The Structure of the Illocutionary Act. The Case of Promising.

Given that a speaker S utters a sentence T in the presence of a hearer H., then, in the literal utterance, U, of T, S sincerely and non-defectively promises that p to H if and only if

1. Normal input and output conditions obtain.
2. S expresses the proposition that p in U of T.
3. In expressing that p, S predicates a future A of S
   2 & 3 are the propositional content conditions.
4. H would prefer S’s doing A to his not doing A, and S believes H would prefer S’s doing A to his not doing A.
5. It is not obvious to both S and H that S will do A in the normal course of events.

   4 and 5 are preparatory conditions. 5 is not a special feature of promising but exemplifies a general constraint on speech acts that is to be explained by the Gricean maxims.
6. S intends to do A.
   This is the sincerity condition
7. S intends that the U of T will place him under an obligation to do A.

   This is the essential condition, and it is here that meaning the utterance as a promise emerges. This is where the speaker imposes conditions of satisfaction (the obligation) on conditions of satisfaction (his utterance).
   So far we have created the meaningful utterance of the form F(p) and now that has to be communicated to the hearer.

8. S intends to produce in H the knowledge that U of T satisfies conditions 2-7, he intends to produce this knowledge by means of H’s recognition of his intention to produce it and he intends this recognition to occur because of H’s knowledge of the literal meaning of T.

   This is the communication intention.

9. The semantic rules of the dialect spoken by S and H are such that T is literally, sincerely and non-defectively uttered only if 1-8 obtain.