size") (258).

Brown and Gilman show that historically the choice of a pronominal form, either T or V, has been based on the power variable; however, more recently the solidarity factor has become increasingly important.

Following up on the Brown and Gilman study, Brown and Ford show in 1961 that factors of intimacy and status define the forms used. Brown and Ford write: "The principal factors predisposing to intimacy seem to be shared values (which may derive from kinship, from identity of occupation, sex, nationality, etc., or from some common fate) and frequent contact" (377).

In the Brown and Ford study, address forms were confined to title + last name (TLN) and first name (FN). They note that "the principal option of address in American English is the choice between use of the first name . . . and use of a title with the last name" (375). The choice of term is controlled by the relationship of the
dyad, which is the combination of the speaker and addressee. Brown and Ford also note that

Mutual TLN [title + last name] is most commonly found between newly introduced adults. The distinction between the two patterns is primarily one of degree of acquaintance with the degree required for the Mutual FN [first name] being less for younger people than for older people and less where the members of the dyad are of the same sex than where they are of different sex. (376-7)

Brown and Ford also articulate what seems to be a well-accepted rule today: "The mutual TLN goes with distance of formality and the mutual FN with a slightly greater degree of intimacy. In nonreciprocal address the TLN is used to the person of higher status and the FN to the person of lower status. One form expresses both distance and deference; the other form expresses both intimacy and condescension" (380).

The third landmark study is by Ervin-Tripp, who develops a flowchart to describe the rules that seem to govern terms of address in American English. Ervin-Tripp identifies what factors control choices in address forms and explains how these rules operate in society and among kin. (This chart appears as Diagram A on page 21 of this thesis.) Ervin-Tripp then contrasts the American rules of address to those of other societies.

Since these three important studies, others have looked at the social and psychological implications of address forms in other settings: in countries like Italy (Bates and Benigni 1975), Sweden (Paulston 1976), Germany (Geiger 1979), French Canada (Lambert 1967), Hungary (Hollos 1975), Japan (Loveday 1981, 1984), Nepal (McLean 1973), and Russia (Friedrich 1972); in languages like Slovene and Serbo-Croatian (Kess and Juricic 1978) and Turkish (Casson and Ozertug 1976); and in other settings like the Quaker speech community (Shipley and
Shipley 1969), academia (McIntire 1972), the U.S. Marine Corps (Jonz 1975), among children (Emihovich 1981; Wooton 1981), and in relationship to sexes (Kramer 1975; Wolfson and Manes 1980).

Very few of the above studies are based on statistical data. In fact, the most important ones this far in the literature are analytical rather than empirical.
Methodology

After conducting a pilot study, I decided to collect terms of address in the Latter-day Saint speech community in the Wasatch front, the heart of Mormonism in Utah. I limited my data collection to Sunday church meetings held on church property. To get a representative mix of socio-economic factors, I recorded address forms from six congregations scattered from Springville to North Orem. I tried to get a wide sample of not only of socio-economic levels but also of other seemingly important factors, such as average age and congregational stability. In each case I brought along another researcher who could both help confirm what I had heard and record address forms used in the women's meetings.

Procedure and Variables

My pilot study showed which variables would be significant and feasible to record in participant-observer research. As observers, my research assistants and I attended Latter-day Saint Sunday services and marked on a preprepared sheet the address forms we heard. We noted the following variables when used by Latter-day Saints over eighteen years of age:

Forms used

The address forms recorded are as follows:

- FN      (first name)
- BLN     (brother + last name)
- SLN     (sister + last name)
- FLN     (first name + last name)
- none or Ø (address avoidance)
The last form above, address avoidance, was sometimes difficult to identify. We counted a teacher's pointing or saying "yes" to call on a class member as an act of address avoidance. The "hey, you" type of address was also counted as address avoidance.

In addition to terms of address, which are second-person terms, this study also includes terms of reference, which are third-person terms, when used in the presence of the antecedent. For example, if Peter, Paul, and Mary are talking in the foyer and Mary says to Peter, "Take Paul to the library," this study would include that speech act in the data, because Paul was within earshot. However, if Mary said to Peter, "Go find Martha," my study would not include that term of reference; Martha was not within earshot. Though some may find fault, my research operates under this assumption: terms of reference used in the presence of the antecedent are used in the same way as terms of address; therefore, both are included in the data. I justify this assumption not through empirical data but by logical analysis. Terms of reference used in the presence of the antecedent are much different from those used when the antecedent is not within earshot. For example, many of us have used terms to refer to someone, say a professor, that we would never use if the professor were listening. However, when the professor is within earshot, our term of reference would then change as if it were a term of address.

In this research we also recorded introduction terms (or terms of self-reference) but have not included them in this report, because the data were insufficient to warrant any defensible conclusions.

The preprepared sheet also had a space to mark other types of address terms. And we did find some (such as Elder + last name) but not enough to be of note.

Formality levels

The situation variable had three components:
• Formal: A meeting large enough to require that the speaker use a microphone, such as in sacrament meeting.
• Semiformal: A meeting small enough that the speaker needs no amplification system, such as in Sunday school or auxiliary classes.
• Informal: All situations outside of structured meetings, such as in the foyer, before class, or in the parking lot.

**Status levels**

Although many complex factors contribute to status, in this study we could judge only one factor quickly and accurately: age. In justifying the difference in status based on age, I follow the Brown and Ford definition, which seems to have become standard in the literature: "among adults an elder by approximately 15-or-more years receives TLN and gives FN to his junior" (377). I adhere to this convention in my study.

The three status variables, as determined by age, are as follows:

• Person of higher status speaking to one of lower
• People of equal status speaking
• Person of lower status speaking to one of higher

**Sex variables**

The four sex variables are as follows:

• Male speaking to male
• Male speaking to female
• Female speaking to male
• Female speaking to female
Usually, judging sex was simple. However, when a person addressed an audience that included both males and females, recording this variable was not completely accurate. For example, in the sentence "Brother Jones will now offer the closing prayer," the speaker is technically addressing the audience by referring to Brother Jones, and, of course, the audience is neither male nor female. In such cases we recorded the data in terms of the speech act's illocutionary force: an address from the speaker to Brother Jones himself.

Sample Size

We recorded 452 examples of address forms used by adult Latter-day Saints during Sunday services. I did not include ten or so speech acts in the data because of recording errors or because the use of the form was so rare. These forms include titles alone (Bishop, President, Sister), kinship terms of address (Mom, Uncle Jed), and other forms (dear, Sister Mary, partner).

Preliminary Nature of the Study

This study of terms of address among Latter-day Saints is a preliminary and exploratory study of limited scope. I may have made some erroneous generalizations in collecting and interpreting the data, most of which I will point out.
Results and Discussion

A statistical package, StatView, showed that the variables in my data do not have a close enough correlation with address forms to show statistical significance. However, a stepwise regression analysis showed the relative strength of each variable as a predictor of address forms. The strongest predictor of address forms is the situation variable, followed by the status variable, and finally the sex variable.

Situation Variable

The situation variable proved to be strongest predictor of address forms among the Latter-day Saints sampled in this study. Table 1 shows the raw data, where we recorded 283 speech acts, more than half the total, in semiformal situations. Also, the data show what my research assistants and I quickly found out: collecting data in informal situations through our participant-observer technique was the most difficult, yielding only seventy-two speech acts.

### Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation Variable</th>
<th>Observed Frequency Table</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>formal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RN</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TLN</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLN</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TFLN</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals:</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Changing the raw data into percentages of the total in each situational category allows a comparison of the three formality levels. Table 2 shows how the percentages compare.

**TABLE 2**  
Situation Variable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Percent of Column Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>formal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FN</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TLN</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLN</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TFLN</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals:</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 shows three significant trends. First, the FN (first name) address form increases in LDS circles as the situation becomes less formal. In formal
situations 27% of address forms were first names, compared to 54.06% in semiformal situations and 77.78% in informal situations.

The next trend seems to be simply an inverse of the first one. The more formal the situation, the more likely a speaker is to use either FLN (first + last name) or TLN (title + last name). TLN includes both BLN (Brother + last name) and SLN (Sister + last name). In formal situations 37% of the address forms are TLN, compared to 21.55% in semiformal situations and 11.11% in informal situations. (Note that the 18% of FLN in formal situations is probably a result of official announcements, when the names of members are being presented to the congregation or when members are formally asked to participate in the service.) These two trends seem to indicate that Latter-day Saints mark the formality of situations and change their address forms accordingly.

A third trend from the data is the tendency to avoid address forms in semiformal situations at the rate of 18.73%. The address avoidance phenomenon seems to have at least two explanations: (1) perhaps these LDS speakers are unsure of what form would be most appropriate in semiformal situations, so they opt for no address at all; or (2) in semiformal situations Latter-day Saints must often interact with people whose names they do not know. I'll discuss address avoidance more in the section on status.

Status Variable

The status variable proved to be the second strongest predictor of address forms. As I've explained above, status in this study is defined by age. The raw data in Table 3 show that we recorded speech acts from people of equal status five times more often than from people of unequal status.
TABLE 3
Status Variable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observed Frequency Table</th>
<th>h to l</th>
<th>=</th>
<th>l to h</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FN</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TLN</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLN</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TFLN</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals: 62 326 67 455

- h to l = higher status* talking to lower
- = equal status
- l to h = lower status talking to higher

*Status is defined by age. More than fifteen years older in age is a status increase.

FN = first name (Kim, Mike)
TLN = title + last name (Brother Johnson, Sister Graham)
FLN = first and last name (Stephanie Scott)
None = address avoidance (pointing, making eye contact)
TFLN = title + first and last name (Brother John Armstrong, Sister Linda Phillips)

When the raw data are converted into percentages of the total in each status variable, as shown in Table 4, the numbers indicate three important trends. First, when LDS speakers in our study address those of lower or equal status, they most often use a FN address: higher to lower status with 58.06% and equal status with 57.67%. When a speaker addresses a person of higher status, the FN address is used only 17.91% of the time.

The fact that Latter-day Saints seem to feel comfortable calling those of lower or equal rank by first name compares very closely to another study of American address forms. Ervin-Tripp asserts that "familiarity is not a factor within dyads of
the same age and rank, and there are no options. For an American assistant professor to call a new colleague of the same rank and age 'Professor Watkins' or 'Mr. Watkins' would be considered strange, at least on the West Coast" (19). The same principle seems to hold true in this study.

**TABLE 4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status Variable</th>
<th>Percents of Column Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>h to l</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FN</td>
<td>58.06%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TLN</td>
<td>14.52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLN</td>
<td>16.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>6.45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TFLN</td>
<td>4.84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals:</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- h to l = higher status· talking to lower
- = equal status
- l to h = lower status talking to higher

*Status is defined by age. More than fifteen years older in age is a status increase.

FN = first name (Kim, Mike)
TLN = title + last name (Brother Johnson, Sister Graham)
FLN = first and last name (Stephanie Scott)
None = address avoidance (pointing, making eye contact)
TFLN = title + first and last name (Brother John Armstrong, Sister Linda Phillips)

Past research also coincides with the second important trends shown in Table 4: Speakers addressing those of higher status more often opt for a respect form of address, in this case TLN 52.24% of the time. The TLN address form is used less
frequently when the speakers are of equal status (19.02%), or when the speaker is of higher status (14.52%).

Table 4 also shows an interesting trend in address avoidance. As the status of a speaker decreases, that person increasingly tends to avoid address forms. Starting from the low mark of 6.45% of address avoidance when higher status addresses lower, the data then show an increase to 12.88% when equals converse, and a high of 20.9% when a person of lower status speaks to one of higher. The address avoidance in this case may show some degree of uneasiness among those of lower status, or perhaps among the younger generation, in choosing between FN and TLN address forms.

The address avoidance phenomenon has been recorded in other studies. Paulston shows that after the rise of egalitarianism in Sweden in 1932, the people of that country have been encouraged to use the familiar pronoun *du* and shun the formal pronoun *ni*. This has caused that society to develop other means of indicating social stratification, such as address terms in combination with pronouns. When the relationship is unclear, or when a Swede is speaking with one of obviously higher status, then that speaker will carefully avoid terms of address (375).

Paulston’s study may also help explain what is happening among the Latter-day Saints in this data. The ideal of American egalitarianism may make using a respect form of address unpleasant for those with lower status.

For those Latter-day Saints who are of equal status (within fifteen years of age, according to my study) but still avoid address forms, other factors may be at play. These speakers may simply be unsure about their relationship with their listeners. Brown and Ford conclude: "When someone is in this region of uncertainty, we find that he avoids the use of any sort of personal name and makes do with the uncommitted omnibus *you*" (384).
The reticence of Americans—which of course also applies to Latter-day Saint Americans—to address those of higher status by their first name without sufficient dispensation was articulated almost seventy years ago by Emily Post: "It is also effrontery for a younger person to call an older by her or his first name, without being asked to do so. Only a very underbred, thickskinned person would attempt it" (54).

Apparently, the right to cross the threshold from TLN to FN belongs to the person of higher status in a nonreciprocal dyad. Brown and Ford write that "the gate to linguistic intimacy is kept by the person of higher status" (381). In other words, the person of higher status must give some sort of dispensation before the person of lower status can begin to use a first name address.

However, since 1961 many social structures have become less important, and the person with lower status may not wait for a signal from the higher before using FN. Eleven years and a liberated American generation after the Brown and Ford study, McIntire comments on academic settings, "It is by no means true that the dyad member with superior status will always initiate a move which signals greater intimacy" (290). The American military, however, seems to be not so easily changed. In writing about address forms in the U. S. Marine Corps, Jonz supports the initial Brown and Ford assertion: "superior rank" decides when a dispensation is given to use a form other than TLN (72).

**Sex Variable**

Of the three variables in this study, the sex variable proved the least important in determining address form. Table 5 shows the raw data collected.
The raw data in Table 5 show that males use over 50% more address forms than females: males used 275 address forms, while females used 180. This difference probably reflects the fact that males have more opportunity to conduct and direct LDS church meetings; therefore, they do more talking and more addressing. The raw data also show the surprising difference in the total number of address forms of males addressing males compared to females addressing males, 240 compared to 35. The low figures in some of the columns may make the trends in this section less reliable than those for the other two variables.

Table 6 shows the raw data converted into percentages of the total in each sex variable.
### Table 6

**Sex Variable**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>m to m</th>
<th>m to f</th>
<th>f to m</th>
<th>f to f</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FN</td>
<td>53.33%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>31.43%</td>
<td>71.43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TLN</td>
<td>23.75%</td>
<td>26.47%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>15.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLN</td>
<td>6.25%</td>
<td>8.82%</td>
<td>8.57%</td>
<td>2.68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>9.58%</td>
<td>30.88%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>8.04%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TFLN</td>
<td>7.08%</td>
<td>8.82%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2.68%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals: 100% 100% 100% 100%

- m to f = male talking to female
- f to m = female talking to male
- FN = first name (Kim, Mike)
- TLN = title + last name (Brother Johnson, Sister Graham)
- FLN = first and last name (Stephanie Scott)
- None = address avoidance (pointing, making eye contact)
- TFLN = title + first and last name (Brother John Armstrong, Sister Linda Phillips)

Table 6 shows trends that result from changes in the sex variable. First, when talking to one of the same sex, Latter-day Saint are more likely to use FN address than when talking to one of different sex. First name address is used 53.33\% when males talk to males and 71.43\% when females talk to females.

However, when the dyad is made up of the two sexes, the use of FN drops sharply. When males address females, only 25\% use FN, and when females address males, 31.43\% use FN. This drop in FN frequency when addressing another of different sex may show the need for Latter-day Saints to maintain the proper distance from or respect toward those of different sex.

The 71.43\% incidence of females addressing females by FN may indicate a high degree of intimacy and camaraderie among Latter-day Saint women.
Table 6 shows only a slight increase in TLN when males address females compared to when males address males; however, the change for women using TLN is much greater: females use TLN 15.18% when talking to other females, but when addressing males they use TLN 40%, a marked increase.

Table 6 also shows that males receive a higher percentage of respect address forms than do females. Adding the percent of TLN address forms males receive from both males and females, we get 63.75%. Yet adding the percent of TLN address forms females receive, we get a much lower figure, 41.65%.

This trend of women being deferential to men is similar to what other studies have shown. For example, Ervin-Tripp says: "Men and women do not use terms of address in quite the same way, and young women, at least, use more deferential request forms than young men. In fact, it is commonly the case in many languages that women employ more deferential speech, but one can expect that such differences are related to other indicators of relative rank" (74). The data from the Latter-day Saints do indeed show that women use more deferential speech, at least when addressing males.

Finally, address avoidance is most likely to occur when Latter-day Saints talk to a person of different sex, according to Table 6. Males avoid using an address form about 20% more when talking to females than when talking to males. Females avoid using address forms about 12% more often when talking to males than when talking to females.
Conclusions

Though the conclusions from the data cannot be supported with statistical significance, the results of this study suggest that terms of address forms among Latter-day Saints are controlled by the same kinds of forces that operate in other speech communities. In brief, the conclusions from this study are as follows:

1. Formal situations lead to formal address forms and vice versa.
2. Factors that mark similarities (same age, same sex) lead to FN address forms.
3. Factors that mark differences (generation span, different sex) lead to more distant or respectful address forms.

Diagram A, a flowchart created by Ervin-Tripp, summarizes the factors that control address forms in American English.

**DIAGRAM A**

An American Address System
(Ervin-Tripp 18)
Diagram B makes an attempt—although largely inadequate—to summarize the critical points in the subconscious and complex process an adult Latter-day Saint goes through when choosing an address form.

**DIAGRAM B**

An Address System for Adult Latter-day Saints

```

TLN = formal title + last name (Bishop Johnson, President Graham)
T  = formal title alone (Elder, Bishop, President)
TFLN = title + first and last name (Brother John Armstrong, Sister Linda Phillips)
FLN = first and last name (Stephanie Scott)
BLN = Brother + last name (Brother Jones)
SLN = Sister + last name (Sister Jones)
FN  = first name (Kim, Mike)
Ø   = address avoidance (pointing, making eye contact, "hey, you")
```
One deficiency in both diagrams is in accounting for address avoidance. Neither is able to map adequately the areas of uncertainty that lead a speaker to avoid address forms. This is where choosing a term of address gets complex and unpredictable.

A comparison of Ervin-Tripp's diagram with mine shows many similarities. One important parallel is that the BLN and SLN address forms function in much the same way in LDS circles as the Mr. and Mrs. forms function in American address; in other words, the variables that cause Utah Latter-day Saints to use Mr. or Mrs. outside the church sphere are the same that cause them to use BLN or SLN inside the religious realm. In our research, we never heard Mr. + last name or Mrs. + last name, only Brother + last name and Sister + last name. This striking parallel may indicate that the BLN and SLN address forms among Latter-day Saints are not terms that convey spiritual kinship; they simply act as religious counterparts to Mr. and Mrs., all the while conveying similar attitudes of respect and distance.

Most Latter-day Saints seem to sense a time in LDS church history when the TFN (title + first name) address form was common. My research shows that this form is virtually nonexistent in the Wasatch Front areas we studied. In collecting nearly five hundred address forms, we recorded the TFN form only twice. Although most Latter-day Saints would agree that this address form once indicated the highest degree of spiritual intimacy among members of the LDS church, today such intimacy is shown by a simple FN address, a form that is no different from the familiar address used outside the LDS circle. In other words, barring the use of the TFN address, which is largely archaic, Latter-day Saints today have no distinct address form that marks a high degree of spiritual intimacy or communal solidarity. If Latter-day Saints did indeed have a prominent TFN address form, then the conclusions of this study would be different. However, the data seem to suggest
that the similarities between Latter-day Saint and American address forms—and the forces that control those forms—are more remarkable than the differences.
Questions for Further Study

My examination of address forms among Latter-day Saints has been simply a preliminary study. It has answered only a few questions, and such answers are certainly tentative. Perhaps what this research has done best is to open up address forms among Latter-day Saints as a field of study. Further studies might be directed along the following lines:

• What effect does socio-economic level have on address forms among Latter-day Saints?
• How do address forms in the Wasatch front compare to those used outside of Utah and in foreign countries?
• How are Utah LDS address forms used outside of the church sphere, such as while shopping or in a business office?
• Is the younger LDS generation moving away from traditional LDS address forms?
• How and why have address forms changed over the course of Church history? Whatever happened to Brother Brigham and Sister Emma?
• What official statements have the Church authorities made on terms of address?
• Can address forms be used as a indicator of congregational unity?
Works Cited


