The proposed project is essentially a cross between interactive fiction and text-based games such as Zork or Oregon trail. The game design would reflect methods to attempt to address echolalia in children who are old enough to interact meaningfully with the computer. Specifically, the game would be geared towards blind children through the use of text to speech.

Gameplay would consist of descriptions of rooms as well as objects that are in them that are procedurally generated. The child would then be presented with a puzzle that requires them to type out a command that is similar in meaning but differs in exact wording to an object in the room. These commands would be presented by a faux third party in order to give the children a model for what to say. For instance, if the room is described as having a “big rock” the child might be asked to type “I move the large stone”.

Several different specific methods are proposed to help address the echolalia through the gameplay. First the use of a third party prompting of the correct answer. “wh” questions such as who, what, why, or when. The child will be presented with several different forms of puzzles ranging from “who do you want to move the rock?” to “What do you do?” Finally we will keep all questions and problems as open ended as possible in an attempt to elicit more thoughtful answers.

The game will also have several party members that can be used in order to help cement and encourage more external use of language and pronoun use.

The concept was originally conceived as being narrowly targeted for only blind children. However, I believe that the target audience can be easily expanded to include people such as those with autism spectrum disorder that display echolalia. In order to keep the audience as broad as possible a second mode of gameplay is proposed. Instead of typing the commands the child is given several buttons with the commands and asked to press one. This allows for children who have the conceptual understanding but not the typing skills to still play the game.