Rotokas (East Papuan)

1) avaravere.......................I’ll go.’ 13) avaraepa....................‘I went.’
2) avauvere......................‘You’ll go.’ 14) avauhea.....................‘You went.’
3) avarovere.............‘He’ll go.’ 15) avaroepa...............‘He went.’
4) pauravere...............‘I’ll sit.’ 16) pauraepa...................‘I sat.’
5) pauuvere...............‘You’ll sit.’ 17) pauuepa...............‘You sat.’
6) paurovere..............‘He’ll sit.’ 18) pauroepa..................‘He sat.’
7) vokaavere..............‘I’ll walk.’ 19) vokaava...................‘I walked.’
8) vokarivere ......‘You’ll walk.’ 20) vokariva ................‘You walked.’
9) vokarevere ........‘He’ll walk.’ 21) vokareva.................‘He walked.’
10) pauavere...........‘I’ll build (it).’ 22) pauava....................‘I built (it).’
11) paurivere ..........‘You’ll build (it).’ 23) pauriva ..............‘You built (it).’
12) paurevere ......‘He’ll build (it).’ 24) paureva.................‘He built (it).’

Hints for this puzzle.

1) Rotokas is a root language, like Turkish (in some ways), and there are roots for a number of verbs in this problem. Roots are unchanging parts of a word to which inflections (the kind of process that gets done to the roots; in this case, suffixes) are attached.

2) There can be several different kinds of verb root in a language that each take different sets of endings. These are called inflection classes; inflection classes of verbs are sometimes called conjugations, and inflection classes of nouns are sometimes called declensions.

3) For future reference, the pattern of inflectional endings is called a paradigm; we’ll be using that word a lot this term (the adjective form of paradigm is paradigmatic). And the short statement of “meaning” in English that appears after the verb is called a gloss. Don’t expect glosses to indicate all the meaning; they’re quick and dirty labels, nothing more.

4) Notice that there are separate pronouns (he, I, etc.) in the English glosses, but only one word in the Rotokas examples. This is because English doesn’t have much inflection, and has to use a lot of words to express things that other languages do much more simply in one word by inflection.

5) There’s a pronoun (it) in numbers 10-12 and 22-24, with the verb that translates English build. That’s because English makes that verb transitive and requires it to have a direct object, whereas it’s not necessarily transitive in Rotokas. You get a lot of kludges like this in short glosses; they’re intended to give you some information, but they can’t possible give you all of it.