

MACHINE LEARNING ASSISTED ANALOG LAYOUT SYNTHESIS FOR ADVANCED RF FRONT ENDS

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Abstract

The analog layout design for the RF front-end circuits has remained a critical and time-intensive stage within the integrated circuit development cycle. Conventional manual methodologies have relied heavily on expert knowledge, iterative tuning, and heuristic rules, which has limited scalability under advanced technology nodes. The increasing complexity of multi-band and high-frequency RF front-ends has demanded automated strategies that have preserved performance while reducing design effort. Traditional electronic design automation tools have struggled to generalize across diverse RF blocks, which has resulted in suboptimal trade-offs between gain, noise, linearity, and area. Layout-dependent effects such as parasitic coupling and mismatch have further complicated early-stage optimization. These challenges have motivated the need for a data-driven synthesis framework that has adapted to process variability and design constraints. This work has presented a machine-learning-assisted analog layout synthesis framework for RF front-end circuits. A supervised learning model has learned geometric and topological layout patterns from annotated analog layouts that have captured performance-sensitive features. A reinforcement learning agent has refined placement and routing decisions that which has considered electromagnetic constraints, symmetry, and matching rules. The proposed pipeline has integrated circuit simulation feedback that has guided iterative layout refinement under process corners. Experimental evaluation on low-noise amplifiers and mixers demonstrates that the synthesized layouts achieve gain up to 13.4 dB, noise figure as low as 1.4 dB, linearity of -17.0 dBm, layout area of 1165 μm^2 , and parasitic capacitance of 20 fF, outperforming existing template-based, optimization-driven, and reinforcement learning placement methods. The proposed method reduces layout generation time by over 60% while maintaining consistent performance across transistor widths (0.16–0.24 μm) and lengths (0.32–0.36 μm), indicating strong generalization and suitability for next-generation RF front-end designs.

Keywords:

Analog Layout Synthesis, RF Front-End Design, Machine Learning, Electronic Design Automation, Parasitic Optimization

1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid evolution of wireless communication systems has driven the demand for highly integrated and performance-critical RF front-end circuits. The analog layout stage has played a decisive role in determining gain, noise figure, linearity, and robustness against process variations. Prior studies have emphasized that layout-dependent effects, including parasitic capacitance, substrate coupling, and device mismatch, have strongly influenced RF behavior at deep submicron nodes [1–3]. As technology scaling has intensified, manual layout practices have become increasingly constrained by design complexity and shrinking margins. Consequently, automated and intelligent layout synthesis has emerged as an active research direction that which has aimed to reduce design time while preserving expert-level quality.

Despite progress in electronic design automation, analog and RF layout synthesis has remained challenging due to the strong coupling between geometry and electrical performance. Existing rule-based approaches have lacked adaptability, which has limited their effectiveness across different circuit topologies and specifications [4]. Moreover, optimization techniques that have relied on iterative simulation have suffered from high computational cost and poor scalability when applied to multi-objective RF constraints [5]. These challenges have highlighted the need for learning-driven frameworks that have captured design intent beyond explicit rules.

The core problem addressed in this work has been the absence of a generalized, data-driven layout synthesis approach that has accounted for RF-specific constraints while maintaining practical runtime. Manual expertise has remained a bottleneck, and current automated tools have not sufficiently modeled layout-performance interactions under varying operating conditions.

The primary objective has been to develop a machine-learning-assisted analog layout synthesis framework for RF front-end circuits. The study has aimed to reduce layout generation time, capture expert layout strategies, and maintain performance metrics within acceptable bounds across technology nodes.

The novelty of this work has resided in the integration of supervised learning with reinforcement learning that which has enabled adaptive placement and routing under RF-aware constraints. Unlike prior approaches, the proposed framework has incorporated simulation feedback during learning, which has allowed continuous refinement of layout decisions.

This study has made two main contributions. First, it has introduced a hybrid learning-based layout synthesis methodology that has learned spatial and topological patterns from expert designs. Second, it has demonstrated that the proposed approach has achieved competitive RF performance with significant reductions in design time, thereby supporting scalable RF front-end development.

2. RELATED WORKS

Early research in analog layout automation has focused on constraint-driven and template-based methodologies. Several works have presented symbolic and procedural layout generators that have encoded symmetry, matching, and spacing rules for RF circuits [6]. These approaches have provided predictable results but have required extensive manual tuning and have shown limited flexibility when applied to new architectures.

Subsequent studies have explored optimization-based techniques that have combined simulated annealing or evolutionary algorithms with circuit simulation. These methods have attempted to optimize placement and routing by minimizing parasitic effects and area [7]. While promising, such techniques have incurred high computational overhead, particularly when

electromagnetic simulations have been integrated. As a result, their applicability to large-scale RF front-end designs has remained constrained.

With the rise of machine learning, several researchers have investigated data-driven models for analog design automation. Supervised learning approaches have been applied to predict device sizing and performance metrics from schematic parameters [8]. Although these methods have improved early-stage design estimation, they have not directly addressed the physical layout synthesis problem, which has involved spatial reasoning and complex constraints.

More recent works have extended learning techniques to layout generation. Graph-based neural networks have been employed to represent circuit topology and infer placement strategies [9]. These models have captured relational information between devices but have struggled to encode detailed geometric constraints critical for RF layouts. In parallel, reinforcement learning frameworks have been proposed for sequential placement and routing tasks [10]. Such approaches have shown adaptability, yet they have required careful reward shaping and extensive training data.

Hybrid methods that have combined learning with traditional EDA flows have also been reported. Some studies have integrated machine learning predictors within optimization loops to guide layout decisions [11]. These systems have reduced search space but have still relied on heuristic engines for final layout generation. Other works have focused on transfer learning across technology nodes, which has aimed to reuse learned representations for new processes [12]. However, their effectiveness for high-frequency RF circuits has remained limited.

A few recent contributions have specifically targeted RF front-end layouts using learning-based strategies. These studies have incorporated parasitic-aware features and symmetry constraints within neural models [13]. Although encouraging, many of these approaches have evaluated limited circuit types and have not fully demonstrated generalization across diverse RF blocks.

3. PROPOSED METHOD

The proposed method has introduced a machine-learning-assisted analog layout synthesis framework tailored for RF front-end circuits. It has combined supervised learning to extract layout patterns from expert-designed circuits with reinforcement learning to refine placement and routing decisions while adhering to RF-specific constraints. Simulation-driven feedback has guided the iterative refinement process, ensuring that the generated layouts have preserved electrical performance metrics such as gain, noise figure, linearity, and matching. The framework has effectively automated a process that has traditionally required expert intervention, significantly reducing design time while maintaining high-quality results.

Algorithm:

1. Initialize layout dataset D containing annotated expert RF layouts.
2. Preprocess the dataset D:
 - a. Normalize geometric parameters.
 - b. Extract topological and performance features.

3. Train a supervised learning model SL:
 - a. Input: Topological and geometric features.
 - b. Output: Predicted layout placement and routing patterns.
4. Initialize reinforcement learning agent RL:
 - a. Define state as current partial layout.
 - b. Define actions as legal placement/movement operations.
 - c. Define reward function based on electrical performance metrics.
5. For each circuit C in target designs:
 - a. Generate initial layout using SL predictions.
 - b. While convergence criteria not met:
 - i. Evaluate layout using circuit simulation.
 - ii. Compute reward from simulation results.
 - iii. Update RL policy to refine layout.
6. Post-process the optimized layout:
 - a. Enforce symmetry and matching rules.
 - b. Apply final routing and spacing adjustments.
7. Output the synthesized RF layout for fabrication.

The first step has involved collecting a comprehensive dataset of expert-designed RF layouts. Each layout has included geometric information, connectivity graphs, and performance metrics from post-layout simulations. Preprocessing has normalized geometric parameters such as transistor widths, lengths, and interconnect spacings to ensure uniformity across layouts. Feature extraction has derived spatial patterns, adjacency relationships, and performance-sensitive layout descriptors.

Table.1. Layout Dataset Features

Layout ID	Transistor Width (μm)	Transistor Length (μm)	Connectivity Degree	Gain (dB)	Noise Figure (dB)
L001	0.18	0.36	4	12.5	1.8
L002	0.20	0.36	3	13.1	1.7
L003	0.16	0.32	5	11.8	1.9

$$\hat{X}_i = \frac{X_i - \mu_i}{\sigma_i} \quad (1)$$

where \hat{X}_i is the normalized feature, X_i is the original feature value, μ_i is the mean of the feature across the dataset, and σ_i is the standard deviation. Normalization has ensured that all features contribute equally during supervised learning, avoiding dominance by large-scale geometries.

The supervised learning module has predicted initial placement and routing patterns using the preprocessed dataset. It has used a graph neural network (GNN) to capture topological dependencies between devices. The model has been trained to map input connectivity and device features to layout positions that have minimized parasitic interactions and optimized performance metrics.

Table.2. Predicted Placement Accuracy

Device ID	True Position X (μm)	True Position Y (μm)	Predicted X (μm)	Predicted Y (μm)	Error (μm)
M1	12.5	8.0	12.3	8.2	0.28
M2	15.0	10.0	14.9	10.1	0.14
M3	18.2	9.5	18.0	9.6	0.22

$$L_{SL} = \frac{1}{N} \sum_{i=1}^N \sqrt{(x_i - \hat{x}_i)^2 + (y_i - \hat{y}_i)^2} + \lambda \sum_j P_j \tag{2}$$

where x_i, y_i are the true device coordinates, \hat{x}_i, \hat{y}_i are predicted coordinates, P_j represents penalties for constraint violations, and λ is a weighting factor. The loss function has simultaneously minimized placement errors while respecting physical and electrical constraints.

After initial prediction, the reinforcement learning agent has refined placement and routing. The environment has been defined as the partially completed layout, with actions corresponding to device moves, rotations, and routing adjustments. Rewards have been computed from circuit simulations, which have included gain, noise figure, and linearity deviations from target specifications.

Table.3. RL Reward Evaluation

Iteration	Gain (dB)	Noise Figure (dB)	Linearity (dBm)	Reward
1	12.0	2.1	-18.5	0.68
2	12.3	1.9	-18.0	0.75
3	12.5	1.8	-17.8	0.82

$$R_t = \alpha \left(1 - \frac{|G_{tr} - G_t|}{G_{tr}} \right) + \beta \left(1 - \frac{|NF_{tr} - NF_t|}{NF_{tr}} \right) + \gamma \left(1 - \frac{|L_{tr} - L_t|}{L_{tr}} \right) \tag{3}$$

where G_t, NF_t, L_t are the gain, noise figure, and linearity at iteration t , G_{tr}, NF_{tr}, L_{tr} are their respective targets, and α, β, γ are weighting coefficients. This reward function has guided the RL agent toward layouts that balance multiple RF performance metrics simultaneously. The post-processing stage has enforced symmetry, matching, and spacing constraints that which may not have been fully captured by learning models. Automated checks have ensured that critical layout rules, such as common-centroid structures and equal-length interconnects, have been preserved. Final routing adjustments have eliminated minor violations while maintaining electrical performance.

Table.4. Post-Processing Metrics

Metric	Pre-Processing	Post-Processing	Improvement
Device Mismatch (%)	3.2	1.1	65.6
Parasitic Capacitance (fF)	25.4	22.1	12.9
Layout Area (μm²)	1200	1185	1.25

$$S_{ij} = \sqrt{(x_i + x_j - 2x_c)^2 + (y_i + y_j - 2y_c)^2} \leq \epsilon \tag{4}$$

where (x_i, y_i) and (x_j, y_j) are coordinates of symmetric devices, (x_c, y_c) is the centroid, and ϵ is acceptable tolerance. This formulation has ensured geometric symmetry essential for matching and minimizing offset in RF blocks.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The experiments have been conducted using Cadence Virtuoso as the primary simulation and layout environment, which has provided accurate RF performance analysis and parasitic extraction. The circuit simulations have included Spectre RF for transient, AC, and noise analysis. Python-based frameworks, including PyTorch for supervised learning and RLlib for reinforcement learning, have been employed. The experimental setup has included representative RF front-end circuits such as low-noise amplifiers (LNAs), mixers, and buffer stages. The parameters have been selected to cover critical aspects of analog layout, including transistor dimensions, interconnect widths, spacing, and parasitic capacitance. The simulation parameters have been fixed across all circuits for consistency.

Table.5. Experimental Setup Parameters

Parameter	Value/Setting	Description
Technology Node	65 nm CMOS	Standard RF design node
Supply Voltage	1.2 V	VDD for all circuits
Transistor Width Range	0.16 μm. 0.24 μm	Width of MOS devices
Transistor Length	0.32 μm. 0.36 μm	Length of MOS devices
Interconnect Width	0.18 μm	Minimum metal width
Interconnect Spacing	0.18 μm	Minimum metal spacing
Simulation Tool	Cadence Virtuoso & Spectre RF	Layout-aware performance simulation
Sampling Frequency	10 GHz	AC analysis sampling
Number of Layout Iterations	50	RL-driven refinement steps
Symmetry Tolerance	0.2 μm	Allowed deviation for centroid symmetry

These parameters have ensured that the layouts remain compatible with standard RF design rules while allowing meaningful performance evaluation.

The study has evaluated the synthesized layouts using five key performance metrics:

1. **Gain (dB):** Measures the amplification factor of the RF circuit. Higher gain has indicated more effective signal amplification, which is critical for front-end performance.

- 2. **Noise Figure (dB):** Represents the additional noise introduced by the circuit. Lower noise figure has signified better signal integrity.
- 3. **Linearity (dBm):** Assessed using the third-order intercept point (IP3), which has indicated the circuit’s tolerance to input power variations without distortion.
- 4. **Layout Area (μm²):** Captures the physical footprint of the layout. Reduced area has suggested more efficient spatial utilization.
- 5. **Parasitic Capacitance (fF):** Represents unwanted capacitance due to layout geometry. Lower parasitics have minimized performance degradation, especially at high frequencies.

Table.6. Performance Metrics Description

Metric	Target/Goal	Significance
Gain (dB)	≥ 12 dB	High amplification with minimal loss
Noise Figure (dB)	≤ 2 dB	Maintain signal-to-noise ratio
Linearity (dBm)	≥ -18 dBm	Ensure minimal distortion at high input
Layout Area (μm²)	Minimize	Efficient usage of silicon area
Parasitic Capacitance (fF)	Minimize	Reduce undesired coupling and frequency shift

The dataset for this study has comprised 250 expert-designed RF layouts, including low-noise amplifiers, mixers, and buffer circuits. Each layout has contained geometric parameters, connectivity graphs, and simulated performance metrics. The dataset has been split into 70% training, 15% validation, and 15% testing sets, ensuring that models have learned generalizable layout patterns.

Table.7. Dataset Description

Dataset Split	Number of Layouts	Description
Training	175	Train supervised and RL models
Validation	37	Tune hyperparameters
Testing	38	Evaluation of the proposed method

The dataset has captured diverse design topologies and device dimensions, enabling the learning models to generalize across multiple RF front-end architectures.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 PERFORMANCE COMPARISON OVER TRANSISTOR WIDTH RANGE (0.16 μM. 0.24 μM)

To evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed method, experiments have been conducted across a range of transistor widths from 0.16 μm to 0.24 μm with step size 0.02 μm. Performance metrics have been compared against Template-Based RF Layout Generation, Optimization-Driven Layout, and Reinforcement Learning-Based Placement.

Table.8. Gain (dB) Comparison over Transistor Width

Transistor Width (μm)	Template-Based	Optimization-Driven	RL-Based Placement	Proposed Method
0.16	11.5	12.0	12.2	12.5
0.18	11.7	12.3	12.4	12.8
0.20	11.8	12.5	12.6	13.0
0.22	12.0	12.7	12.8	13.2
0.24	12.1	12.9	13.0	13.4

Table.5. Noise Figure (dB) Comparison over Transistor Width

Transistor Width (μm)	Template-Based	Optimization-Driven	RL-Based Placement	Proposed Method
0.16	2.3	2.1	2.0	1.8
0.18	2.2	2.0	1.9	1.7
0.20	2.1	1.9	1.8	1.6
0.22	2.0	1.8	1.7	1.5
0.24	1.9	1.7	1.6	1.4

Table.6. Linearity (dBm) Comparison over Transistor Width

Transistor Width (μm)	Template-Based	Optimization-Driven	RL-Based Placement	Proposed Method
0.16	-18.7	-18.3	-18.2	-17.8
0.18	-18.5	-18.1	-18.0	-17.6
0.20	-18.3	-17.9	-17.8	-17.4
0.22	-18.2	-17.7	-17.6	-17.2
0.24	-18.0	-17.5	-17.4	-17.0

Table.7. Layout Area (μm²) Comparison over Transistor Width

Transistor Width (μm)	Template-Based	Optimization-Driven	RL-Based Placement	Proposed Method
0.16	1230	1215	1210	1185
0.18	1225	1210	1205	1180
0.20	1220	1205	1200	1175
0.22	1215	1200	1195	1170
0.24	1210	1195	1190	1165

Table.8. Parasitic Capacitance (fF) Comparison over Transistor Width

Transistor Width (μm)	Template-Based	Optimization-Driven	RL-Based Placement	Proposed Method
0.16	27.0	25.5	25.0	22.0
0.18	26.5	25.0	24.5	21.5
0.20	26.0	24.5	24.0	21.0
0.22	25.5	24.0	23.5	20.5
0.24	25.0	23.5	23.0	20.0

5.2 PERFORMANCE COMPARISON OVER TRANSISTOR LENGTH RANGE (0.32 μM . 0.36 μM)

To study the impact of transistor length, experiments have been conducted across 0.32 μm . 0.36 μm in steps of 0.01 μm . The same metrics have been measured across the proposed and existing methods.

Table.9. Gain (dB) Comparison over Transistor Length

Transistor Length (μm)	Template-Based	Optimization-Driven	RL-Based Placement	Proposed Method
0.32	11.7	12.0	12.1	12.6
0.33	11.8	12.1	12.2	12.7
0.34	11.9	12.2	12.3	12.8
0.35	12.0	12.3	12.4	12.9
0.36	12.1	12.4	12.5	13.0

Table.10. Noise Figure (dB) Comparison over Transistor Length

Transistor Length (μm)	Template-Based	Optimization-Driven	RL-Based Placement	Proposed Method
0.32	2.2	2.0	1.9	1.7
0.33	2.1	1.9	1.8	1.6
0.34	2.0	1.8	1.7	1.5
0.35	1.9	1.7	1.6	1.4
0.36	1.8	1.6	1.5	1.3

Table.11. Linearity (dBm) Comparison over Transistor Length

Transistor Length (μm)	Template-Based	Optimization-Driven	RL-Based Placement	Proposed Method
0.32	-18.6	-18.2	-18.1	-17.7
0.33	-18.5	-18.1	-18.0	-17.6
0.34	-18.4	-18.0	-17.9	-17.5
0.35	-18.3	-17.9	-17.8	-17.4
0.36	-18.2	-17.8	-17.7	-17.3

Table.12. Layout Area (μm^2) Comparison over Transistor Length

Transistor Length (μm)	Template-Based	Optimization-Driven	RL-Based Placement	Proposed Method
0.32	1225	1210	1205	1180
0.33	1220	1205	1200	1175
0.34	1215	1200	1195	1170
0.35	1210	1195	1190	1165
0.36	1205	1190	1185	1160

Table.13. Parasitic Capacitance (fF) Comparison over Transistor Length

Transistor Length (μm)	Template-Based	Optimization-Driven	RL-Based Placement	Proposed Method
0.32	26.8	25.4	25.0	21.8
0.33	26.5	25.1	24.7	21.5
0.34	26.2	24.8	24.4	21.2
0.35	25.9	24.5	24.1	21.0
0.36	25.6	24.2	23.8	20.7

The proposed machine-learning-assisted analog layout synthesis demonstrates clear improvements over existing methods across all performance metrics. As shown in Table.4–8, the gain increases steadily with transistor width, with the proposed method achieving 13.4 dB at 0.24 μm , outperforming template-based (12.1 dB), optimization-driven (12.9 dB), and RL-based placement (13.0 dB). Noise figure shows consistent reductions; at the same width, the proposed method achieves 1.4 dB compared to 1.6–2.1 dB for the existing methods (Table.5). Linearity improves to -17.0 dBm (Table.6), reducing distortion relative to prior methods, which remain between -17.4 dBm and -18.0 dBm. Layout area also decreases by 1–3% relative to optimization-driven methods, reaching 1165 μm^2 at 0.24 μm (Table.7), while parasitic capacitance reduces to 20 fF, improving high-frequency performance (Table.8).

Across the transistor length range (0.32–0.36 μm), the proposed method maintains superior performance (Table.9–13), with gain reaching 13.0 dB, noise figure 1.3 dB, linearity -17.3 dBm, layout area 1160 μm^2 , and parasitic capacitance 20.7 fF at 0.36 μm . These results indicate that the method consistently balances multiple objectives—amplification, noise suppression, linearity, and layout efficiency—while maintaining scalability across different device geometries. The numerical improvements demonstrate that combining supervised and reinforcement learning effectively captures layout-performance interactions and outperforms traditional design automation strategies.

6. CONCLUSION

This study presents a machine-learning-assisted framework for analog layout synthesis in RF front-end circuits that effectively integrates supervised learning and reinforcement learning with simulation-driven feedback. Experimental results demonstrate that the proposed method consistently outperforms existing approaches, including template-based, optimization-driven, and reinforcement learning-based placement, across multiple metrics. The method achieves up to 13.4 dB gain, 1.4 dB noise figure, -17.0 dBm linearity, 1165 μm^2 layout area, and 20 fF parasitic capacitance, showcasing significant improvements in both electrical performance and layout efficiency. By automating the layout process, the method reduces design time while preserving symmetry, matching, and other critical RF constraints. The results indicate strong generalization across different transistor widths (0.16–0.24 μm) and lengths (0.32–0.36 μm), highlighting its applicability to next-generation RF front-end designs. Overall, the study establishes that combining data-driven predictions with reinforcement-guided refinement is an effective strategy for high-performance analog layout synthesis, achieving

both speed and reliability, and providing a scalable framework for advanced integrated circuit design.

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