

# Talking about Photos

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# Talking About Photos

- How photo-interviews differ from talk-alone ones: the visual-verbal relationship
- How photo-interviews work
  - Photos that do and don't get people talking
  - Remembering with photos
- 7 strategies for analysing photo-interviews

# How photo-interviews differ from talk-alone interviews

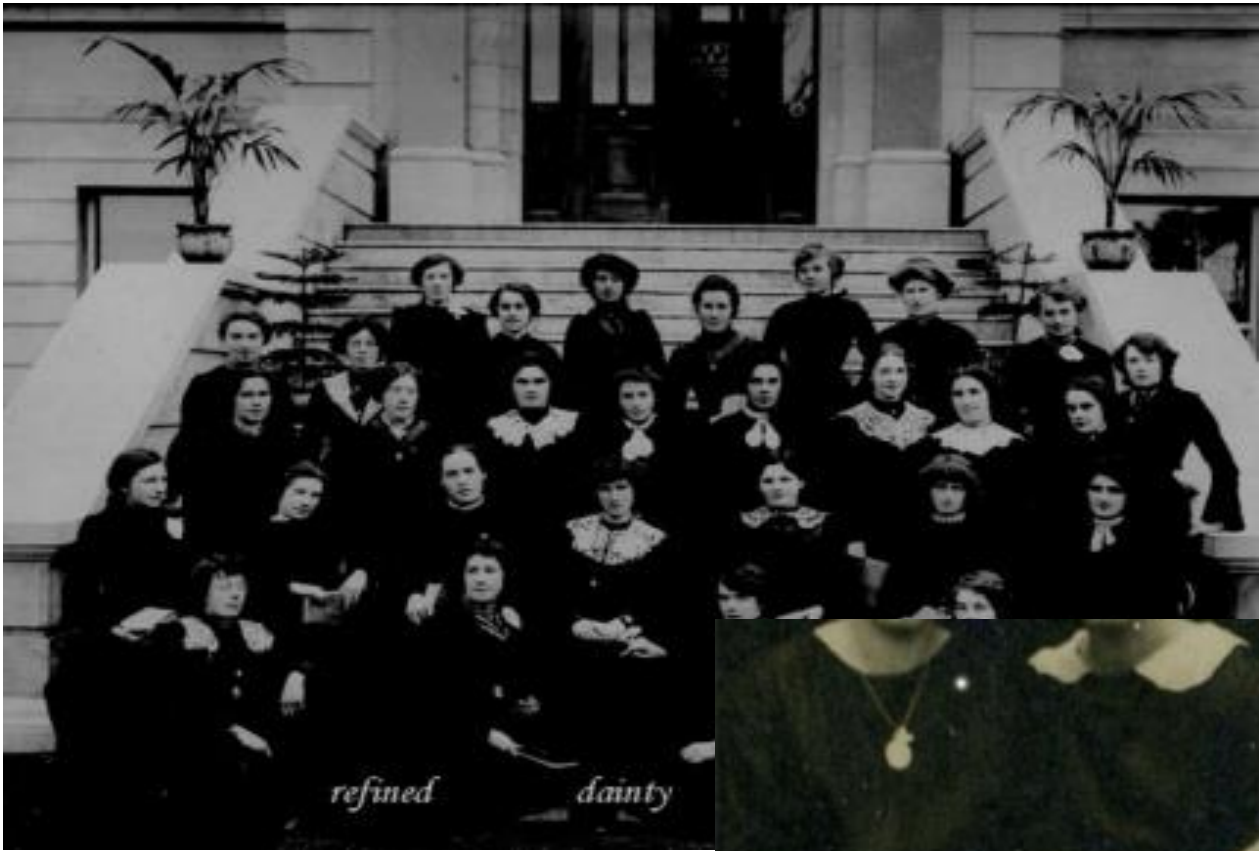
## Visual-verbal relationship

- Visual starting point
- Different modes of engagement
- Complex sensory experience
- Temporalities – accounting for a split second
- Temporalities – viewing in time

# How does a photo-interview work?

## Not all photos get people talking

- Relationship the interviewee has to 'personal' photos (eg Freund with Thiessen 2011)
- Photos that aren't interesting (eg Harper 2001)
- Photos that are deemed 'obvious'



Re-presenting  
photos  
Úna Bhroiméil (2009)



# How photo-interviews work

## Memory (Tinkler 2013)

- **Memory response**

Reaction: often vivid + emotional

Searching

- **Processing of recalled matter**

- **Outcomes -**

‘Compose’ an account that makes sense to self and others, and which presents and positions the self in ways that one can live with.

If unsuccessful or resisted - ‘Discomposure’ (Summerfield 2004)

# Strategies for analysing photo-interviews

1. Look
2. Contextualise
3. Listen
4. Juxtapose
5. Watch
6. 'Trace the threads' (Tinkler 2011)
7. Reflect on how photos shape intersubjectivity

**Look: what do people notice?**





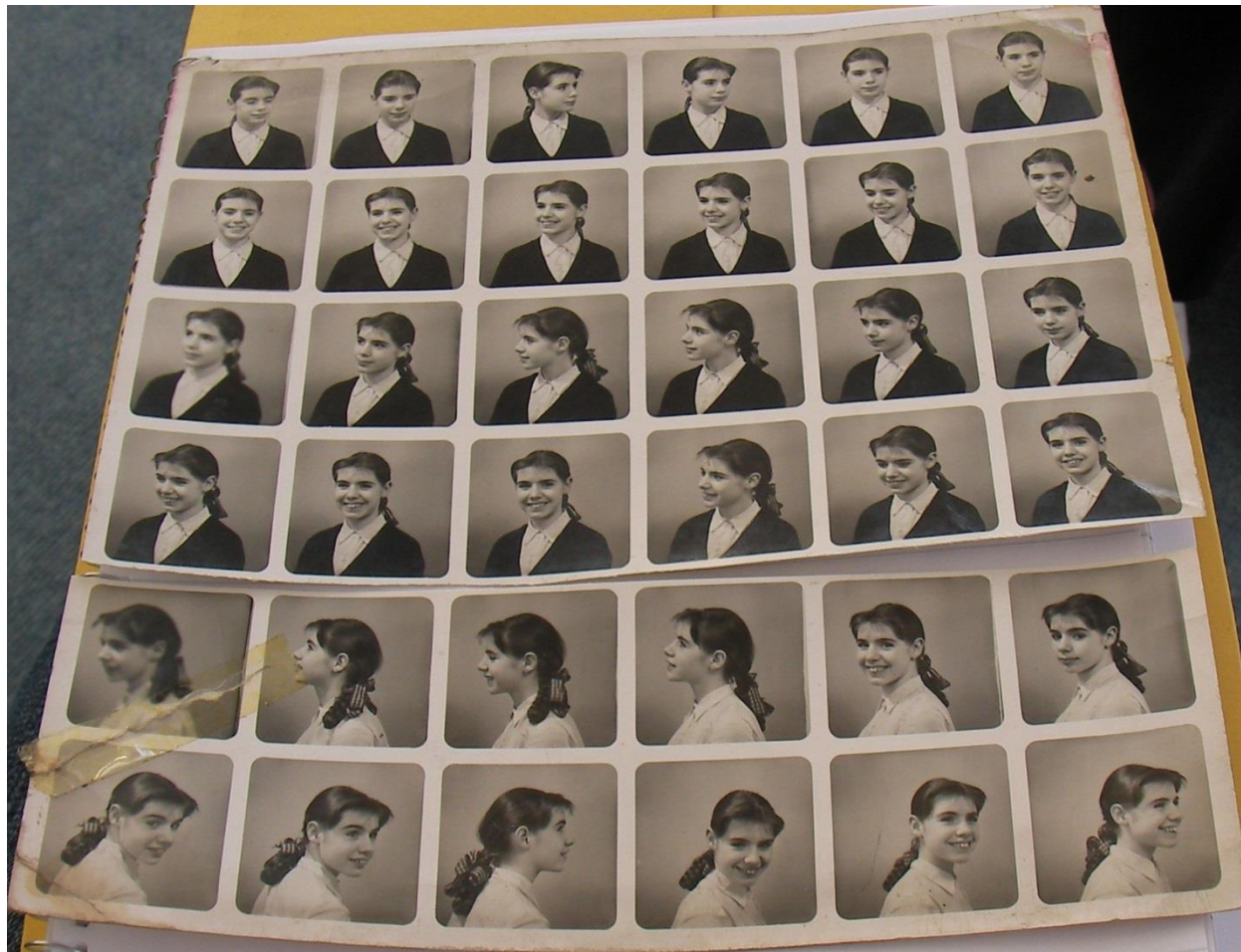
# Look, or look away



## 2. Contextualise

- Contexts of production: understanding the visual prompts + parameters in photo-elicitation using participant-generated photos
- Contexts of production and use: shaping how people talk about personal photos
- Learning from interviewee's photo practices

# Contextualise: photo practices



# 3. Listen

- What is said
- Silences
- How stories delivered (Portelli 1998)
- 'Layering of memories' (Tinkler 2010)

# Listen: 'Layering of memories'



# 4. Juxtaposition

- Between oral account and visual 'evidence'  
(eg Croghan et al., 2008, on young consumers)
- Between accounts produced at different points in time  
(eg Radley & Taylor, 2003, on patients' experiences of hospital; Thomson, 2011, on women's experiences of emigrating)

# 5. Watch



Physical engagements +  
bodily reactions

- Photos are material things – (Edwards, 2002)
- Looking is shaped by the material form of a photo (Edwards 2004)
- Physical, embodied responses: the ‘materiality of seeing’ – (Rose 2004)

## 6. Trace the narrative threads

‘Talk about a collection is more than a stringing together of discreet accounts about photos and is not reducible to these... Interviewees introduce, explain and frame their collections by what they say and do. Albums also require navigation. Through what is talked about at length, merely commented on, or ignored, the subject navigates a visible path through their collection... Preferred pathways are... narrative threads that are not reducible to, or necessarily obvious from, the photo collection in and of itself.’

(Tinkler 2011: 51)



# 'Trace the threads'

## Carol's girlhood agenda



# Strategies

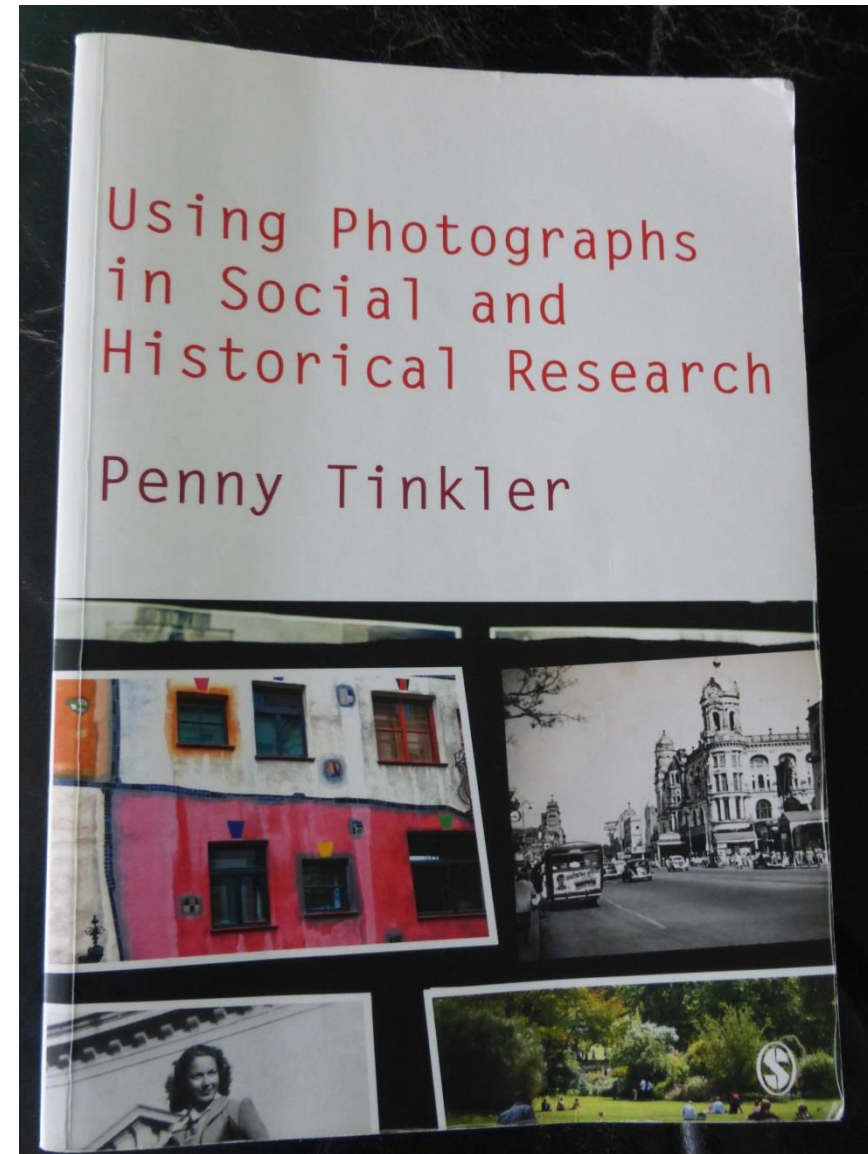
1. Look
2. Contextualise
3. Listen – ‘layering of memories’ (Tinkler 2010)
4. Juxtapose
5. Watch
6. ‘Trace the threads’ (Tinkler 2011)
7. **Reflect on how photos shape intersubjectivity**

Penny Tinkler, *Using Photographs in Social and Historical Research* (Sage, 2013 )

<http://www.uk.sagepub.com/booksProdDesc.nav?prodId=Book235025>

P. Tinkler, “When I was a girl . . .”: women talking about their girlhood photo collections’. In A. Thomson and A. Freund (eds) *Oral History and Photography*, Palgrave, 2011, pp. 45-60.

P. Tinkler, “Picture me as a young woman”: researching girls’ photo collections from the 1950s and 1960s.’ *Photography & Culture* 3 (3), 2010, 261-282.



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